

The
CRAFT
Factor

SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT COUNCIL
25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION
1975 – 2000



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The Deciding Factor...

Twenty-five years ago a few of us got together and formed the Saskatchewan Craft Council as an organization to promote crafts. Our objectives were to exhibit and market our work to the public, to increase the quality of crafts produced in the province, and to increase communication between the members.

We have attained these objectives. We now have our own permanent exhibition space, and three markets a year. SCC also conducts symposia and workshops with affiliate organizations.

The Craft Bulletin and *The Craft Factor*. In the beginning, our newsletter *The Craft Factor* was the only benefit that members would get with their \$5.00 membership fee.

Our first editor, Norma Morgan included some culinary recipes under the "EATS" section and some crossword puzzles to spice up the first issues of the Bulletin. Soon a coloured felt paper cover, black and white photographs and reviews of exhibitions, conferences and workshops were standard fare.

Then in 1988 the *Dimensions* catalogue was included as an insert to the summer issue. It was in colour while the rest of the magazine was still in black and white.

Everyone was waiting to see what the new works were like and who won what with which piece....

Each editor put their mark on *The Craft Factor*. Barry Lipton, Elly Danica, Peggy Forde, Michele Heimeman, Wallace Polsom, Sandra Flood and Leslie Milikin and others kept finding articles and writers for our newsletter.

The Craft Factor was also a vehicle for discussion and the section "Letters to the Editor" became the forum for dissenting views and provocative ideas. We remember the heated arguments for the Artisan Status category. Then in the

nineties the information function of the newsletter was relegated to *The Craft Bulletin* and *The Craft Factor* became the magazine with the reviews, the critical essays and the colour photos. We regret that it has been demoted to only three issues a year.

When we live in such isolation, receiving and reading our magazine *The Craft Factor* makes one feel connected to other creative souls.

In the new age of web pages and electronic transmission and easily deleted files, the printed word and the printed photographic image are still the permanent witnesses of our creative efforts. As much as traveling exhibitions *The Craft Factor* is also a strong ambassador.

The Craft Factor is also valuable as a marketing tool, because it includes samples of artists' works which can be used in proposals to galleries and when applying for grants.

Gallery exhibitions and *Dimensions* shows have been reviewed and critiqued by individuals of national and international stature. Where else can we receive critical appraisal of our work—we depend on our publication to feature good work, reviews and yes—criticism.

As we browse through *Craft Factors* from the past decades, we remember craftspeople who are no longer making crafts, have moved to another province/country or sadly are no longer living. These losses make the documentary and archival value of our magazine priceless.

Mel Bolen & Charley Ferrero
Founding Members
Saskatchewan Craft Council



The Saskatchewan Craft Council (SCC) is a registered charity. It was established 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 Craft Federation.

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THE CRAFT FACTOR

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Lee Brady

The Color of Light

Commissioning Stained Glass for a Church

a book by Sarah Hall

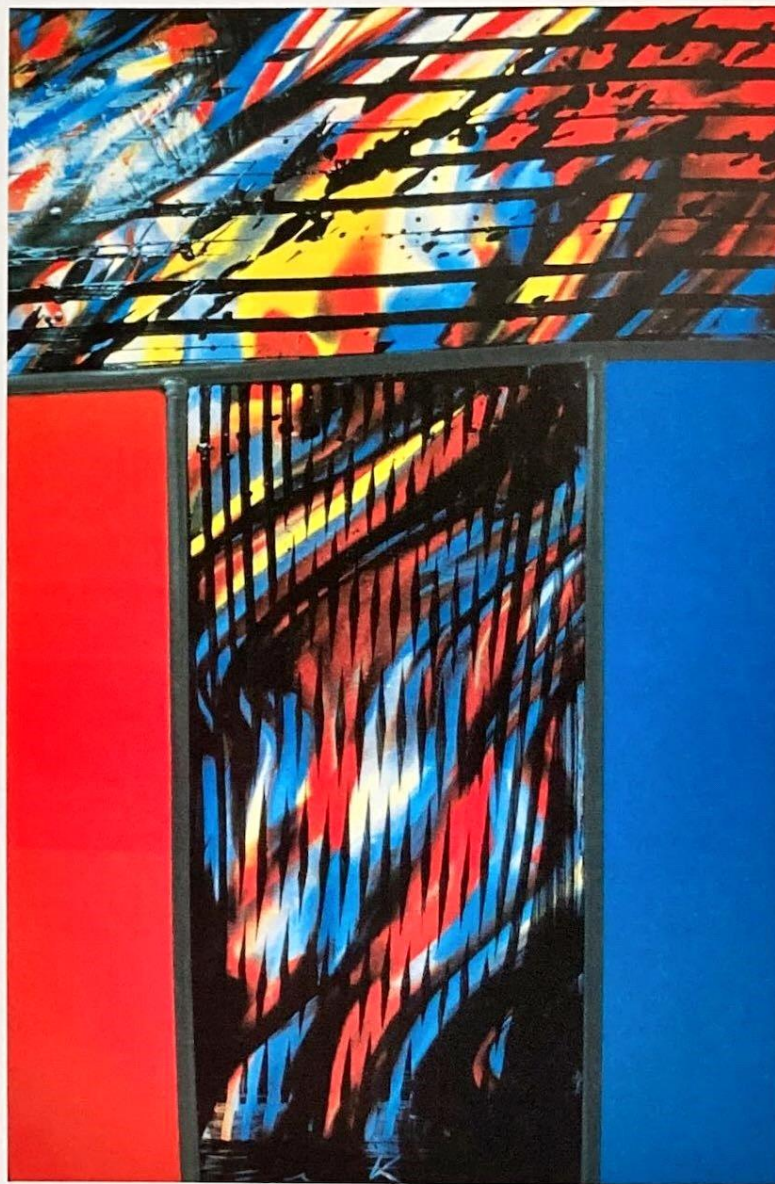


After many years of completing numerous commissions in public buildings and churches across North America, Sarah Hall shares the lessons of her trials and successes. As she says in her introduction, "The purpose of this book is to demystify the process of working with stained glass artists and to establish a format for the commissioning process." This she does by conveying what stained glass is, where it came from, and what it can be.

Hall illustrates and explains the various types of both handblown and machine-made glass, the steps in constructing stained glass windows, and such special techniques as sandblasting, acid etching, staining, and painting. She describes the thousand year history of stained glass, and how architectural styles, religious ideas, and political changes have affected it.

"The Color of Light" includes a section on commissioning stained glass projects, with step-by-step guidelines and a list of questions and answers. Appendices cover maintaining stained glass, restoring it, a list of resources for restorations, and a glossary. With these, clients can feel more at ease and in control—something church building committees may appreciate—and artists can approach commissions with a more helpful and professional attitude. The book includes 85 colour illustrations.

ABOVE: Sarah Hall
RIGHT: Jurgen Reipka, multi-coloured streaky glass, painted.
Photos by Sarah Hall
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Lee Brady is a glass artist from Saskatoon.



The Little Bowl Show

Last fall Michael Hosaluk asked me if I would be interested in helping him out with the "Little Bowl Show" that was to open in the Saskatchewan Craft Gallery July of 2000. He told me his idea and I said sure, it sounds like fun . . . it was.

We invited wood turners from around the world to turn up to ten pieces, each of which would fit in a 6 x 6 inch box for convenience of shipping. The turners sent each piece to someone to finish. They didn't have to know the person, and in many cases they did not. The second artist could work in any medium he or she wanted and had complete freedom to do whatever came to mind with the bowl. The works were to be sold and the proceeds to go toward a permanent wood facility at the University of Saskatchewan Emma Lake Kenderdine Campus, the Saskatchewan Craft Council, and educational funding at the World Turning Center in Philadelphia.

Before we get into the success or merits of the show, think about the idea for a second. Art for art's sake. No concerns about having to sell a finished product since the work was to be donated - just experiment and have fun working in a context and/or medium completely new to you. It was a real joy to watch what took place! Then there was the generosity of the people who contributed their time and talents to raise money for a cause in a place they may have heard of, but had no idea where it was. The Emma Lake wood conference t-shirts expressed it simply: "Where the hell is Saskatchewan and who is Emma Lake?" We received just under two hundred bowls! The work that came in was world class and can be viewed at the Saskatchewan Craft Council's web site until the end of December.

I have participated in collaborative work before and have always marveled at how another artist can see something so far removed from what I may have originally intended. Some of us are disappointed that our intent was missed by such a broad margin, while others are excited to see the new possibilities. Take for instance the pieces done by myself and Sarah and Laurie Afseth. They received what I considered to be nothing more than very plain triangular vessels. Sarah turned her bowl into a powerful statement about a parent trying to maintain a balance in life, "Untitled, # 108". You will see a bronze casting of a woman carrying the vessel on her back, holding it in place with one hand while holding the hand of her child with the other; the child is dragging

a blanket with a dog tugging on the end. Sarah's partner, Laurie, saw something different in the piece he received and cast a bronze hand to hold the bowl in its fingers as if to offer what's inside, "Untitled, #14".

