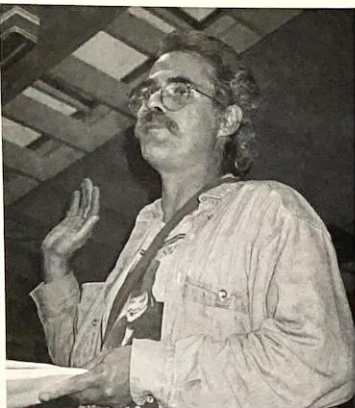


The
CRAFT
Factor

SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT COUNCIL



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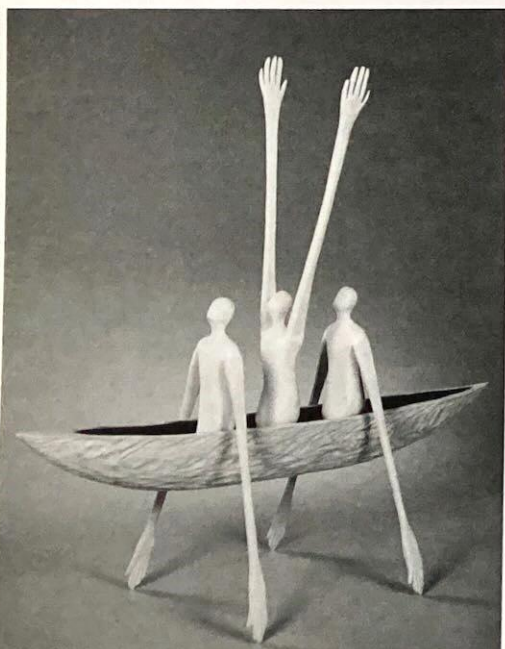
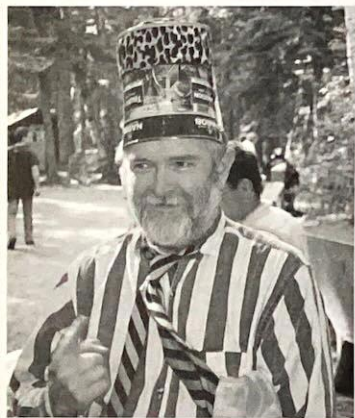


EMMA 2000 – COLLABORATION

SEE ARTICLE ON PAGE 4

1. Don Kondra
2. Bonnie Klein, Rachael Bliss,
Susan Hagan
3. Jean Peterson, Susie Winters
4. Anita Rocamora,
Niel Stoutenburg, Megan Broner
5. Moon Paddlers
Anita Rocamora, Jan Thorsteinson,
ash, pine, maple
6. Bobby Hansson (Dr. Bobo)
7. Jamie Russell

Photos 1, 2, 4, 6 & 7 by Wes Pound,
Conference Coordinator
Photo 3 by Tanya Norman



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THE CRAFT FACTOR

The Magazine of the
Saskatchewan Craft Council
VOL. 25.2 WINTER/SPRING 2001

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front cover: Unusual Fruits, Emma 2000 - Collaboration; Michael Hosaluk, Yuko Shimizu, Russell Baldon, Mark Stirri, Arthur Perlett, Anita Rocamora, Andy Buck, Clay Foster, David Sengel, Jamie Russell, Miranda Jones, John Dunnigan, Mark Orr, Sandra Flood, Mark Gardner, Jenna Goldberg, Susan Hagen; wood, paint. Photo by Dan Morse, USA

back cover: In The Eye Of The Storm, 2000, Lee Brady, glass, cast glass, fused, kiln formed, sandcarved 43 x 43 x 13 cm. Collection of Corinne and Gord McKay

SPECULATION

Laura Kinzel

by Dianne Douglas

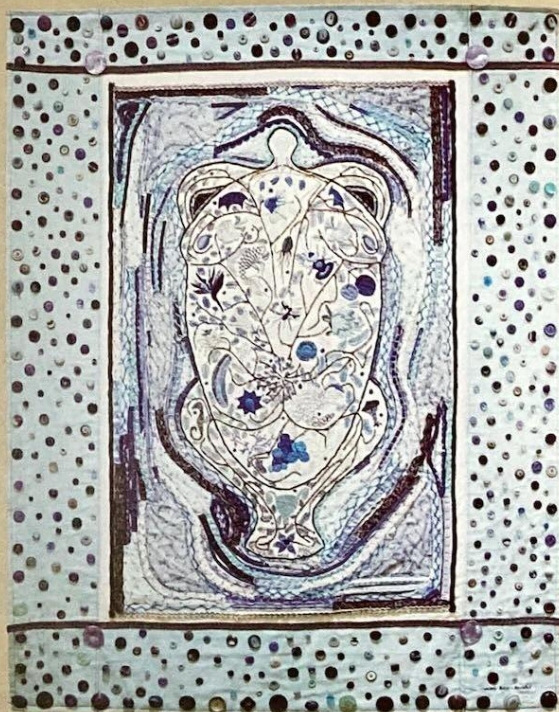
Embroidered samplers. Cozy crochet-covered objects. Cloth wall hangings, embellished applique, buttons and stitches. A fringed pillow. A handbag of quilted fabric. We are all familiar (we think) with these traditional examples of "women's work"—objects created to be decorative and comfortable.

The nineteen pieces in Laura Kinzel's show *Speculation* have as their starting point these familiar, cozy household crafts. But Kinzel takes these traditional forms and turns them into something Grandma could never have imagined.

The show represents Kinzel's creative response to her lengthy struggle with endometriosis and the challenges she has faced in her encounters with the medical system. The show's title is taken from an installation consisting of two hundred or so plastic speculums, each in its own pink or blue crocheted cover—Kinzel calls them her "bunnies." The subversive humour of this installation would resonate with any woman who has been exposed to these cold, hard objects during the course of a medical examination. There is also a sense of sadness or loss when these fluffy objects remind us of the children the artist will not have because of her disease.

Many of the pieces have this aspect of humour, often mixed with sorrow, frustration and downright anger. Whether the message is subtle, poignant or bluntly stated, these works pull at our emotions. The piece *Weighty Problems* poignantly expresses the feeling of being trapped in a situation in which the "patient" often has little control. In this piece, a self-portrait, a painted nude figure, gaunt, bent, and chained to a hospital building, struggles against the weight of the "system."

Describing her work, Kinzel says: "these fabric works documented my interaction with the western medical system and my feelings about having a body that I felt somehow had betrayed me. The common thread is control: different kinds of control, who wants control and why, who gets control and why, and how one gets that control." Originally a printmaker, Kinzel began working with fabric after allergies necessitated a change of medium. The work of cutting and sewing seems a kind of metaphor for the medical procedures done to her body. Fabric itself is a particularly evocative medium for expressing some of these feelings and experiences. In the show catalogue, Kinzel writes, "the fabric has a sense of history and experience, and is like a security blanket filled with memories."



far left: *The Healing Piece, Revisited* in 1999, assorted fabric, linen, buttons, embroidery cotton, polyester thread, ribbon, glass beads, yarn, lace, cotton backing, velcro. 139.7 x 109.2 cm,
left: *Technically Terminal But On My Own Terms*, 1999
Assembled height; 24" monitor size
17.8 x 40.7 x 38.1 cm
Embroidered sampler;
106.7 x 53.3 cm

Dealing as it does with an intensely personal experience, this show blurs the distinction between art and therapy. The work shows a clear chronological progression from the early pieces with their immediate emotional response to a health crisis, to the later pieces with their wryly humorous perspective on the overall experience and how the artist has been changed by it.