Trent Watts sent Jack Slentz a little round bottomed bowl with a very wide flange. I saw the piece before it was sent and in the short time I got to consider it, I was not sure what I would have done to it. Jack came up with the perfect solution. The piece is "Untitled, #140". He blackened the rim and added some very unique texturing. I pointed the piece out to Trent at the opening and he barely recognized it. Rollin Patrick took a similar piece of Trent's and had us all fooled! It came back as a square lid to a square box with legs "Into My Blue Soul, # 54". I was looking at the piece along with six other people or so, when Michael Hosaluk approached and lifted the bowl/lid off the box. "Ohhh, wow! I didn't know it came off! Look, it's a box! Aaaaah!", was the gist of the comments after the shock of his boldness at "touching" an exhibition piece wore off. It was pretty funny to witness.

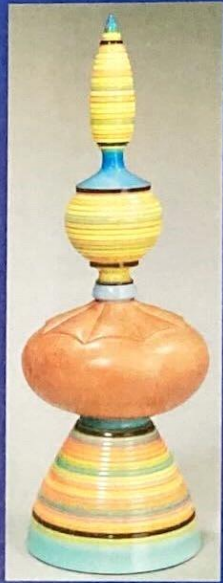
This exhibition was best experienced in person. The variety of colours, textures, techniques and materials used was astounding. There was everything from fabric to metal, watercolor to oil, organic to inorganic . . . so many surprises. Many pieces were not even recognizable as wood while others capitalized on the wood's natural qualities. Some artists were identified by their signature technique and others experimented with something new. To say I was excited when I walked through the exhibit the first time or two would really be an understatement.

The "Little Bowl Show" was a success in every sense of the word. It was a success for the artists in general since it expressed very well how unique each of us is. It showed that the material is not important, but rather our ideas that count. We were brought together as one in a collaborative exhibition!

Speaking for myself and a few others who shared their experience with me—we enjoy collaboration! It gives us a chance to observe another artist's process, either validating our own, or giving us some insight on how we might change, use different media, present work differently, combine different forms, colors and so on. The collaborative process helps to keep the mind fresh, and it also helps to break the isolation we seem



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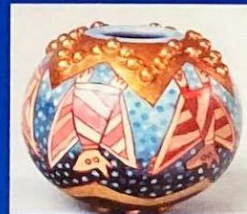
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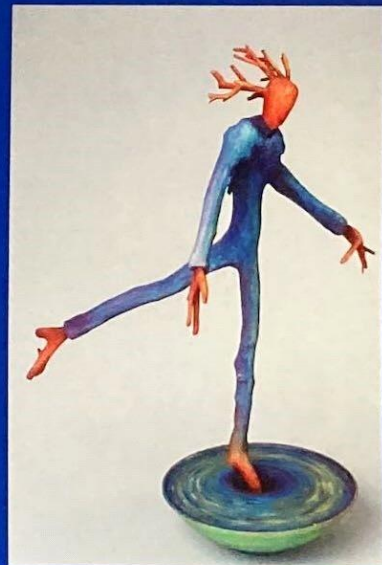
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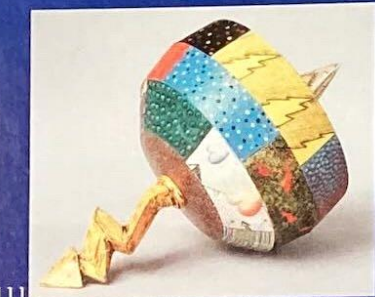


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List of Works



108



111



140



75



152



155

to be so fond of. Many of us go on to do other collaborative works. Exhibitions like the "Little Bowl Show" are great vehicles to encourage sharing and creating supportive networks amongst artists.

The show was a success financially! We decided to market the exhibition over the Internet. We specifically targeted galleries and collectors with a history for interest in wood art. By the end of the second week of the exhibition, we had grossed approximately \$19,000 in sales. I think you could hear SCC Director, Sandra Grismer's sigh of relief all over Saskatchewan—understandable because she was learning what it is like to work with woodies. We are not generally recognized for our organizational or money management abilities. The Craft Council really has a professional staff, and their professionalism shone in putting this show together.

The show was a success aesthetically; the sales will attest to that. We all know that if our work isn't well presented, it isn't sold. It was a huge accomplishment to display almost two hundred pieces in our small gallery without it looking like a garage sale. Well done! The web site worked well mostly due to good photography, scanning, and site organization. Believe me, it was a rushed job. From the photography/documentation to publishing the site, we had approximately a two week window of opportunity.

Where the "Little Bowl Show" will go from here is not yet clear. For now and until the end of December, you can see the exhibition on the SCC web site, www.saskcraftcouncil.org. Originally, the thought was to have the Wood Turning Center in Philadelphia look after the remainder of the exhibition. It made sense; they have the tools, know how, reputation, ability and the connections to do a good job. We have run into all sorts of governmental bureaucratic nonsense in forwarding funds from a non-profit organization in Canada to a non-profit organization in the United States. Whatever happens, I have complete faith in the SCC that, as always, they will resolve the issue to the best of their ability and we will all live happily ever after.

4 Mary Celine Thouin-Stubbs & Robyn Horn
cherry wood
7 x 7.9 x 5 cm

6 John Jordan, Dick Gerard & Robert Bahr
poplar, madrone burl
35.5 x 12 x 12 cm

7 Anita Rocamora & Niel Stoutenburg
maple, porcelain
18.6 x 10.2 x 11 cm

9 Joe Fafard & Michael Hosaluk
bronze, wood
7.2 x 11.7 x 11.7 cm

14 Laurie Afseth & Niel Stoutenburg
maple, cast bronze, marble
17 x 32 x 22.5 cm

25 Amanda Immelman & Trent Watts
bass wood, acrylic paint
16 x 11 x 11 cm

28 Christian Burchard & Jacques Vesery
madrone burl, cherry wood
12.75 x 12 x 11 cm

38 Satoshi Fujinuma & Atsuko Hotta
taisanbokv wood, acrylic paint, aluminum
8.5 x 9.5 x 10.5 cm

47 Tom Eckert & Michael Hosaluk
curly maple, ebony, lacquer finish
4.5 x 12 x 12 cm

53 Rollin Patrick & Cheryl Bogdanowitsch
found wood, acrylic paint
36 x 25 x 14 cm

54 Trent Watts & Rollin Patrick
found wood, willow, acrylic paint
33 x 13 x 13 cm

58 Miranda Jones & Trent Watts
curly maple, split peas, acrylic paint
6.5 x 9 x 9 cm

75 Mark Sfirri & Louise Hibbert
poplar, polyester resin, acrylics, ink
23 x 9.5 x 9.5 cm

108 Sarah Afseth & Niel Stoutenburg
maple, cast bronze, mineral oil
14 x 26 x 23 cm

111 D. Lowell Zercher & Michael Hosaluk
ash, Honduras mahogany, gold leaf
18.5 x 9 x 9 cm

140 Trent Watts & Jack Slentz
birch
4 x 14 x 14 cm

152 Eli Abuhatzira & Rude Osolnik
purple heart, centre halley
15.7 x 6 x 6 cm

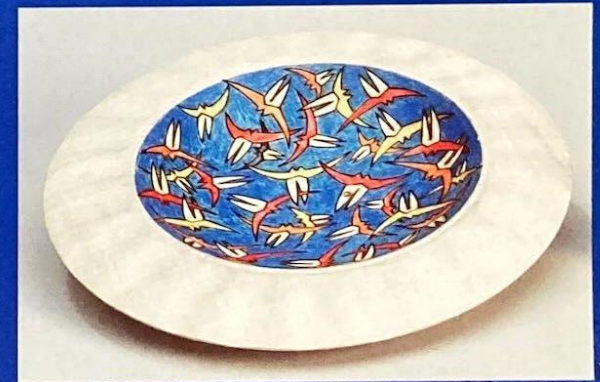
155 Paul Sasso & Mark Sfirri
poplar, paint
13.5 x 10 x 8.5 cm

156 Fabian Garcia & Mark Sfirri
wood, acrylic paint
23 x 10 x 9 cm

177 Michael Hosaluk & Wes Pound
curly maple, watercolour, pencils
7 x 9 x 9 cm



156

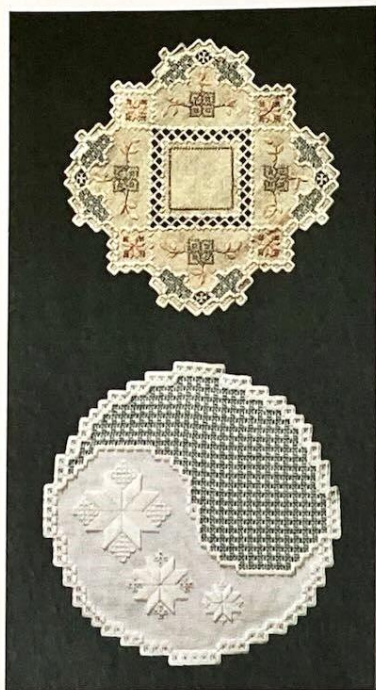


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Harriet Richards

A Sampling of the Bridge City NeedleArts Guild

A Chapter of the Embroiderers Association of Canada, an active member of the International Council of Needlework Associates



TOP: Lynne Hermanson; *Peach and Copper Doily*; linen, pearl cotton and copper thread. 24 x 24 cm
BOTTOM: *Yin and Yan Doily*; traditional hardanger fabric, pearl cotton thread. 28 x 28 cm

"How can you write an article on needlework? There's nothing to it, you put the needle in and then you take it out" (a relation).

"Ten different types of gold thread were used, with parts of the design worked over felt padding. The Robe was completed in two months... with twelve embroideresses working at a time. In all forty people worked... in relays. At the request of Queen Elizabeth two disabled ex-servicemen worked on the Robe, one embroidering the Tudor Roses and another the Shamrocks." (The Coronation Robe of Her Majesty Elizabeth the Queen Mother, 1937).

"He sat in the window of a little shop in Westgate street, cross-legged on a table, from morning till dark." (The Tailor of Gloucester, by Beatrix Potter).

"The silk for the velvet came from Lady Hart Dyke's silk farm at Lullingstone in Kent... The Embroidery was completed in a total of 3,500 hours from March to May 1953, with twelve embroideresses working in shifts seven days a week. Before the Robe left the School to be made up every member of staff, including office staff and the odd-job man, had added a stitch. (The Coronation Robe of Her Majesty, Elizabeth II, 1953).

"Needlework is a low-tech, thousands of years old craft which provides a wonderful balance to my own high-tech, high stress life." (Computer programmer Debbie Jenkins corresponds with a NASA rocket scientist who is also a passionate stitcher)

Known samples of embroidery date back as far as the Bronze Age in Denmark, and the needle arts have flourished in many forms worldwide ever since. Members of the Bridge City NeedleArts Guild have an active link with this history, and a commitment to keeping the art alive and growing. Many guild members routinely share information with stitchers around the world. The guild was formed in March 1996, one of forty-two chapters of the Embroiderers Association of Canada, and its aim "to preserve traditional techniques through education and networking." Its President, Ivy Preddy, has been doing needlework for thirty years, learning the craft first though 4H, and then as a young nurse, sitting and sewing with co-workers or friends. After moving to Saskatoon from Regina, she missed her involvement with the guild there and, along with other former members from Regina, was instrumental in establishing the Bridge City NeedleArts Guild.

Membership has grown to around forty, and a Youth Embroiderers Chapter has been formed which includes two young men (during the Middle Ages English embroidery was worked by both men and women in religious communities, upper class houses, and the Broiderer's Guilds). Exceptional resources are available to Saskatoon area needleworkers. The Embroiderers Association of Canada (EAC) keeps a registry of teachers who travel throughout the continent to pass on their knowledge in techniques such as working with metal and silk threads, Battenburg lace, gilding, and stumpwork. Anna Marie Winter of Regina is one of these teachers, and recently taught a course on Kumo fans on the University of Saskatchewan campus. Every two years the guild brings in someone with an international reputation, as well as using local instructors. In Saskatoon these courses are offered first to guild members, and then opened to the public.

The EAC provides correspondence courses tailored to many levels of skill. The variety is astonishing to someone not familiar with this art: canvaswork, crewel, counted thread embroidery, blackwork, deerfield embroidery, pulled thread chatelaine, heirloom sewing (lace to lace and lace and entredeux). Names of stitches are a delight: spider, burden, New England laid, fly, spike, snail trail.

Joyce Davis, the guild's founding president and now vice-president of the EAC, demonstrates needlework at the Exhibition each year. She says it is extremely important to promote the craft to kids, because unlike pottery or stained glass whose popularity remain strong, there is a danger of needle arts being lost. Many young people stop and talk, but most are from rural areas and have no easy access to the group here. Ms. Davis has also noticed a resurgence of younger women across the continent who, perhaps curious about a piece inherited from a parent or grandparent, now themselves do embroidery as a stress reliever.

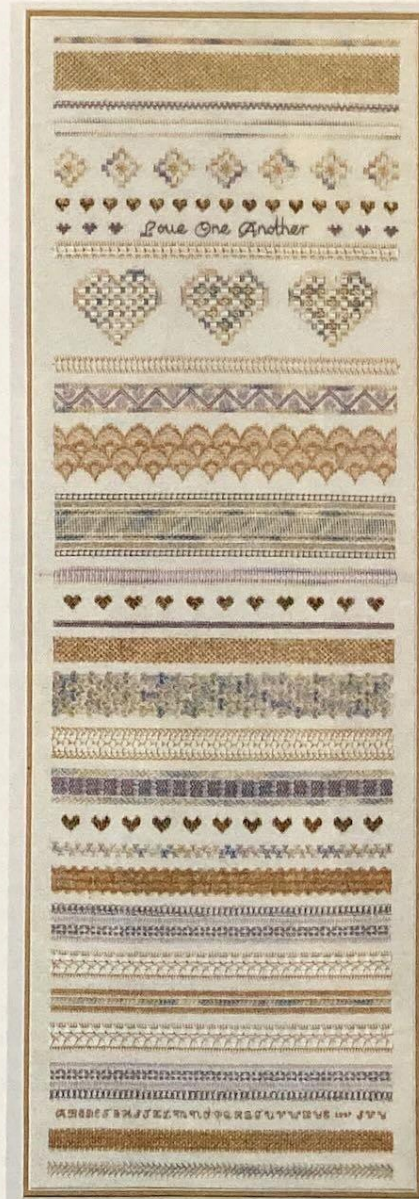
After only four years the guild (partnered with the Saskatoon Potters Guild) was given a juried show at the Saskatchewan Craft Gallery: *Reflections of a Needle*, March 3-April 23, 2000. The show pieces were all original in design, and the public's response to the work was, Ms. Preddy said, "a tremendous boost and encouragement to the members."

The needle arts encompass any work done with thread. Quilters and weavers have their own guilds, and although similar techniques may be used, their intentions are different. The needle arts person would be more inclined to use quilting as part of a picture, and select cottons for their potential as landscape elements, whereas a quilter is more likely to choose on the basis of colour and pattern. Members are constantly experimenting and playing with traditional techniques, using unusual fibres such as straw or bouclé, and adding new dimensions with transfer dyes, handmade paper, or fabric fusing.

The four pieces shown here, done by Saskatoon artists, are representative of the many ways contemporary needleworkers make historical techniques their own.

Lynne Hermanson taught herself Hardanger embroidery in 1993. Hardanger originated in Norway hundreds of years ago, and is distinguished by the Kloster block-five stitches over four fabric threads, side by side. These are openwork pieces where threads are removed and a finer thread used in a needle weaving or needle lace technique. Thirty years ago this was a dying art. Ms. Hermanson tired of the repetitious patterns available and began to design her own, incorporating new stitches and metallic threads, patterns she describes as more elegant than traditional Hardanger. She prefers evenweave or linens with their finer threads, and often embellishes with beads to bring a piece to life. It has taken time to build up her reputation, but she now publishes and sells her designs for doilies, samplers and Christmas ornaments, and receives appreciative calls from customers all over the world.

Ivy Preddy's *Love One Another Band Sampler*, which includes heart bands and the alphabet, is a classic example of its kind, although her use of mauves and peaches is non-traditional. Samplers have been found in Egyptian burial grounds, and were used for centuries all across Europe both to learn various stitches and patterns, and to record them. Hers contains thirty bands, each done in a separate stitch such as Hardanger, Pulled Thread, Bargello, or Withdrawn Bands.



Ivy Preddy; *Love One Another Band Sampler*; cotton, silk metallic thread on jubilee fabric. 22.2 x 71.1 cm



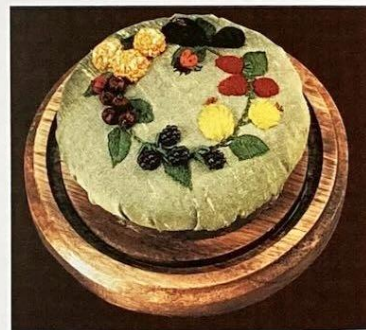
Debbie Jenkins has done needlework since she was ten. She recently conducted a multi-media workshop for the guild, where acrylic paint was laid down in washes on cotton sheeting to establish landscape on which scenes were embroidered. She is an inventive stitcher who makes notes of "critters and fish and reefs" and keeps a notebook filled with sketches and codes for threads. Her Strawberry Patch Tea Cozy came out of the guild's 'summer brown bag challenge', where participants were required to incorporate each of five mystery items in a bag. The cozy is decorated with delicate winged insects, plastic buttons in the shape of frogs and strawberries, silk ribbon ants strolling along the base, iridescent fabric paint, appliqué, cross-stitch, satin and stem stitch, and a mushroom made from a mass of french knots. Since her brown bag included a 'toity-tune', Love Me Tender plays inside the cozy.

Ms. Jenkins mentioned that a person in Britain "can obtain a university level degree in needlework", surprising maybe to North Americans who she claims have the worst attitude toward the art, such that we have lost much of our own brief history contained in early samplers. The education she referred to is a three year apprenticeship offered by The Royal School of Needlework in England, which created the coronation robes described previously, and specializes in restoration and conservation of all textiles. The school was founded in 1872 by Queen Victoria's third daughter and its purpose was "to restore ornamental needlework to the high place it once held amongst decorative arts and to create an acceptable form of employment for 'gentlewomen' who, in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, found themselves in great financial need." By 1903, members of the Arts and Crafts Movement assisted the school and "their influence and designs still remain to the present day."