Many of the pieces include embroidered text, either as part of the main piece, or in the form of an accompanying sampler. The text is often quite literal, and the viewer can choose to either read the text or to respond to the visual experience of the work without reading the sampler. Kinzel calls this combination of visual art and verbal commentary her "visual journalizing."

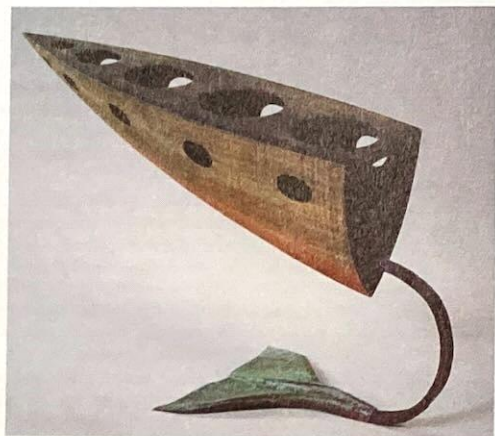
The piece *Technically Terminal But On My Own Terms* is a good example of this combination of the visual and the verbal. In this piece, Kinzel took her nonfunctional computer and crocheted a cover for it. Monitor and keyboard are covered with crimson yarn and joined with cables, also covered in the same red yarn. The keyboard, of course, has keys, but these ones are a wonderful variety of red buttons. In the accompanying sampler, Kinzel notes, "I gutted my computer and crocheted over it; my tribute to technology. The image on the monitor is based on my experience in a hospital sleep lab... my feeling that my human presence was secondary and even inconsequential to the high-tech equipment."

Speculation raised many issues. For example, how do we as individuals respond to our own illnesses? When medical treatment is increasingly technology-based, what place is there for the human spirit in it all? Kinzel's work reminds us of the fragility of our bodies, and our vulnerability. Is this therapy? Is it art? Looking once again at the crochet-covered speculum "bunnies," we are reminded that distinctions between concepts are not always rigidly defined. We as individuals can, like Kinzel, take our most deeply personal and painful experiences, and turn them into creative expressions that speak deeply of what it means to be human.

Dianne Douglas is a Saskatoon Fibre artist.

EMMA 2000 - COLLABORATION

by Sandra Flood



top Left: bowl, Greg Wilbur, Helen Shirk; copper, patina, colour pencils.

bottom left: *Whale of a Tale*, Graeme Priddle, Grant Kernan, Del Stubbs, Greg Wilbur, Louise Hibbert, John Todd; curly maple, steel, copper (patina), acrylic paint, modeling paint.

right: *Lamp*, Barry Robson, Alain Mailland, Lynne Hull, Dave Dunkley, Doug Corrigan, Heather Cline; birch, maple, aluminum, brass, copper.

As a craftsperson turned craft historian, who has not practiced for a number of years and who is not a woodworker, to be invited to the Emma 2000 - Collaboration as scholar-in-residence was both exciting and daunting. Daunting because I had read in past issues of *'The Craft Factor'* excellent and perceptive articles by woodworkers, who had participated in earlier Emmas, and I was not sure what I could add to these accounts. At the official opening on Wednesday evening, the agenda for the event was reiterated - just get down and make stuff; an all-participant's slide show revealed the wealth of talent present. As another first-time participant said, it was an intimidating situation. Surrounded by acknowledged master-craftspeople with known names and unknown, where everybody apparently knew everybody else and appeared to have projects already well in hand, I drifted around the site watching experts at work. I was a silent bystander in numerous planning discussions, got drawn into talk, questions and eventually making. I met many of an extraordinary group of people, listened to wide-ranging discussions, and I came away with new understandings of media, techniques and creative strategies, with a greater knowledge of and astonishment at the range of fine craft production.

The Emma 2000 - Collaboration is the latest in a developing series of educational events. These have arisen as the result of the sudden surge in woodturning and the vision and energy of a coterie of woodworkers supported by a craft council in an underpopulated and isolated Canadian province.

Craft media have always shown sudden surges of activity, batik in North America during the 1930s, knitting in Great Britain in the 1980s, and woodturning in Britain and North America, starting in the 1970s, in which Canadians such as Stephen Hogbin and Michael Hosaluk played a significant role. During a surge there will be an increase in practitioners, exposure, public interest, commissions and collecting by patrons and institutions, and there will be developments in techniques and marked changes in the aesthetic. The three-decade surge in woodturning (lathe-turned objects) shows no sign of slowing. Increasing participation in English-speaking countries and Europe, international conferences and a permanent collecting, archival, educational and exhibiting centre, the Wood Turning Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania are evidence of its importance. Emma 2000 participants Mike Scott (Wales), George Peterson (North Carolina), Rolly Munroe and Graeme Priddle (New Zealand) brought their experience from an eight-week intensive International Turning Exchange Residency at the Wood Turning Centre, as did Jack Larimore (Philadelphia) who had been a Visiting Scholar there. Immediately before going to Philadelphia, Graeme

Priddle had been to the International Woodturning Conference at Puy St. Martin, France, where there were 300 turners representing 21 countries. He talked about woodturning in New Zealand, where 12,000 of a four million population are now woodturners, a higher percentage than anywhere in the world. He said that coming to Emma in 1996 had changed his life and talked of his plans for a New Zealand Emma. Andre Martel, from St-Cesaire, Quebec also talked about the explosion of woodturners in France, where he, and later Hosaluk, had taught at the workshop established at Viens near Lyons, by Jean-Francois Escoulen, another Emma 2000 participant.

Activity in the wood workshop, the largest enclosed workshop on the Emma campus, demonstrated the technical limits to which turning is being pushed. "Pure theatre" said Jan Thorsteinson from Manitoba as forty inch diameter discs were contoured on the lathe, removed and sculpted or sliced into pieces and handed on to other makers. A multiple bowl turning, counterbalanced initially by a chunk of wood, whirled like a propeller but did not become airborne. Logs of green birch were nonchalantly turned into a series of smooth spheres or teased delicately into furry spires amid jokes and roars of laughter. Bowl-within-bowl, multiple-rims, off-centre turnings came off the lathe to be carved, cut and reassembled, added to an assemblage, painted, and transformed into sculpture, functional objects or furniture.

The vision, and the drive to see Emma 2000 to fruition, came from a trio of woodworkers, Michael Hosaluk with Don Kondra and Jamie Russell. They wanted to know what was going on 'out there'; Saskatchewan has offered nothing in the way of formal craft education beyond weaving and pottery, and has few historic or contemporary craft exhibitions from outside the province, let alone the country. The first turning symposium, and a furniture workshop, was organized in 1982. Workshops continued, annually bringing in noted Canadian and American makers until 1985, when the first of biennial, alternating furniture and woodturning, design and technique conferences took place. They were the only conferences of their kind in Canada.

The supporting organization was the Saskatchewan Craft Council, which annually from 1985-91 ran another vigorous program, Incite/Insite/Insight, also instigated by Hosaluk with Randy Woolsey. Each Incite brought in national, and occasionally international, craftspeople to run simultaneous, hands-on workshops in different media. Incite attracted Saskatchewan craftspeople in all media, at all levels of expertise, and introduced new media, new techniques, new ideas and the best of contemporary work. The aim was, as Randy Woolsey wrote,



top: Bench with Wheel, Yuko Shimizu, Andy Buck, John Dunnigan, Jack Larimore, Tom Ray, Jo Stone, John Jordan; you name it, it's in there.
 bottom: Bench, Dave Dunkley, Michael Cullen, J. Kelly Dunkley, Barbara Cullen, Heather Cline, Matthew Harding, Jean-Francois Escoulen, Tom Ray, poplar, fabric.

an attempt to confront and vitalize an increasingly moribund and conservative approach to craftmaking in this province: to offer an occasion for observing and participating in some not-so-usual projects; to encourage makers from many disciplines to actively share views and dreams; to stimulate the intellect while offering new skills to the hands. Ideally, it will help to trigger fresh insights about what we make, what we want to make and what we CAN make.

As Incite became more formalized, conceptual and eventually ended, the original ideas underwriting it temporally went underground to re-emerge at Emma Lake. Meanwhile the conferences catering to the woodworking community were moving in the opposite direction. Initially offering a structured program of slide lectures and demonstrations, they attracted furniture makers or turners at all levels of experience, and a few craftspeople outside the discipline. The line-up of internationally-known furniture makers and woodturners successfully attracted participants from across Canada and the USA, bypassing the problems of limited local interest and economic feasibility, and ensuring success. By the 1992 woodturning conference, Hosaluk had designed the workshops to encourage participation and collaboration. Alongside their usual workshop material, presenters began to explore some of the ideas discussed as part of the slide presentations. Mark Sfirri says that the 1992 conference provided probably the largest creative jolt he had experienced since leaving college, and that 'creative jolt' affected other presenters too. The 1994 conference, 'Contemporary Woodturning and Furniture Design', combined the two disciplines, retained some structured workshops but included more time for spontaneous collaborative projects. Hosaluk and Merryll Saylan supervised a surface design area with a lot of participant involvement. Sfirri and Del Stubbs ran a double session, 'Del and Mark Winging It', in which they launched into making something neither had made before, talking through the process to their audience.

These conferences were moving from the traditional, formal approach to a more anarchic event, driven in part by a maturing wood community. Saskatchewan woodworkers, if they cared to take advantage of the opportunities, had been exposed to over a decade of workshops and direct contact with the major names in the woodworking world. In turn, a number of Saskatchewan woodworkers had gained national and international reputations for their work and teaching. But with the closure of the Kelsey Campus cabinetry program that had hosted the

conferences, a new venue had to be found. Through contacts in the United States, Hosaluk was able to get funding which underwrote the move to the University of Saskatchewan's Kenderdine Campus at Emma Lake near Prince Albert National Park. The Emma Lake campus had the potential to offer everything on site - accommodation, food and unrestricted access to tools, workspace and materials. The new funding also underwrote costs for a number of participants.

The first Emma Lake event, in 1996, was called Conservation and Collaboration. There was no formal conference agenda, only four days in which to make things, collaboratively. There were no presenters, only participants. It was a gathering of local and international makers, some by invitation and some by choice, most having established reputations, predominantly woodworkers but including people working in metal and other media, including fine arts. Some demonstrating and teaching occurred by on-the-spot demand. Clearly, from the accounts of this event, it was a disconcerting, risky and ultimately liberating situation for many. It was definitely an event for mature makers.

In 1998 with the aptly named 'Breaking Barriers', personal, technical and artistic barriers continued to be broken as about 116 furniture makers, turners, carvers, smiths, sculptors, painters, photographers, paper makers and other craftspeople from seven countries set to work. Returning participants came prepared, moving more quickly into high gear and setting the pace for newcomers. The Emma 2000 - Collaboration was the largest of the Emma Lake events, with approximately 140 invited participants, of whom 40 were women. This made for a less male-orientated milieu, as more than one participant commented. Emma 2000 was also longer, with small groups starting to arrive on Monday, so that by the official opening on Wednesday evening some projects were well under way.

For participants these are not their normal working conditions. As far as craft studios go, the Emma Lake campus is still in a relatively undeveloped state and the logistics for the 'Emma' organizing team of borrowing and transporting enough machinery, and providing adequately serviced workspace was, and is, a major task. The concluding event, an auction of work made during the conference has, because of the calibre of the makers, attracted outside buyers, including collectors and gallery owners, and has raised increasingly significant sums of money. Some of this has gone towards the site improvements at Emma Lake, such as upgrading the wiring and laying a concrete pad for the metalshop. For Emma 2000, the main studio had had its roof repaired and power outlets and lights had been installed on the outside wall, particularly under an adjoining canvas-roofed area. The large open-sided forging, casting and metal

spinning shop had a new roof. Even so every workshop and canvas-roofed extension was used to its maximum. Workbenches and groups of chairs or even tree stumps along the pathways provided additional and quieter work areas.

By consensus, the new focus of energy at Emma 2000 was metal. The open-sided metal shop was a dragon's lair of fire and noise. Numerous small forges, various sizes and intensity of torches wielded in limited spaces, hammers ringing on anvils, triphammers, metal cutters, drills, grinders and a metal spinning lathe were all topped by the roar of the furnace for smelting bronze. In this crowded space a dense and intricate ballet of absorbed activity took place as makers went about their tasks. From the less crowded, quieter, canvas-roofed smithing area nearby, Greg Wilbur, a coppersmith from Oregon, noted the expansion of the metal working area. He suggested that this was only a beginning, that new parameters were being set and the jockeying for territory was a stimulant to creativity.

Surface decoration, mainly painting, formed another major area of activity, not only for trained painters but for others practising or acquiring skills. Where teaching was going on at Emma 2000, it tended to be one to one, a democratic learning situation of peers learning from peers, with a high level of interaction. Like other participants, Wilbur found himself doing his own work, 'commissions' for other projects and teaching. He commented on the constant exchange of ideas generated by what he ranks as a major educational event, the distinctive nature of the exchanges at Emma being visceral rather than intellectual.

The Emma Lake Collaborations have become a unique chance to have informal yet intensive interaction with peers in the strategies and techniques of making, for established artists to have close encounters with different areas of expertise and conceptualisation, to experience the "creative jolt" the spins work in new directions or confirms the direction taken. It is also, despite the intensity and hard work, a chance to have fun, to create and experiment without the professional constraints of reputation, income-generation and patron satisfaction. More than one participant commented that the Emma Lake Collaborations have a distinct and important creative ambience, different from but equal to the older, renowned, American establishments of Haystack and Arrowmont. A unique international venue for generating creative energy has come into being.

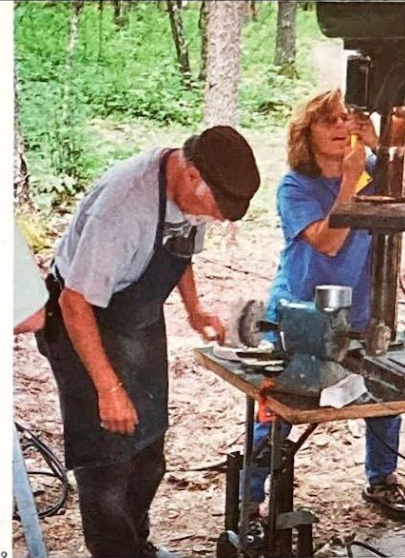
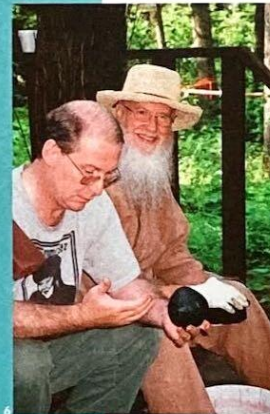
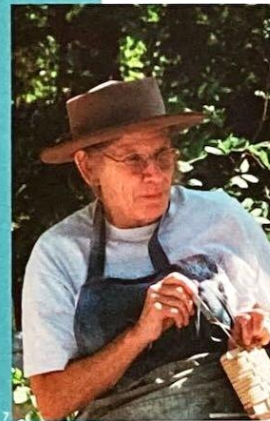
Randy Woolsey *'Inate/Insight '86'* TCF Spring 1986 p.7
 Mark Sfirri *"Collaboration in Contemporary Woodturning"*
 TCF Fall/Winter 1994 pp. 10-12

Sandra Flood has a Ph.D. in craft history and recently published her thesis *'Canadian Craft and Museum Practice 1900-1950'*, part of the *Canadian Museum of Civilization's Mercury series CCFCs 74*.



top: The Passion Prophet, Heather Cline, Matthew Harding, Michael Hosaluk, Megan Broner, Amanda Immelman, Paul Sasso; mixed media.

bottom: Bench, Dave Dunkley, Michael Cullen, Joel Dunkley, Barbara Cullen, Heather Cline, Matthew Harding, Jean-Francois Escoulen, Tom Ray; paplar, fabric.