Joyce Davis has a big collection of stitchery books and takes an interest in all aspects of needlework history. Stumpwork is a padded, sculptural embroidery technique where, for example, a flower's petals or the wings of an insect are raised from the main body of the piece. Traditionally used in sewing caskets, wall hangings and mirror frames, some of these pieces took years to execute, having been started by young women when they were eight or nine. Ms. Davis' stumpwork Garland of Berries Pincushion, only three inches in diameter, uses four techniques to construct the berries. Tiny layers of oval felt form the body of the gooseberries, the strawberries are needlelace, the golden raspberries are clumps of french knots pulled together, covered beads form red currants and black beads are boysenberries. The little wings of her 1/4" ladybug are wire-formed.

Relaxation, fellowship, and a commitment to preserving and sharing techniques, are themes repeatedly expressed by these, and other, serious needleworkers. The guild meets on the first Wednesday of each month, September to June, 7:30 pm at Mayfair United Church.

Acknowledgements: Thanks to the members of the Bridge City NeedleArts Guild who shared their expertise. References to The Royal School of Needlework, Hampton Court, England came from the school's website.



TOP LEFT: Debbie Jenkins; *Strawberry Patch Tea Cozy* embroidery on broadcloth, embroidery floss, beads, silk and taffeta ribbon, metallic floss, fabric paint, white lace, buttons, and cross stick appliques; 35.5 x 25.4 cm

BOTTOM: Joyce Davis; *Garland of Berries Stumpwork Pincushion*; silk fabric, silk and cotton thread, beads, wire. 7.6 cm

Sandra Flood In The Beginning: The Early Years of the Saskatchewan Craft Council

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Saskatchewan Craft Council is cause for celebration; organizations frequently do not have long lives. An anniversary is also a chance to reflect on where we have come from, where we are, and where we might go. This article looks back, perhaps to serve as a measure of where we are.

We have long roots. From the early decades of the twentieth century, there were organizations in Saskatchewan concerned with craft. Branches of national organizations such as the Women's Art Association and the National Council of Women took an informed interest in craft and many members were art school-trained practicing craftswomen. The Saskatoon Arts and Crafts Society, active from 1924 to 1956, grew out of the Arts and Crafts Committee of the Saskatoon Local Council of Women. As a volunteer, non-profit organization, the Society arranged exhibitions, talks and demonstrations by a wide range of professional and traditional craftspeople. In order to encourage craftspeople to practice and retain their skills, they organized production of high quality traditional work, mainly textiles. These they promoted and marketed within the province and through an extensive national (and international) exhibiting and marketing network run by women's organizations.

One of the founding members of the Society, Mrs. A. S. (Vivian) Morton, became a member of the Saskatchewan Arts Board and an advocate for crafts when, in an innovative move typical of the CCF government, the Arts Board came into being in 1948, under the aegis of the Department of Education. The first of its kind in North America, the Arts Board was established,

because a few people believed some stimulus was necessary if the arts were to emerge as a significant cultural force in the province. Although there was no ground-swell among the citizens demanding that such an organization should be formed...The Board had to encourage people to think about their needs and, in many instances, stimulate this thinking by demonstrating what could be made available or what could be done.

Within the year, the Arts Board had convened a Handicrafts Committee, which immediately set about identifying provincial craftspeople and their needs, and organizing and funding summer schools, craft festivals and individual or group education projects. For the next twenty-five years, the Arts Board continued a high level of involvement with the craft community.

Outside Saskatchewan, each province had a different history of organizations activated for and by craftspeople, and of government support, the latter usually dependent on rural poverty and tourist potential. After World War II, parallel with provincial and federal government initiatives to support craft production and with the continuing formation of single media guilds at local and national level, new forms of craft organization emerged. The earlier organizations, initiated and run by women, were superseded by associations of craftsmen and women, that despite inclusive membership were designated male — for example, the Guild of New Brunswick Craftsmen, started in 1947, and in the early to mid-seventies, the rush of provincial 'Designer Craftsmen' associations. This gender shift, arising from post-war social issues, affected all aspects of the craft scene. The re-emphasis on professionalism, studio craft, and the designer-maker reflects the rising numbers of graduates from college and university art departments, the influence of Modernism, and an increasingly affluent and stable Canada.

Saskatchewan was not isolated from these changes. Immediately prior to the advent of the Saskatchewan Craft Council, James Thornsbury, a University of Saskatchewan ceramics professor, with the support of Peter Weinrich, Executive Director, and Orland Larsen, Director, from the newly formed Canadian Craft Council, had tried to start a Saskatchewan 'Designer Craftsmen' association. In August 1975, David Didur, a goldsmith, was listed as the contact person for the Northern Saskatchewan Designer-Crafts Council in Saskatoon. At the same time Norma Morgan, who became SCC's first Board secretary and editor, was contact person for the South Saskatchewan Crafts Council in Regina. Professionalism and 'designer-maker' became key issues for the new SCC.

The gender shift surfaces in SCC's fledgling newsletter, which starts off using 'craftsmen' but in the third issue protests having a gender bias saying,

We do feel it important to use the terms 'craftspeople', 'craft workers' or 'craftsperson'.

'Craftist' was the new word coined by CCC. At a national level, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, based in Montreal and incorporated in 1906, had realized that the volunteer work force necessary to run a national organization no longer existed after the second world war. Despite strong representation from the craft community and the Guild, the Massey Commission (1949-51) gave clear indication that crafts were not going to receive official recognition as an integral part of Canadian culture and, therefore would get none of the financial support proposed for First Nations' and fine art production. Stymied in their efforts to maintain a national organization, the Guild decided to devolve into its remaining regional branches. Even so, renamed the Canadian Guild of Crafts, the Guild retained a national presence. In 1974, the Guild amalgamated with the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, based in Ottawa and established in the mid-1960s, to form the Canadian Crafts Council. This brings us full circle, for one of the representatives at the joint meetings to effect the amalgamation was Lea Collins, the Visual Arts Consultant for SAB, and one of the directors of the new Canadian Crafts Council was James Thornsby. Thornsby through Collins initiated meetings in Saskatoon and Regina in March and April 1975, that preceded the formation of SCC.

The formation of the CCC and the Arts Board's longstanding involvement with craft had a direct bearing on the formation of SCC. At a meeting in Regina on 7 June 1975, the reasons given for forming an organization to represent craftspeople were, first, that the national organization could only deal with organizations, not with individuals, and second, that the Arts Board, government and other provincial organizations also wanted to deal with an organization. Only after that came the reason that craftspeople had no representation of their interests and problems through people chosen by them.

At this June meeting, committees were assembled to do the preparatory work for setting up a craft

association. The 18 committee members included ten potters, reflecting the two University ceramics departments and the long established Regina Extension Department pottery studio; twelve committee members were based in Regina and four in Saskatoon. Among currently familiar names were the potters Marline Zora, Mel Bolen, Sandy Ledingham, Wendy Parsons, and Ken Wilkinson.

On October 3, in Regina, a meeting was held between support agencies and craftspeople to see what programs were already available. This was followed by the founding conference on October 4 and 5, in Saskatoon, at which the newly constituted SCC proposed four areas of activity. First and of greatest importance was the hiring of a full-time, paid director, and a part-time secretary. Second was the production of a newsletter to facilitate communications. Third was to set up and make available to the public an Index of Saskatchewan craftspeople, which would also include listings of shops, studios and galleries selling crafts, fairs and festivals, and galleries exhibiting crafts. Fourth, the director would organize workshops on tax and business issues affecting craftspeople, accessing quality supplies and co-operative or bulk buying, and media or techniques as requested. The first actions of the SCC were to draft an operating budget in order to make grant applications, to affiliate with the CCC, and to promote exhibitions, sales and crafts in general.

The aims and objectives of craft organizations remain amazingly consistent throughout the twentieth century. The retention of skills, the improvement of the economic situation of craftspeople, monitoring standards, public education and public recognition are constant concerns. These aims were reflected in the Council's Bylaws: "to promote and facilitate the growth of craft excellence in Saskatchewan; to serve as an advisory body on matters of professional interest; to inform and place before the public the services and objectives of the Council." "To encourage close co-operation among similar provincial and national associations" and "to promote and encourage communication amongst craftspeople in Saskatchewan" mark contemporary directions. From the beginning, crafts were envisioned as an integral part of the cultural life of a unique country, Canada. In 1925, William Carless, professor of architecture at

McGill University, Montreal, wrote that,

Every civilized nation of today has taken steps to preserve whatever arts and crafts it possesses...[It] is an essential part of the fabric which some day may go to make up a distinctively Canadian art.

Fifty-two years later, Barry Lipton, Chairman of SCC, wrote,

We are no longer a frontier society and it is time to recognize culture as a basic need of civilized people.

Both Carless and Lipton speak of their expectation that government will take an active role in the recognition and support of culture.