1. Laurie Afseth
 2. Marilyn deSilva, Michael Hosaluk, Jean-Dominique Denis
 3. Before the Launch
 4. Marching Band, Mark Sfirri, David Sengel, John Jordan, Peter Adams, Bobby Hansson(Dr. Bob), Jean-Francois Escoulen
 5. Arthur Mason
 6. Andrew Curle with Clifton Monteith working with urushi (see below)
 7. Margold Cribb
 8. Robyn Horn
 9. Al Bakke, Cheryl Bakke-Martin
- Photos 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 & 9 by Wes Pound (Conference Coordinator)
 Photos 3, 6 & 7 by Tanya Norman

6. Almost unknown in the West, URUSHI (the sap from a variety of poison sumac), has been used in Asia for millenniums. The raw material can produce a poison ivy-like reaction in users but unlike poison ivy, continued exposure will build an immunity to the effects. The sap is used as a coating on numerous materials. The finished surface will be completely waterproof, resistant to acids and alkalis and can even function as an electrical insulator. Urushi requires humidity to cause the chemical process to cure—the rainy days at Emma were a great help. The normal month-long process was reduced to five days, with a few all nighters in order to finish for the auction the final day of the conference.

Andrew Curle

COVE(R)N

Susan Andrews Grace

by Sheila Robertson



Susan Andrews Grace, photo of her exhibition, COVE(R)N, June 16 - July 23, 2000, Saskatchewan Craft Gallery

Susan Andrews Grace, a former Saskatoonian transplanted to Las Vegas, is a feminist, a fabric artist, a poet, a woman with a crazy sense of humour, and a keen sense of social justice. She brought all these qualities to bear in *Cove(r)n*, her exhibition on view at The Craft Gallery, June 16-July 23, 2000.

This made for a fascinating show and one not without its problems. If anything, she invested so much of herself and her diverse interests in the exhibition that it ultimately lacked coherence. It succeeded on an intellectual basis but physically overwhelmed the intimate gallery space, intimidating some viewers. There was something unsettling about the fourteen amorphous figures Andrews Grace created for *Cove(r)n*, a pun referring both to gigantic coverings or tea cosies, which these figures are, and to the notion of a witches' coven.

The artist succeeded in creating an energy with these figures, but for some people, the energy was not one that invited further investigation. Part of the problem was the configuration, with the tightly

spaced figures forming an ellipse in the centre of the gallery. To view the work properly, one had to circle around along a narrow corridor, crossing in front of the slide images cast by wall-mounted projectors. I believe this made visitors feel intrusive.

It was impossible to view the works clearly: the gallery lights were dimmed for the show (in order to make the projected images visible) and the white shrouds, resembling people pretending to be ghosts at a Halloween party, were a bit spooky.

Each figure represented a female archetype, from flirt to healer to whore. "Maybe all of them are in some way or another me," the artist confessed. Each one had been given identifying details, but these were obscured by veiling.

Conceptually this was brilliant, since Andrews Grace was exploring the notion of how women and their accomplishments have been obscured by history, misinformation, fear and jealousy. It meant, though, that some of the connections she had made and the handcrafted elements decorating the figures,

the very things that made the work so appropriate for this gallery, were not clearly visible. The colours and textures of the individual figures were essentially neutralized by the white veils, just as women's achievements have sometimes been overshadowed.

One of the thrills of artmaking is in seeing an idea transformed into something tangible. This complicated installation piece was ten years in the making. Andrews Grace recalls the moment that the idea for it came to her. She was walking in downtown Saskatoon, having just picked up slides documenting a series of tea cosies she had made. At the time, she was doing a lot of batik.

That same day, she had attended a lecture at an arts conference. The speaker had made fun of those who would describe a tea cosy as "life-sized" when what was meant was "teapot-sized." This sparked for her the image of tea cosies as big as people. These entities could symbolize women, traditionally the tenders of the hearth and the pourers of tea.

The idea grew and grew, embracing sculpture, sewing, painting. Andrews Grace made the shells six feet tall and more than four feet wide, of cotton muslin and polyester batting. The covers were tufted with stitches known as witches' knots. She made armatures for the figures, and fashioned for each a "scape cape," a sort of bodice piece inspired by the experiences of different women. She was pleased when the first few figures she made in her studio took on a formidable air.

They reminded her of her grandmothers and an aunt, big women who didn't suffer fools and weren't especially fond of little girls. "I was a bit scared of them," the artist noted.

She proceeded to light the figures from within, and added the complementary slide images. Finally, with assistance from the Saskatchewan Arts Board, she worked with an engineer to devise a way to make three of the figures move. This was accomplished with the use of motors on timers. A computerized controller, the work of Kim Lux, resulted in a range of very subtle movements: a shift, a twitch, a rustle of skirts. *Coquette*, for instance, bobbed as though to lift a corner of her dress, showing off her taffeta slip.

As with Judy Chicago's masterpiece, *The Dinner Party*, these figures contained references to women of history. Rather than honouring particular women, Andrews Grace was citing particular types of women. *Burnt Woman* served as a tribute to the millions of women accused of witchcraft,

tortured and killed by fire. The figure also neatly related to the title of the installation. Her shroud was patched with burnt cloth, an effect resulting from considerable trial and error on the artist's part. "I had to experiment with ways of stabilizing burnt cloth, because it turns to ash," she said. In a poignant touch, the burns were covered with gauze bandages, as though in a revisionist's effort to promote healing and create a happy ending. As if to reinforce this, the image cast on *Burnt Woman* was of a ginger flower. Bright red, the colour of blood—and flames—it's also a glamorous, sexy, feminine image.

Among the wrenching elements in this exhibition were the references to abused women, particularly in the projected images from an Andrews Grace series called *Crucified Bags*. Moreover, her *Amazon* figure, in keeping with the myth of the female warriors who cut off their own breasts, bore a long, red wound on her chest.

Perhaps the *Poet* figure approached most closely the persona of the artist herself. Along with a scarf, the edge of which was hemstitched by hand, she wore a garland of snippets of poetry written by Andrews Grace, who described them as "failed poems."

The character of the *Nun* is an intriguing archetype: think of Chaucer's version in *The Canterbury Tales*. Andrews Grace based her figure of a nun on her experiences at a Catholic elementary school in Saskatoon. The beautiful shibori edging of the vestment (accomplished with indigo dye and the use of dental floss as a wax resist) was inspired by the artist's memories of the nuns' garments.

Projected on the figure's back was a depiction of the *Virgin Mary*. Quite literally, the *Nun* "has Mary on her back," said Andrews Grace. Two other figures hovered outside the gathering. One was the *Fool*, a quilted shell lying in a heap with no skeletal structure. Nestled in its folds was a bundle on a poplar stick, reminiscent of a hobo's belongings or an aboriginal healer's medicine bag.