Having set up an organization, members were forced to grapple with organizational problems. These had been inherent to craft organizations throughout the century—the recruitment and organization of volunteer labour; sources of funding for programs, facilities and employees; finding and financing a base from which to operate; and servicing a diverse community. The first committees had already discovered the demands in time, energy and expertise required in setting up, let alone running, an organization, hence the prioritization of hiring a director. This, with the other proposed programs, required application to government bodies for funding. The Council may have been lead to believe that "there is ample money to support the development of craft industries in Saskatchewan." In fact, government funding was problematic; it was in short supply and came from a number of different sources, each with their own agenda. In addition, funding bodies kept changing their mandates so that the fledgling organization found itself bouncing between one department and another. Within six months, the Council was saying that it could not carry on applying for numerous small grants indefinitely.

Some provincial government departments were not unaware of the problem. The Council was almost immediately involved in 'SaskARTchewan', a series of ten mini-conferences culminating in a three day provincial conference in April/May 1976. Set up by the Department of Culture and Youth and SAB, their advisory committee had identified 'financial support to

the arts' as a crucial issue for discussion. The Council's brief to SaskARTchewan focused on the shortage of available funding, arguing that a once enlightened provincial government was backsliding in its commitment to the growing cultural community. The Arts Board was to later argue that after 1975, the grants allocation apparently increased and reached a plateau in 1976-77, but in real terms the level of funding did not equal that of 1975. The brief added that,

of all the arts practiced in Saskatchewan, crafts have the most opportunity of providing economic viability.

The brief also suggested that craft had been relatively unrecognized by government, and noted the lack of in-depth training in anything but ceramics, the lack of gallery space, unsympathetic marketing agencies, and the loss of mature craftworkers to more sympathetic environments.

Funding first came from Saskatchewan Sport Trust Fund to hire a program co-ordinator "to pursue problems and solutions," and from the provincial Department of Culture and Youth to run the newsletter for the first year. This went free to members and "people interested in craft development in the province." After six months, the paid program co-ordinator gracefully retired and the office in Regina shut. Lipton wrote,

We had fallen for the bait of government grants to pay for our organization, and found that the program coordinator was spending a considerable amount of time applying for grants to secure his salary.

The Board recognized that it could generate little money from memberships and programs, certainly not enough to support the estimated operating budget for 1977 of \$32,000, which at \$500 per active member was unlikely to get government support.

We decided to cut all of the operating budget except that portion committed to publication of our magazine....

The initial relief generated by this decision must have evaporated quickly as the seven member board undertook the running of the organization. As Board chairman, Lipton dealt with eight provincial or federal

government departments and organizations in one year. Responsibility for funding the Craft Council no longer rested with SAB but with Saskatchewan Sport Trust Fund and the Department of Culture and Youth, whose source of funding depended on lottery profits, which the Craft Council considered unstable and morally problematic. Dealing with the agendas of various departments was inefficient and frustrating, as Lipton recounted

[O]fficials in both departments thought it [a touring Craft Caravan] was a good idea. Industry and Commerce wanted less show and more selling, Culture and Youth wanted more show and no selling. And neither could afford to pay any salary for it.

Board members found themselves caught between their need to make a living through their own craft practice and their commitment to the Council in time, money (travel expenses and telephone bills for the first four years were met out of their own pockets) and energy. Norma Morgan's editorial comment in the first year gives a sense of the effort made,

"[S]erving on a board can be a demanding, often times frustrating experience, trying to determine the needs of the people the board is supposed to represent. As individuals on the board, we have often been strong-willed, opinionated[,] disappointed, or discouraged in our dealings with each other..."

A second problem was the lack of member support. Despite the growing membership, 53 at the inaugural meeting (although not all became active members) rising to 140 by Spring 1976, in general active participation seemed lacking. Appeals for a SCC logo design, a name for the newsletter and, more importantly, responses to a craft questionnaire, the forerunner to the Index, were disappointing. The first of many appeals for participation appeared in the second newsletter,

If you want the Craft Council to be a useful tool, your cooperation will be needed. Remember, the S.C.C. is primarily a group of craftspeople, and the desire for self-determination must be accompanied by the willingness to participate in its development.

Apart from inertia and more pressing commitments,

participation may have been stalled by the Council's image. One newsletter correspondent saw it as being a young, professional, artistically-aware elite, and likely to estrange older, more experienced and traditional craftspeople. At the founding conference, reasons for the formation of SCC emphasized recognition of craftspeople as a professional group, producing a professional level of crafts, with established standards. Where 'professional' meant university-educated craftspeople and a full-time commitment, even if teaching financed studio production, many craftspeople may have felt excluded.

This exclusion was reinforced by the imposition of standards through juried markets and exhibitions. Although setting standards was not a new idea in the province, the criteria for SCC's standards reflected a contemporary intellectual stance, which was most obvious in the exhibition criteria. For market jurying criteria, the more widely acknowledged standards of technical skill, knowledge of materials and functional appropriateness were balanced by the nebulous criteria of 'good design'. Not articulated but definitely practiced, was discrimination against work felt to be 'commercial' or from a 'cottage industry'. Gary Essar, a juror for the 1977 Battleford exhibition, wrote that the final criteria was always the quality of the work but in work of equal quality 'innovation' became the determining factor. Jurors looked for some level of 'personal statement' rather than what they perceived as the more or less set patterns, materials and methods of traditional craft. Lea Collins and John Graham in the '1st Biennial' exhibition catalogue, 1978, refer to 'craft art' works and 'artist-craftsmen'; Lipton is even more explicit,

We want the show to start to break down some of the misconceptions about craft. Many people have categorized craft as somewhere below art. These same people will pay an artist for the creativity in his art piece but balk at paying much more than a materials price for a craft object.

As Essar remarked, a large proportion of entries to exhibitions were 'traditional' pieces and, despite the fact that some were accepted, many 'traditional' craftspeople ceased submitting work. Not only did 'traditional' craftspeople feel excluded, but major provincial studio craftspeople did not submit their

work, deterred in the art/craft commercial war by the association with 'craft'.

Within the membership, a mild furor was raised by the implementation of a 'Craftsman', later 'Artisan' status, which could be conferred if a member's work met SCC's standards criteria and was held for four years before re-jurying. Artisan status was seen by SCC as a way to recognize and promote quality crafts, particularly in response to galleries, businesses and government agencies. A Standards Report, in 1978, suggested four tiers of craftspeople: 1. from "anyone who considered themselves a craftsperson", 2. through juried marketers, 3. juried exhibitors, with 4. recipients of prizes and awards at the pinnacle.

Despite the problems and the ongoing organizational activities of lobbying government departments, answering queries, regular meetings etc., the Board had instigated, from the beginning, an ambitious program of workshops, markets, exhibitions, and an increasingly professional magazine. In that first four years, approximately fifteen SCC workshops took place, covering a wide range of subjects, from 'design' to a weekend 'small business' course. The target was to mount six workshops a year, at three different levels from entry to expert.

The Regina Christmas market, Wintergreen, was successfully established. The Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival at North Battleford, started by the Department of Industry and Commerce in 1974, had with the Council's "assistance with standards, procedures and labour" expanded and added a juried exhibition with awards of excellence in 1976. The Premier's Office, impressed by the quality of work, instituted the Premier's Award in 1977. In 1979, marketers were juried and in 1980 the Department of Industry and Commerce, who felt "that there is [not] enough return on dollars invested to support crafts as an industry in the province", turned the market over to the Council on condition that the Festival eventually became self-supporting.

In 1978 the first biennial juried exhibition opened at Dunlop Gallery, Regina. The Council had started a generously-funded collection as a "physical record, as a history of craft life, of the best work done in the province over the years" and was looking for permanent storage and exhibition space. The

commitment to the magazine as the means of communication with a far-flung membership resulted in the first typeset issue of *The Craft Factor* in December 1977. Less than a year later there were rumours that *The Craft Factor* would revert to

a much less formal production, typewritten, ... gestetnered or photo copied....Those who would see it changed say it is difficult to justify spending \$1500 to produce a magazine when most craft people would be satisfied with a much simpler effort put out by volunteer labour....

The counter-argument, that the magazine was an example of the professionalism demanded of its members by the Council and the fact the Council presented to the public, appears to have won. Perhaps the fact that the magazine had burned out six volunteer editors in three years carried some weight. A paid editor, Seonaid MacPherson, settled in to produce a redesigned magazine with a distinctive visual format and content.

In early 1979, funding appears to have been re-established on a different and more generous basis. The centre of operations moved from Regina to Saskatoon with an office in the old synagogue on Avenue F South and a part-time staff person, David Miller, was hired. Marlo Kearly was hired as full-time Executive Director the following year. The exhausting burden for the Board was lightened. By 1984 the Council had a gallery and a number of part-time and contract staff. Through the commitment and enthusiasm of a relatively small group of people, the Council had grown into a lively organization working to fulfill its commitment to craftspeople and to the public.

The Council came into being at a time when national, provincial and regional craft organizations (and other cultural organizations) were inventing or reinventing themselves despite uncertain but increasing funding and government support. It was a rich and lively craft environment. That decade saw major national and international exhibitions, including 'Ceramic Art of the World' organized by the Alberta Potters Association in Calgary 1973, and 'Artisan '78'. There were three general craft magazines: the Guild's 'Craft Dimensions Artisanales', the Canadian Craftsmen's Associations

'Craftsman L'Artisan', and CCC's 'Artisan'. The three great patrons of Canadian craft — the Massey family, the Bronfman family and the Chalmers family — were putting together collections. The World Craft Council had its conference, with the exhibition 'In Praise of Hands: Contemporary Crafts in the World', in Toronto 1974, to which three Saskatchewan craftspeople went, subsidized by SAB. In 1976, Gary Dufour, SCC's co-ordinator, went to the WCC conference 'The Living Crafts: Tradition and Quality' in Oaxtepec, Mexico, in 1978 six SCC members went to Kyoto, Japan; in 1980 five SCC members went to Vienna, Austria. It was still the Trudeau era, with its particular joie d'vivre and vivid sense of an inclusive Canadian identity.