Finally there was the *Angel*, a reference to Virginia Woolf's *Angel of the House*, the taken-for-granted female presence who quietly does all the work. The installation's *Angel* dangled near the ceiling in a dark corner. It was pure white, without ornamentation or veils. There was a sense, with this exhibition, that Andrews Grace was juggling too many ideas, too many layers of meaning. Nevertheless, it was interesting to see how far she could travel, starting with something as small and domestic as the humble tea cosy.

Sheila Robertson is a Saskatoon writer and editor.

WINTERGREEN

25th Annual Craft Market by Greg Beatty

Last November 24-26, 2000, Wintergreen celebrated its 25th anniversary. To mark the occasion, the Saskatchewan Craft Council (SCC) held a special opening ceremony. In attendance were Lieutenant-Governor Dr. Lynda Haverstock (who was presented with a ceramic floral piece by Emma Radfelder); Jack Hillson, Minister of Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing; and Regina Deputy Mayor Vic MacDougal. Adding to the festive atmosphere in the Sportplex was a Wintergreen Gate, which the SCC commissioned from Michael Jozsa and Leslie Charlton; and the inaugural exhibition of *The Face of Craft*, which contained portrait masks in a variety of media by thirty-one SCC members.

Consistent with its pioneer past, Saskatchewan has a strong craft tradition. But it was only with the emergence of professionally trained potters, weavers and other artisans in the late 1960s that people began to look beyond church bazaars and summer fairs for sales opportunities. "One catalyst for Wintergreen was the sales that were held at [the University of Regina] Extension [Department]," said Zack Dietrich. "They were crazy. We would have a line-up of one or two hundred people before the doors opened."

"Prior to then, sales were largely via word-of-mouth," Donovan Chester added. "No one had his own studio then. If people knew you, they'd call you up. Or they'd go looking for you down at Extension."

Another catalyst, said Radfelder, was the Battleford Handcraft Festival. It was established in 1974 with the assistance of the provincial Department of Industry and Commerce. That year, 30 exhibitors attracted a crowd of three thousand. "I remember a bunch of us talking and wondering why there wasn't a similar sale in Regina," she said.

A juried sale called Regina Crafts 77 was held December 9-10, 1977 in the Prairie Building on the Exhibition Grounds. It was organized by Pam Perry, Kurt Wagner and Joan McNeil with financial support from Industry and Commerce and the guidance of Jenny Hambridge from that department. Industry and Commerce's involvement suggests there was recognition early on of the economic impact craftpersons have through the value-added nature of their work with clay, wood, glass and other materials. The inaugural sale, recalled Mel Bolen, "was held right after Agribition, and they hadn't cleaned the barns very well. It was incredibly cold. The whole place smelled of disinfectant so that your eyes watered. There were cement floors. No lights. And there wasn't anybody there."

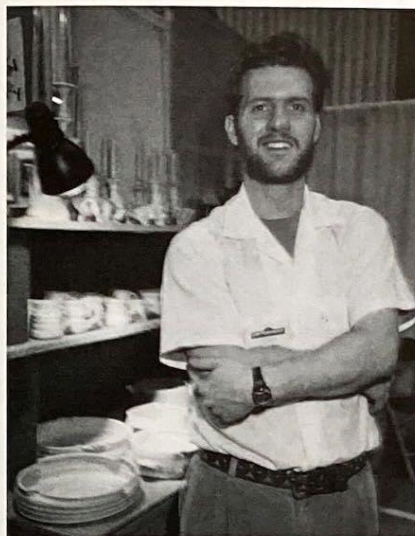


Indeed, revenue (including booth rentals, door admissions, a five-percent commission on sales to a maximum of \$25 and a government grant) totalled only \$1941.54, while expenditures (primarily building rental, jurors fees, entertainment and advertising) were \$2573.32, a net loss of \$631.78. McNeil and her partners then recommended that the organizing committee be expanded to include non-SCC members with business expertise, that a more prestigious venue be sought, that there be better advance publicity, and that commission fees not be capped at \$25.

Wintergreen 78 was held December 8-9 at the Jubilee Theatre in the Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts. Joan Delage coined the festival's name and McNeil designed the first poster. A December 11 Regina Leader-Post report noted that the event included entertainment by puppeteers, magicians, and bluegrass and Elizabethan singers. Revenue was \$4651.82, while expenditures were \$4609.32, resulting in a modest \$42.40 profit. Approximately 2400 people attended, and total sales were \$27,266.40.

In 1979, attendance increased to 3400 but sales increased only marginally to \$30,300. Each participant designed a special Christmas tree ornament which was sold, with the proceeds used to send delegates to the World Craft Council conference in Vienna the following July.

In 1980 the SCC hired a full-time co-ordinator to prepare and promote the sale. To keep the focus on the artisans, it also decided to dispense with festival entertainment. The SCC had also considered handing over responsibility for Wintergreen to another sponsor



after the loss of Industry and Commerce support in 1979. June Jacobs attributed the department's decision to its perception of the festivals as being more "cultural fairs" than "industrial events." "When we took [Wintergreen] on," Jacobs said, "we wanted to make it a viable sale and it's that now." But the general membership, feeling the festival gave the SCC a positive image, directed the council to keep it. Jacobs also addressed the controversy surrounding the jury system. When juries were first introduced, there was some opposition, especially from those who were rejected. One point of contention was the vagueness of the requirement that the work be "original". In 1992 with the advent of jury sessions, SCC marketing members were required to attend to have their work peer-evaluated. Formal guidelines were also developed by the SCC specifying that the maker should understand the properties and limitations of the materials used and maintain hands-on supervision over each aspect of the production process.

"When the jury sessions began," said current SCC marketing co-ordinator Chris Jones, "there was a grandfather clause so that if you had been involved in Wintergreen previously you were accepted. Once you receive jury approval, you can retain your status by attending one craft market every two years. The standards are quite strict and a lot of people don't qualify." In addition to the juries, Jones noted, the SCC employs monitors to visit each booth prior to Wintergreen opening to ensure that exhibitors are marketing only those product lines that they have been juried on. If inappropriate items are discovered, they are removed.



As Wintergreen continued to grow, it expanded beyond the Jubilee Theatre to include Hanbridge Hall. It was also decided to add an extra day to give people a greater opportunity to attend. In 1992, an estimated 10,000 shoppers spent \$250,000. One bugaboo for Bolen was the long ramp at the Centre of the Arts, that led down to the basement. "It was the worst unload/load in the world. It was slippery and full of ice. People were always getting stuck when jockeying for position." Other exhibitors with lightweight goods would park them at the top and that blocked the entrance for everyone else.

"I don't want to dwell on horror stories," Chester laughed, "but I remember one time when it was in Jubilee, we all came down on the freight elevator and said, 'Oh, this is really nice.' Well, the symphony played that night, and they wouldn't let us use the elevator. I was the second last to leave. I thought I was having a heart attack hauling all my stuff up two flights of stairs. And when I left, all I could hear was this monotonous swearing. There was one guy who'd brought in this beautiful display in sections on the elevator. In order to get it up the stairs he had to unbolt every bolt."

In 1994, Wintergreen moved to the Sportplex. "We need to accommodate all the people who applied," said coordinator Lois Kurp in a Leader-Post interview. With 90 artisans, the 1994 edition of Wintergreen was the biggest in its eighteen year history. The opportunity to "neighbour" with Agribition at the nearby Exhibition Grounds was also seen as a plus by Kurp.

As befits Saskatchewan's reputation for excellence in clay, potters have been well represented at Wintergreen. But there is a greater diversity of media now. This year, there were booths selling origami, intarsia, birchbark roses, and soap. This is partly attributable to the increase in SCC-recognized craft categories. "It's kind of like the Olympics now," Bolen observed dryly.

opposite page: Sandra Grismer (SCC Director of Operations) presenting Lieutenant Governor, Dr. Lynda Haverstock with a porcelain sculpture by Emma Radfelder.

above Left: Jeffrey Taylor
right: Bill Schmidt



Mel Bolen

Since Wintergreen's debut, craft production has become an integral component of the Saskatchewan economy. Commercial outlets such as the MacKenzie Gift Shop and Traditions Handcraft Gallery are now more common. Artisans are also more entrepreneurially minded. Many host regular studio sales and have promotional websites. To a certain extent, this has freed them from their dependence on the annual sales circuit that, in addition to Wintergreen and Battleford, once included Park Art (Moose Jaw), Bazaar (Regina), Sunflower (Yorkton), Evergreen (Prince Albert) and Sundog (Saskatoon). Nonetheless, craftpersons remain enthusiastic about Wintergreen. "It's good to have things on display at galleries and gift shops year-round," said Barbara McConnell, who was participating in her third Wintergreen. "It helps promote name recognition. But one of the hardest things for emerging craftspeople is to attract a large audience." Wintergreen provides an audience of thousands. Sometimes the face-to-face contact that occurs can lead to an artisan/collector relationship or independent commissions.

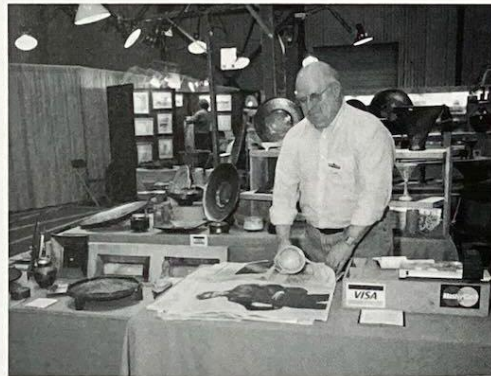
Spacious booths permit artisans to display their full product line. Wintergreen provides an opportunity for customers to meet the craftpersons. "The only venue that's better is your own studio," said Bolen. "You're standing in front of your booth. They get an idea of what you're like. Then there's a connection with the piece. They've got a story locked in, rather than saying they bought it at a shop somewhere."

Artisans enjoy this interaction as well. Although there are occasional irritants like "swatch people" who come equipped with a fabric strip from home to colour-code their purchases, inveterate hagglers and bargain hunters who surface in Wintergreen's final hours. As well, while consumers profess to value craft for its uniqueness in an increasingly homogenized, mass-produced world (what McConnell described as "the mystique of the crafter"), there is still considerable price resistance. "It breaks my heart," said potter Jeffrey Taylor, who was attending his second Wintergreen, "when they look at my

stuff, then compare it to something they've seen at Wal-Mart. Ninety percent of the time I won't get that sale because they're looking at price as the ultimate [determinant of value]." For people without an art/craft background, demonstrations (a fixture since Wintergreen's move to the Sportplex) are likely the best way to promote understanding of the labour and skill that craftpersons invest in their practice. "If all they see is the finished product," noted Taylor, "then there's no basis for a value judgment."

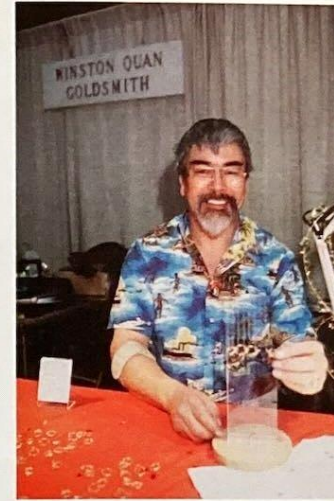
From a personal perspective, Wintergreen also offers craftpersons the opportunity to socialize with each other. While a strong sense of community exists in craft, the labour-intensive nature of most disciplines demands that people spend long hours in their studios. In addition, many craftpersons live in isolated rural areas. Thus, it's difficult to visit one's contemporaries unless one is prepared to travel long distances. Wintergreen permits craftpersons to combine business with pleasure. Radfelder recalled one sale that was attended by an acquaintance who was a law enforcement officer. "He came down in his civvies," she chuckled. "At that time, there was a lot of wacky-tobaccky going around. And everybody had a mickey under the table. He came up to me and said, 'Emma! What kind of an outfit are you involved with?' Dumb me, I never even thought of him being a cop, so I asked, 'Why?' 'Well, just one sniff knocks you out. I could get a promotion if I reported this.' I said, 'Mister, if you did, you'd never walk again!'"

Wintergreen also plays a valuable role in professional development, especially for emerging craftpersons. "It's good to get around and see everybody," said Taylor. "I don't have the opportunity to go to every potter's studio. But I can see what they've been doing. And I do play off their ideas, not just in clay, but all the different media."



Donovan Chester

McConnell agreed that exposure to the work of her fellow artisans has inspired her. Not only does she enjoy watching the demonstrations, she also likes to tour the other booths. "You have to be careful about not taking someone else's idea. But in terms of sharing different ideas [concerning technique and media], there's usually discussion... it's an opportunity to step outside your own little group and meet people from all over."



Winston Quan

People have begun to rediscover the attraction of purchasing handcrafted items. That was certainly the case with two young women I met at Wintergreen. "They're unique gifts," said Leah. "They're not something that everyone's going to have ... when I'm buying for family and friends, I like to come here."

"I like the way the hand-made things look," added Michelle. "They look a lot nicer usually."

That's Donovan Chester's perception as well. "We're into the second generation. People tell me that they've grown up with craft. Now they have their own house, and the money to furnish it. And they're buying craft." Also helping to raise the profile of craft across Canada is the

Saidye Bronfman Award, for which Saskatchewan woodworker Michael Hosaluk was a finalist this year.

For Valerie Couton, the significance of Wintergreen is even greater. Originally from France, she moved to Regina eight years ago. "I haven't missed one yet," she said. "It's like an art gallery. I buy presents for relatives and friends back home. It's not like you're purchasing generic gifts that are in every store in the world. The crafts on display at Wintergreen are a reflection of Saskatchewan's identity."

For Wintergreen 2000, the SCC's Jones reported, paid attendance was 6027 with returnees bumping that figure to 8582. Total revenue at the seventy-eight SCC booths was \$211,800, which translated into an average sale per booth of \$2700.

One area of concern, though, is the lack of new artisans. For Chester and Bolen, the University of Regina Extension program was a big inducement for people to pursue a clay career—often, after having become disenchanted with their original career choice. Now, it's gone, and high school art programs have also been scaled back. Equally problematic for Dietrich is the fact that young people, "don't see craft as a viable lifestyle. The message they receive from society is that if you want a good job with lots of money you have to go into technology. So when we die off there might not be anyone left."

And while the senior artisans I spoke to all appreciated the buoyant craft market in recent years, and felt they were at their peak in terms of technical expertise, they did not foresee any aggressive expansion on their part. "My intention when I got out of art school was to make a living making pots," said Bolen. "I've done that for twenty-five years, and I'm happy. So that's mission accomplished. But there's also a quality of life, and physical burnout. We've all suffered from tendinitis. Or a bad back. You have to take time for yourself. For R and R. For inspiration and creativity."



Wintergreen 2000 market at the Regina Sportplex (63,000 sq. feet)

One idea Bolen would like to see revived is the old-fashioned notion of the benefactor. "I'd like to find five people who would give me \$2000 a year to cover the basics like utilities, and I'd give them the choice of my best pieces." This would require a change in the provincial mindset; in Japan craftpersons are revered. Of course, Japanese artisans can trace their lineage back millennia, while Saskatchewan's history, as a settled province, is more modest. "Still," Bolen conceded, "when you consider just how many people we do have here who are surviving, raising families, building studios and showing nationally and internationally—I think it's phenomenal!" And to the extent that Wintergreen has contributed to the viability of craft in Saskatchewan, the many SCC-affiliated people who have participated in its operation over the last twenty-five years deserve a tremendous vote of thanks.