Starting a new venture generates an energy and excitement that may be difficult to sustain over the long run, and these are different times. We have lost ground; the contemporary craft scene in Canada has none of the official recognition, high profile, or buoyancy seen in Britain, the United States or Australia. The battle for government recognition and support, for accessible and high quality craft education, for regular international, national and regional craft exhibitions in major galleries, for serious attention to collecting, and for research and publications has to be refought and won. The objectives that SCC originally set forth are still valid: promoting communication with and between individual Saskatchewan craftspeople and co-operation with other craft organizations, informing the public, advising on matters of professional interest and the promotion of excellence. Their method of application may require a new vision, informed by experience but spurred by the energy, effort and excitement that originally propelled SCC. Here's to the next twenty-five years!

The information and quotations for this article have been taken from the Saskatchewan Crafts Association Newsletter and *The Craft Factor* volumes 1-4: the SCC fonds at the Saskatchewan Archives Board Saskatoon A672 Boxes 1-10; W.A. Riddell Cornerstone for Culture: A History of the Saskatchewan Arts Board from 1948-1978; S.M. Flood 'Canadian Craft and Museum Practice 1900-1950' and other research. I would like to thank Marline Zora, Lee Brady, Gale Steck, Norma Lundberg formerly Norma Morgan, Mel Bolen, and Ken Wilkinson for answering my questions.

The Craft Factor published a history of the Saskatchewan Arts Board in relation to craft in Fall 88, Spring 89 and Spring 90 issues; a brief history of SCC in Winter 90/91 and Spring 91 issues; and a history of the magazine in Fall 90 issue.

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Greg Beatty

The Face of Craft

Recently, I interviewed B.C. author Don Dickinson on his novel *Robbierime*. Set in the fictional Wasagam National Park in Dickinson's home province of Saskatchewan in 1958, it paints a stark portrait of a family grappling with problems of poverty, isolation and cultural deprivation in the post-war era. If Saskatchewan is a much more enlightened place today, part of the credit must go to organizations such as the Saskatchewan Craft Council. Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, the SCC has been instrumental in fostering an appreciation of fine craft among producers and laypersons alike.

To celebrate this notable occasion, the SCC has organized an exhibition of masks titled "The Face of Craft." According to Corinne McKay, chair of the SCC's 25th Anniversary Committee, Saskatoon region sub-committee member, Marigold Cribb proposed the idea. "We wanted to do something that would involve members province-wide," McKay said. To avoid intimidating less experienced members, she added, the committee decided to make it a non-juried show. "It created a feeling of belonging, knowing that you could produce something that you thought was wonderful and [submit] it. I thought that was really important."

"When we sent out the call for entry," McKay recalled, "we suggested either a self-portrait or a portrait of another craftperson." Not all of the members who responded chose to follow this directive. For those who did, their masks offer viewers the chance to meet the person behind craftwork they might have previously seen and admired in a gallery or gift shop. Show and sales craft do offer a greater opportunity for public interaction than painting, sculpture and other creative disciplines. But when people are largely alienated from art, with its esoteric jargon and intimidating exhibition venues, it never hurts to put forward a human face.

Even those craftpeople who chose a more lyrical approach to their subject should not have any trouble winning viewer approval. As McKay rightly noted, "Every ethnic background, every culture has a tradition of mask-making. We all love to put on a mask, to show the public a different face or change our personality." It is believed that the custom of mask wearing



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1. Olive Kalapoca *Putting on the Glitz*
2. Lee Brady *M.B. - 30 Years in front of the furnace*
3. David Freeman *Self Portrait*
4. Charley Farrero *Red eye reduction*
5. Marigold Cribb *Untitled*
6. Christy Schweiger *1/4 Century Celebration*
7. Gale Steck *Gale's Millennium Mask 2000*
8. Bob Whittaker *You Lookin' At Me?*



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began with hunters wearing severed animal heads, either as a disguise when stalking game or as ritual objects in ceremonies designed to ensure a successful hunt. Alternatively, masks could have developed from the practice of painting the face with magical designs.

In Western society, masks are most often worn on Hallowe'en and other special occasions such as masquerade parties. As a cultural critic, I am struck by the eagerness with which people don disguises. Fantasy plays a role, of course, as does the desire of Boomers to remain eternally young. But it does suggest a certain amount of discontent with one's identity. Most people today are employed by corporations, where they are expected to sacrifice their individuality to achieve the nirvana of economic efficiency through standardization. Perhaps frustration with this ethos, coupled with the generic sameness of the brand-name landscape we now inhabit, and the barrage of manipulative media messages that we endure, is responsible for our desire to alter our identity?

Identity has been a central concern of visual artists for over two decades now. In craft, it is generally necessary to balance aesthetic and ideological imperatives with functionality. Thus, it was McKay's opinion that this project might serve as a springboard for SCC members to explore an issue they may not have tackled before. Not that these masks are entirely devoid of utility. With proper care, some could be worn. But most were intended by their maker to be *objets d'art*. Portraiture, of course, involves more than just physically depicting the subject. To be truly engaging, a portrait must also offer viewers an insight into the subject's psychological state.

One work I found particularly fascinating was an untitled 1995 salt-fired stoneware mask with gold lustre by Bonnie Bailey. Mounted on an iron armature with a wooden base, it consisted of a facial fragment—specifically, the nose and mouth. While full-length masks were generally the rule here, at the absolute minimum a mask must conceal the wearer's eyes a la the Lone Ranger to be effective as a disguise. Bailey's fragment functioned like an anti-mask, calling into question the status we have granted the eyes as the paramount signifier of identity. In a more

- 9. Kristina Komendant *Roseola*
- 10. Lorraine Sutter *Haunting*
- 11. Corinne F. McKay *Myself*
- 12. Laura Kinzel *Buffon Your Lip*
- 13. Janice Stefan & Debbie Wells *Bee Keeper*
- 14. James Gerlinsky *Tuesdays' Child?*
- 15. Larry Trask *In Alien*
- 16. Jeffrey Taylor *Free Me Take The Flight Out Of This Eye*

traditional vein was Teresa Gagne's *Willow Woman* (1999). A ceramic self-portrait with a burnished terra sigellata finish and woven willow hair, the work evoked a feeling of calm repose. Perhaps the most realistic of the masks was McKay's *Myself* (2000). She has painted many self-portraits. Here, she sculpted a plasticine model of her face, which she then used as a mold to create a papier mache mask. This intermediary step introduced an element of interpretation into the artistic process, as opposed to her simply making a life mask. With blonde hair styled in dreadlocks, red lips and blue eyes, the mask did incorporate aspects of McKay's painterly practice, although she admitted that she felt constrained by her inability to include background detail in the self-portrait to add emotional depth. Charley Farrero, in contrast, mounted his offering of a fiery-eyed demon in a black box, which permitted him to augment the mask with a tiny ceramic frog and vase of flowers.

Of those masks that departed from the portrait format, most alluded to their traditional use in ceremonies and festivals. Because they were rendered unrecognizable, mask-wearing shaman in primitive societies were believed to represent gods or spirits. One example of this legacy is Daryl Eberhardt's *My Son, My Sun* (2000), which consisted of a torch-cut, cold-forged, brazed steel flaming sun with brass highlights. Similarly celestial in nature was Madeleine Arkell's *Within* (2000), a ceramic and mixed media work which in its ripe fullness was evocative of a moon face. Many cultures, of courses, worshipped the sun and moon, the two most dominant objects in the sky, as deities. Two works that drew on the animist belief in transformation were Larry Trask's *In Alien* (2000) and Manjari Sharma's *In Unison* (2000). The former was composed of Brazilian soapstone and bone. It featured a bison head on the front, and an alien visage on the back. One association this inspired in me was that the near-extinction of the bison in the 19th-century was caused by European hunters who were alien to North America. Sharma, who studied mask-making in India, blended a human face with the head of a long-beaked bird, which rose up from the top of the person's head. Such masks were common in many societies, and embodied the belief that some humans had the power to transform themselves into animals.

- 17. Barbara Goretzky *Picasso*
- 18. Teresa Gagne *Willow Woman*
- 19. Daryl Eberhardt *My Son, My Sun*
- 20. Mia Tuason *Face*
- 21. Madeleine Arkell *Within*
- 22. Mike Nicholls *Incognito*
- 23. Arthur Parlett *The Watcher In The Woods*
- 24. D. Lynne Bowland *Spittin' Image*



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In an art historical context, African tribal masks were said to have strongly influenced Picasso during his early forays into cubism. We were reminded of this link in Barbara Goretzky's *Picasso* (2000), a red-glazed clay mask whose disjointed features recalled the fractured compositional strategy adopted by cubists in their shift away from the traditional one-point perspective of the Renaissance. Similarly evocative of the cubist movement was Michael Hosaluk's *Midnight Dancer* (2000). Composed of wood, with a black finish and a headdress of willow and horse hair; the mask, in its oval shape, flatness and stylized simplicity (slits for the eyes and mouth, slight ridge for the nose), recalled the female faces in Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907).