Greg Beatty is a writer from Regina, Saskatchewan. Photographs by Charles Melnick



top: Shopper with Karen Holden of North Star Pottery
centre: Dr. Lynda M. Haverstock, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, Emma Radfelder
bottom: Anita Rocamora



Kohkominahkêsîs Grandmother Spider by Alfred Young Man, Ph.D.

Legend has it that Spider Woman, one of the Holy People of the Navajo, taught them how to weave. She created the first weaving at the base of Spider Rock in Arizona, a huge monolith of a rock, today made famous by the many car and other advertisements that were filmed and photographed on its narrow flat top and then flashed around the world via television and the printed press. The magnificent rock itself, is located deep within the narrow confines of Canyon De Chelly on the Navajo Reservation and the Navajo themselves seem to have been able to wrestle a fairly lucrative movie location shooting scheme from the mass media. Nevertheless, that "pillar of the ages" still retains its sacred meaning to the Navajo and other Indians on the continent today. Anthony Berland writes this, regarding the meaning and importance of weaving, to the Diné,

In a religious sense, it was Spider Woman, working through the individual weaver, who directed the growth of the blanket, and baby girls were prepared in a special ritual for their future as weavers. In Navajo legend it is said: 'When a baby girl is born to your tribe you shall go and find a spider web which is woven at the mouth of some hole; you must take it and rub it on the baby's hand and arm. Thus, when she grows up she will weave, and her fingers and arms will not tire from the weaving.'

Kohkominahkêsîs is Grandmother Spider in Cree, so the connection is there. The nine artists and artisans from Saskatchewan and Manitoba in this exhibition maintain a strong cultural and historical tie with that legendary figure, Grandmother Spider and the Navajo story, both of which connect the spiritual world with the material. There is one strand of First Nations philosophy that teaches that all Native peoples in this hemisphere were at one time created as one family long ago, had originated in one place and at one time and then over a long period of time migrated to their present locations on this continent but always maintaining their legends and cultures, adapting to new environments, climate changes and locales along the way, subtly transforming themselves as they went. And as vast spans of geological time passed, the natural environment subtly changed Native people into the distinct Nations we know today, each with their own unique language, culture, and history to match. It is this fact, of cultural and biological change over time, that paradoxically and perhaps ironically, connects First Nations people and their art with that art of the past so strongly, this more so than anything else.

1. Marcia Chickness, Clutch Purse, glass beads, (Czech 2 & 3 cut), canvas, velcro, synthetic cloth. 19 x 36 cm. 1995
2. Sarlford Strongarm, Moosehair Head Roach, dyed moose hair, white deer tail hair, red centre piece. 45 x 23 x 15 cm. 2000
3. James Kyle, Boys Traditional Dress Regalia, cotton, broadcloth, ribbon, textile paint. 1994
4. Lightening Spirits, Chicken Dancer, plaster, acrylic paints, shellac, leather, cloth, ribbon, fringe, bells, feathers. 402 x 203 x 10 cm. 1999

The artworks in this show include those of the late Maurice Royal from the Whitecap Dakota Nation, *Willow Baskets* (fig. 11), Sanford Strongarm from Kawakatoose Cree Nation, *Dancing Roach* (fig. 2), James Kyle of Cree/Irish ancestry of Saskatoon, *Traditional Dance Clothing* (fig. 3), Marge Reynolds of the English River Dene Nation, *Jingle Dress* (fig. 7), Emelia Villebrun of Métis lineage living in Saskatoon, *Evening Wear* (fig. 8), the Lighting Spirits from the Mistawasis Cree Nation, are three generations of the Duquette family who are teaching their children the culture and history of their family and Nation, *Chicken Dancer* (fig. 4), Stewart Francois from Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation in Manitoba, *Shield* (fig. 5), and Marcia Chickena from Poundmaker Cree Nation, *Clutch Purse* (fig. 1).

In an educational package created for the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils, Audrey Dreavers wrote:

According to the wisdom of Creator, there are foundations for all traditional teachings regarding how things are gathered, handled and used. These are our Spirit Laws, and they govern how First Nation people are to conduct themselves and show respect and honor for all living things. The Spirit Laws are contained in the stories and teachings that are passed to each generation.

Audrey holds these teachings to be of the highest order, so as curator of this exhibition and as protocol instructs, she arranged a sacred ceremony to take place before the show was installed at the Craft Council Gallery. In this way she appropriately respected the primordial connection of those objects created in ancient times with the contemporary, the former represented here by the twine-plaited cotton shirt from Arizona and the closed loop weave bag from Arkansas (fig. 9). Other archeological objects in the show date anywhere from a relatively late date of AD 1600 to a very early duck decoy (fig. 10) dated AD 200 from Nevada. No objects date from the age of the legend itself, which must be thousands of years old, but Audrey's point (if "making a point" is the point of this show which it probably is not) is well made nevertheless. Audrey found it imperative to make this necessary connection, this spiritual and intellectual link, between the ancestral and the contemporary thus completing the circle with Mother Earth as she exists today and as she existed ages ago. How many non Native curators would have thought... no, could have thought, of doing such a thing? And if they had

thought of it, could they have legitimately pulled it off? Probably not... and probably very few to none would have thought of doing things this way anyway. So, happily this special exhibition brings back to First Nations people the reality of who we are as First People on this continent, and it connects us with those spirits who inhabited the sacred lands of our ancient ancestors.

Upon entering the Gallery, I was struck by the distance, not only in miles and time, but in space and epistemology, between the contemporary and the ancient material, and yet one could not really exist without the other and therein lies their true meaning. Weaving, we are told by legend, was begun in this hemisphere as an art form by instructions from the Spirit World. We see this message in Navajo legend and it is told in Cree and many other Indian legends, always being related to the spider web; weaving was not something that was merely invented by primitive humans because they were cold and needed to keep warm. Therefore, all the knowledge used by prehistoric artists to create the ancient works is in some sense sacred. Indeed, as Native philosophers tell us, human beings are the least well equipped creatures on this planet when it comes to the matter of survival. Surely, they say, the guidance of the Creator and those beings in the Spirit World is essential. However, to acquire survival instructions one had to be humble because humility then, is the only way to gain the attention of those powers who retain the ultimate knowledge and power of survival. Society, culture, language, music, medicine, mathematics, even government could not exist without this spiritual connection. These things are considered sacred because, they too, came to Native people via the spirit world. Humans can only gain so much practical and cultural knowledge through trial and error, such as through reductionism in science. Ultimately men and women must appeal to the superior spiritual knowledge of the Creator in order to continue living in a good way and this is a time-honoured tradition of Native peoples everywhere. It is this supreme truth which surfaces most profoundly in *Kohkomunabkésis* and one which Audrey brings forth in such grand style for the public to contemplate. At the same time it is an idea that is so subtle and culturally explicit, so understated here, that unless people are almost specifically looking for the question the answer may simply pass them by.

background: Textile fragments, Spiro Mound, LeFlore County, Oklahoma; rabbit fur and dyed canebrake fibre. Ca. AD 1400-1600
 opposite page: 5. Stewart Francois, *Two Spirits*, Shield, elk hide, metal hoop, cloth, acrylic paints, 23 x 10 cm.
 6. Audrey Dreaver, *Shifu Coat*, advertising flyers, linen (warp) cotton, size small, 1989.
 7. Marge Reynolds, *Untitled*, Women's Jingle Dress, 100% polyester, metal cones, ribbon, fringe, metal belt, velcro. Size 12, 1998.
 8. Emilia Villebrun, *Black Velvet Jacket with Beaded Flowers & Burgundy Velvet Skirt*, velvet, beads, size 10, 2000.