While McKay pronounced herself pleased with the submissions, she did admit she was disappointed that no weavers participated. Textiles were represented, however, in Annemarie Buchmann-Gerber's *About Face* (2000), which consisted of an embroidered and beaded cotton veil. While a veil is usually regarded as oppressive, as in the case of the Muslim chador, it is arguable that to the extent it frees women from overt male scrutiny, it is actually liberating. Also incorporating fabric was Laura Kinzel's *Button Your Lip* (2000)—a crocheted mask of blue yarn studded with numerous buttons and beads. Sharing Kinzel's whimsical sense of humour was Lee Brady, whose fused multi-coloured glass mask *M.B.—30 Years In Front of the Furnace* (2000) paid tribute to silver-haired ceramist Mel Bolen, a founding member of the SCC.

As the SCC prepares to embark on its next twenty-five years, McKay is optimistic it will continue to grow. "What we're starting to see now is some younger faces," she said. "For a long time, that was the biggest concern. The greying of the craft community." She attributes this to a resurgence of ideals first popularized during the "back to Earth" movement of the 1960s and '70s. "Along with that," she maintains, "comes the appreciation of handcraft and the lifestyle around it." "The Face of Craft" will debut at Wintergreen in Regina on Nov. 24. If sufficient interest is expressed, the show will go on tour to galleries across the province. Proceeds from the sale of a commemorative poster featuring all thirty-one masks will be used to establish an endowment fund to assist SCC members.

- 25. Paula Cooley *Artist Statement*
- 26. Michael Hosaluk *Midnight Dancer*
- 27. Wendy Parsons *Le petit chat*
- 28. Annemarie Buchmann-Gerber *About Face*
- 29. Manjari Sharma *In Unison*
- 30. Bonnie Bailey *Untitled*
- 31. Susann & Amanda Ranger *Untitled #7*

Harriet Richards

The Saskatoon Potters Guild A Brief History



Left to right, E. Cailles, F. Wright, T. Hazell, B. Tydeman, Mrs. Freeborn, Mrs. Maduke, S. Butterfield, D. Tweddell. (Saskatoon Potters Guild (SPG) archive photograph).

In 1962, some Saskatoon potters came together to form the first potters guild in the province. Their dedication was evident from the beginning. It has helped them provide opportunities for members to develop as artists and craftspeople, and maintain their commitment to educate the community at large.

The group's first location was in the Arts Centre, downtown Saskatoon. Retired member Betty Tydeman spoke of what it was like in the late 1950's: "There were a few good potters and experimenters around, but still mostly gifted learners." She joked that some of them were producing "lots of ugly stuff ... but eventually lots of people came into the group prepared to work."

From the archives:

February 12, 1962: a group of people interested in producing pottery, met at the home of Mrs. Ron Heacock and decided to invite others to join them with a view of forming a Club.... This initial group comprised Mrs. Heacock, Mrs. F. Wright, Mrs. Barb Rogers, Mrs. Doris Tweddell, Mrs. Heddeman, Mrs. Eleanor Cailles and Mr. Michalowski. The city was accepting submissions from interested groups regarding the building plans for the Mendel Gallery and there was a need to form a group to make a submission.

Minutes of a Meeting of Potters of Saskatoon held at 8 pm on Monday, March 12, 1962 at CFQC-TV Studios: A brief was compiled for submissions to the City of Saskatoon indicating reasons for and some requirements of inclusion of pottery at the proposed new art gallery.

April 9, 1962, ...second meetin held again at CFQC, 5 members added to the 15. Two speakers, Miss Sheila Stiven told us of the work of the Sask. Arts Board regarding pottery production in Saskatchewan and Mr. John Hudson of the Sask. Research Council told us of the types of clays to be found in Saskatchewan. He showed samples, in raw and fired states, and gave advice regarding claiming, working and firing of these clays. Miss Steven advised the group of available classes and names of working potters in the province and existing places to show.... a fee of 25 cents per member was established.

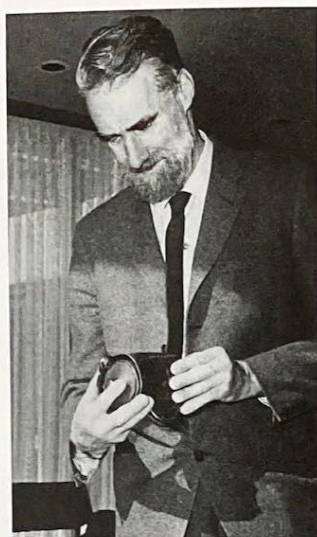
On May 14, 1962 the group named itself Saskatoon Ceramics, Canada, and at that same meeting three members demonstrated slab construction. Within a month they held a clay dig at Beaver Creek and within two years had ordered two electric wheels to be housed at their new quarters at the Mendel Art Gallery. By 1964, it was already a group to be reckoned with: giving classes, inviting guest artists to speak (Professor Eli Bornstein, Professor Otto Rogers), attending workshops, and setting standards for the pots members sold in public outlets.

When accomplished potter Harry Davis of New Zealand agreed to give a workshop in 1966, the relevant section of the minutes was recorded in capital letters. Very few visiting artists today would be greeted with such ceremony. On arrival, he was taken to the King George for lunch, had interviews with CFQC and the StarPhoenix, visited a Hutterite Colony, and then gave a public lecture attended by sixty people. Although he repeatedly pronounced the clay 'evil' due to problems drying it evenly, the guild's records declare: "Mr. Harry Davis is a beautiful person."

In September 1966, the group was renamed as *Saskatoon Potters Guild (SPG)*. The next year the University of Saskatchewan Extension division was using their equipment, they heard a lecture on the use of lead glazes given by member Dr. Michael Alms, took classes from Vic Cicansky, and presented a kiln to the Mendel Gallery.

The Saskatoon Potters Guild 1969 exhibition and sale at the Mendel was attended by hundreds. This guild, after just seven years, stated: "We are now constantly being called on to give pottery displays, workshops and demonstrations. The demand for pottery is increasing and it is now recognized as an art. If we are to fulfill these obligations we must increase our membership and facilities."

Learning and experimenting with new techniques were routine, and outdoor firings became events in themselves. Some of these took place in a member's backyard accompanied by a potluck supper. At one raku firing, the



Harry Davis (New Zealand), 1966 workshop (SPG archive photograph)

pots were "either smothered in garbage cans filled with dried leaves or some were put into the lily pond. Between the clouds of smoke and steam, it was amazing there were no protests from the entire neighbourhood."

With nineteen practising members using the studio space, and very few outside classes in the community, it wasn't long before the guild was turning away those wanting to join but who could not meet a required standard of self sufficiency. The University opened a Pottery Department in 1970, with Jim Thornsbury as Head. Professor Thornsbury gave the group a six week workshop, and they later provided his department a \$100 scholarship for a needy student enrolled in a senior program. Two of those awarded scholarships have since formed their own studios: Lee Brady (see pages 4-5 and 29), now a glass artist, and Pam Rogers who is located in Bragg Creek, Alberta. In the early 1970's, several gifted and experienced potters moved into the region, and the guild was able to make use of their expertise as jurors and workshop leaders.

The guild was eventually asked to leave the Mendel studio, (a space which never did get a fan, forcing them to flee the stink from waxing the base of pots, and whose door iced up in the winter). In May 1979 they relocated to, as one member called it, "that godawful basement place" at 308 5th Ave. North. The workshop was flooded a few years later, created a huge mess and ruining a wheel motor. It was

a frustrating time for the Saskatoon Potters, who by then were accredited as a teaching facility with the Community College. They carried on, expanding their resource library, improving their skills and holding exhibitions. In 1985 they settled into their new studio at the Albert Community Centre, where they remain today.

Every year the Saskatoon Potters hold two workshops given by people outside the guild, bringing in potters from all over to learn and exchange ideas with one another. Working members today have access to glazes, wheels, kilns, extruders and spray booth, and pay a small fee for firing. The studio -- available twenty-four hours a day, year-round -- includes a spacious, well-lit workroom, a glaze room adjoined by a room which houses five electric kilns, and a separate space where classes are given. A raku kiln may be used at the Prairie Sculptors Association at Leisureland. Not least among the benefits new members receive is the willingness of the more experienced potters to help and advise. Associate members have some privileges with studio use, participate in sales and exhibitions, and receive the monthly newsletter.

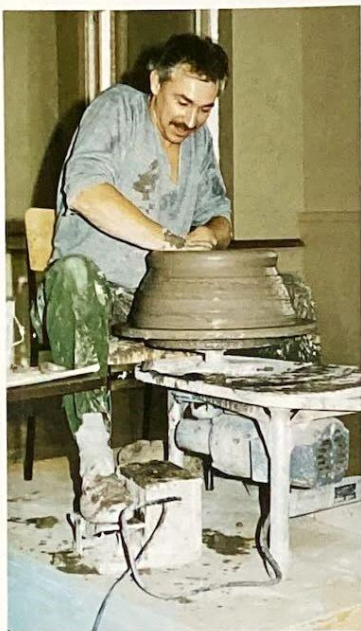
Guild members work hard, and newcomers are expected to take turns serving on committees and helping with the constant studio maintenance. In exchange for a paid working membership, a studio manager has duties which include ensuring equipment is kept up, purchasing supplies and scheduling the firings. All guild members receive a reduced rate for workshops.



ABOVE: Raku firing, (SPG archive photograph)



ABOVE: (left to right) Lorraine Sutter, Thelma Howard, Margaret Lyons, Lois Kloassen, Siu-Wah Wu, Elaine Gusta, Barbara Norum. Summer 1999



The guild has two sales each year, one the last weekend of November and another the weekend before Mothers Day, which includes a juried show. The pieces in this show are diverse, ("from funky to functional" as one observer put it), and are given individual critiques, with the best receiving an award given in memory of Doris Tweddell, one of the guild's founders. Doris Tweddell was a great experimenter with glazes and clays, and is well known for her reproductions of the KLIM cans, which contained powdered milk given to RCAF prisoners of war, and were remade as shovels and billy cans. She was also among the first of many teachers to local potters.

The Saskatoon Potters Guild is primarily an educational group, both for its members and for the community; since the city has recently shut down pottery classes at civic centres, the guild classes are even more in demand. Spring and summer sessions at their studio are not quite as busy, but fall and winter classes fill up quickly. There are ten wheels in the students' room, including one accessible by wheelchair. The teachers are experienced guild members who want to give back some of what they have learned.

Shirley Enslin, whose class is shown here, has started her second term of teaching and is as passionate an instructor as she is a potter. She has seen "incredible work done by students", and takes satisfaction from the growth in them within a ten week course. Especially gratifying to her are those who have difficulty for a long time, but "love the process so much they finally learn to throw beautifully." Judging by the health of the Saskatoon Potters Guild, Ms. Enslin's own love of the craft, with its demands of focus and physical concentration, seems to be one shared by many others.



TOP: Mel Bolen demonstrating (SPG archive photograph)
LEFT: Gale Steck, instructed during the 1970's (photo, collection of the artist)
ABOVE: Shirley Enslin instructing beginners class, July 2000
(Photo Harriet Richards)

Corinne F. McKay

Saskatchewan Craft Council 25th Anniversary Exhibition

"Gingerbread and oatcakes also worked well in that 'brown' aesthetic that briefly flavored everything, especially crafts." Wayne Morgan

Upon entering the Saskatchewan Craft Council's 25th Anniversary Exhibition, one realized the truth in this statement; natural tones (brown) did prevail in the work exhibited from the '70s. This past and present exhibition included two works each from founding members of the Saskatchewan Craft Council, one completed early in the council's 25-year history (the '70s), the second recently completed. The first impression was one of admiration for the bravery of the artist! How does one select a piece from early in your development? In each case, the juxtaposition of the two pieces revealed the growth, innovation and continuing quest for excellence within the crafts person. They have all shown tremendous focus and significant growth within their chosen mediums as explorers and innovators creating and supporting the arts.

Lee Brady's work seems outstanding in both personal growth and innovation. His shift from ceramics to glass has nurtured a respect for complexity of process and produced a refined elegance within the finished product. His *Raku Wall Plate* (1975), a simplified wall piece, contrasts with *Sumptuosa 11* (1999), a glass vessel exemplifying Brady's current innovative manipulation of glass. Recalling the integrity of the arts and crafts movement, yet with a contemporary aesthetic, *Sumptuosa 11* merges ornament and form: the triangular vessel is fused, kiln-formed and sand-carved from metallic and opaque glass, featuring lotus blossoms with whip-shaped stems fluidly trailing into the centre 'pond.' With the cool greens contrasting with the intense pink of the lotus blossoms, a reflective mood or atmosphere is created that one would like to revisit over time.

Jane A. Evan's *Afternoon Adagio* (1999) reveals a merging of art and process so beautifully developed that one doesn't think about the techniques used until curiosity about the creation of such luminosity sets in. *Afternoon Adagio* is a painting-like landscape that captures the viewer's attention immediately. The cool, shimmering water reflecting the surrounding foliage is developed through a complex combination of weaving, painting and embroidery. Evan's appreciation of landscape is uniquely expressed through the manipulation and unification of traditional and contemporary techniques. Evan's *Aird St. Squares* (1975), a traditionally based weaving of cotton and wool in contrasting black and red, shows an artist who was interested in developing the vocabulary that would allow her development beyond process into the expression of personal vision one sees in *Afternoon Adagio*.



ABOVE: LEE BRADY *Raku Wall Plate*, 1975
raku clay 42 x 36 x 8 cm
BELOW: LEE BRADY *Sumptuosa 11*, 1999
fused, kiln-formed, sand carved glass
12 x 52 x 52 cm



ABOVE: OLESIA KOWALSKY
Serving Set, 1979
porcelain



LEFT: OLESIA KOWALSKY
Floor Vessel, 1986
stoneware, wrought iron stand
69 x 34 x 34 cm



MEL BOLEN (right) Easter Basket, 1999, porcelain clay, stains, oxides
21 x 28 x 26 cm; (left) Tea Pot & Cup, 1975, clay, glaze, oxides
(pot) 20 x 23.5 x 16.5 cm

Fibre artist AnneMarie Buchmann Gerber's entries show an artist's journey from traditional natural toned stitchery, *A Tree* (1977), to an intriguing politically based narrative, *Oh Canada series No.2* (Abusers are everywhere).¹ The mixed media, 'painted tapestry'¹ successfully utilizes stitchery, newspaper, polymer gel and acrylic paint. The paint is often applied over the collage stitchery, revealing a need to diffuse and transform the stitchery into a link between visible process and the now historically based societal narrative.

Margot Lindsay's *Moss Phlox* (1997) is a complex landscape utilizing a variety of embroidery stitches to create texture and patterns; the colour expressively manipulated creating subtle tonal differences. This is a fully developed fibre image using embroidery, handmade paper and beads in a painterly manner; enjoyment of the process shown in the meticulous stitches reminiscent of the mark-making in a Van Gogh landscape. Although Lindsay's whimsical *View From My Window* (1976) is an enjoyable image, her current work reaches beyond the traditional.

Clay was Ruth Welsh's medium of choice in 1977. Her *Blowing Dandelion Fluff* uses a palette much like that of the painting *Sunflowers Cranberry Flats 11* (1995). The canvas is loosely painted, and both capture movement effectively, as the flowers move in the wind.

Working Man (1997), James Thornsbury's figurative clay sculpture, is a narrative to which one can immediately relate. Dirty jeans, leather apron and a worked-in T-shirt tell an open-ended story, possibly a different story for each viewer. This piece shows the development of the promise shown in Thornsbury's *Covered Jar* (1976) a Japanese influenced vessel showing an already experienced handling of clay and glazes.

Mel Bolen's *Teapot and Cup* (1975) has the '70s creative use of a leather handle, compensated by a circular grip to assist in pouring. The woven handle is repeated in clay in *Easter Basket* (1999), representing the texture of leather. Both works shows Bolen's expertise with clay.

¹ *The Craft Factor*, Fall 1992, volume 17/2, p. 4



LEFT: Top; MARGOT LINDSAY *Moss Phlox*, 1997 embroidery, handmade paper, beads 16 x 26 cm; Bottom; *View From My Window*, 1997 embroidery 29 x 22.5 cm

RIGHT: SANDRA LEDINGHAM Top, *Water Jug*, 1975, coil built, medium fired, clay & rope handle 34.5 x 37 x 24.5 cm
Bottom, *Place Setting*, 1998, low fire clay, glazes, wheel thrown



Charley Farrero's *Rooster Roster* (1999) suggests a playful narrative showing the experience of a professional. Farrero's more experimental *Untitled* raku vessel (1976) has a shape to which one can still relate.

Another ceramic piece, Sandra Ledingham's *Water Jug* (1975) is a clay vessel true to the '70s sense of aesthetics, utilizing rope as a functional handle. In contrast, her *Place Setting* (1998) shows the polish of experience. A masterfully constructed setting revealing a Japanese aesthetic, its black high gloss contrasting with natural terracotta will delight for years to come.

In contrast, the articulated shapes of Olesia Kowalsky's *Serving Sets* (1979) were glazed a deep burgundy colour. *Floor Vessel* (1986) was stunning in its simplicity, its wasp-nest texture exemplifying the organic. Freestanding stoneware in an iron stand, this vessel is reminiscent of early historical storage containers. The product of an experienced craftsman able to simplify and use natural tones to enhance this vessel could easily represent the ultimate expression searched for in those "brown" years of the 1970s.

COMMISSION



Birdsong Banner by Wendy Black-Kostuk

Birdsong Banner, 1999, 7 x 7 feet, flag nylon appliqued with a satin stitch. The banner was commissioned to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Lakeridge School in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. It is installed in the main lobby and is intended to reflect the school motto, "Souring To Success."

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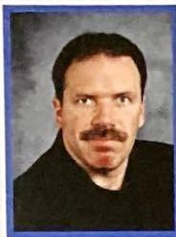
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