In personal correspondence Audrey wrote of the incredible humbleness shown by Maurice Royal (1926 - April 2000):

Maurice Royal was a red willow basket maker who lived on the Whitecap Dakota reserve in Saskatchewan. Maurice was a very kind and humble man. He made his baskets in a little shack that was built beside his house at Whitecap. On one of my visits, he told me about how he learned willow basket weaving from his grandmother when he was a small boy. He would go with her into the bush to help her gather the willow, and carry it back for her. When he was older, he was sent to residential school. By the time he left the residential school most of his Dakota ways were gone; all he really remembered was the basket weaving his grandmother taught him. He said that as a young man, when he needed something to make his life better for himself and his family, he turned back to the baskets his grandmother taught him, and it helped him. Over the years, Maurice taught a lot of workshops to anyone who wanted to learn, and was always willing to do a demonstration for people. He was a very patient teacher, and through the workshops Maurice helped a lot of First Nations people to feel better about who they were and what they could do. The gifts that he gave to all those he taught, how he helped them feel good about themselves through the teachings of an old tradition show that the wisdom and lessons of Grandmother Spider, and the power they carry, are still being honored today.

This show is all about spirituality, humility, our connectedness with the Earth Mother, and the links with the past which still affect artists and artisans today and what that knowledge can give to the present in both urban and rural settings. There are many beautiful objects here, those made for practical uses as well as those made for the pure joy of creation, in both periods of time. One of the most outstanding contemporary artworks is the re-cycled paper coat "of many colours" woven by Audrey Dreaver herself. Although she felt that I should not give her work special treatment I feel, nevertheless, that her *Shifu Coat* deserves mention (fig. 6) especially since it is such an excellent example of Native art writ large. Audrey has this to say about how she constructed that beautiful piece of art and why:

I think it's important that people know it is made of advertising flyers (whether you point out Zellers and Canadian Tire doesn't matter). To me, mentioning what they are made from is like a monument to our beautiful oxygen-giving ecologically-supportive vital-to-our-existence relatives that were unashamedly sacrificed for the creation of a crappy sub-standard useless material that does nothing more than pollute the earth on several levels.

In this critic's mind Audrey's work ranks right up there with Jana Sterbak's "Meat Dress" (so dubbed by the press) that created such a stir in the early nineties at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. In doing her research for her artwork and in deciding which objects to choose for the exhibition, Audrey found (as an accomplished artist and weaver would invariably do) that the ancient objects had as much, if not more knowledge incorporated into them than anything being created today. Clearly she was inspired by what she found. The unfortunate categorizing of this ancient art and skill as the work of mere "primitives" (which modern science is prone to do) has not taken all this specialized knowledge into account. The archeological artifacts on display were all chosen specifically for the superior techniques which were evident in their creation in terms of mathematical knowledge,



9. Closed-loop weave bag containing a ball of bark fibre strips for weaving. Allred Bluff Rockshelter, Larue, Benton County, Arkansas. Length 8.75 cm. ca AD 700-1000. Photo courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institute



10. Painted and feathered tule rush duck decoy and plain duck decoy, Lovelock cave, Humboldt County, Nevada. Lengths 26.5 cm and 27 cm. Ca. AD 200. Photo by David Heald. Photo courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution 13.4512D and 13.4513



11. Maurice Royal, Baskets, willow, handwoven

geology, color harmony and theory, balance in design, botany, knowledge of advanced tapestry and weaving techniques and an understanding of the properties of natural material and dye mordants. There are styles of weaving in this selection of objects which, according to Audrey, would be difficult for any accomplished weaver to duplicate today.

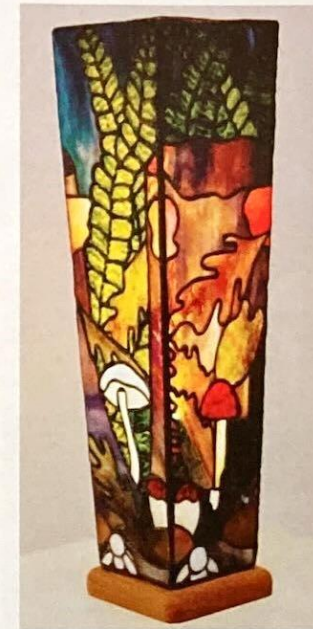
So, in the end what have we learned from this exhibition? I believe that we have learned that spirituality can exist among First Nations people anywhere and at any point in time in North America, in contemporary times as well as in ancient times and that without spiritual knowledge, we as human beings are virtually directionless. We also know, and it's about time that we do, that knowledge can be transfigured and transferred or carried forward by societies not necessarily physically connected, through great spans of time simply by studying something as unassuming as weaving and storytelling or something as prosaic as the persistence of the will to survive and that is about as profound as you can get in art.

Alfred Young Man, Ph.D. is Chair of the Native American Studies Department and a Full Professor at the University of Lethbridge

THROUGH A GLASS BRIGHTLY

Saskatoon Glassworkers' Guild

by Steven Ross Smith



Glass transforms light while retaining its purity, and that is why Gary Burkholder applies the words "magical, and mystical" to glass art. In glass we can see light captured, radiant. In medieval times, artisans working with glass and other materials, making works for function, ceremony or religious ritual, formed material-specific guilds—associations where skills, techniques, and information could be shared, and social contact was available. The Saskatoon Glassworkers' Guild, established in 1987, demonstrates the traditional traits of a such a guild.

It was early in the '80s that a group of glass working novices, hobbyists and craftspeople were meeting informally in Saskatoon. Lee Brady, who had been working with glass since 1979, and others saw that a formal organization could benefit them and their colleagues. They wanted to stimulate the creation of original works, and felt that organized forums for learning were essential. The Saskatoon Glassworkers' Guild was formed. Exactly who was there in 1987 seems lost in the smoke of many kiln firings, but the group did include Brady, Brenda Barnes, and Myrna Tyson. Within a year, Lynne Bowland and Gary Burkholder had joined the group. As a non-

profit artistic organization, the Guild was eventually able to access funds from Saskatchewan Craft Council, to help underwrite costs for visiting artists, and to start a member newsletter, Glass Work, which Gary now edits; Lee is the Education Committee Co-ordinator. Over the last ten years, a core of ten to fifteen people has given strength to the organization whose membership has stabilized at around fifty, and the membership spans all levels of glass craft from novice to professional.

The Guild has defined a two-fold purpose: to educate the membership about glass technique; and to educate the public about glass art. Both purposes are being realized.

Beginning in 1990, with visiting artists like Robert Jekyll, an internationally known stained glass window maker from Toronto, Guild members encountered new ideas and techniques. Later, Oregon artist Peter McGrain did a workshop on design and sand-blasting (abrasive glass etching), and Sarah Hall, a church window artist from Toronto, demonstrated metal leafing and reverse painting. These workshops and demonstrations, along with mentorships, acted as catalysts to artistic growth.

left: D. Lynne Bowland, *Fish Dreaming*, recycled copper pipe, glass, pencil crayon, copper channel, solder, lead; sandblasting, 74 x 85 x 23 cm.
right: Sarah Caldwell, *Forest Fungi (children of darkness)*, glass, copper foil, 45 x 13 x 13 cm.



top: Gary Burkholder, *Warrior Spirit*, copper foil, paint, wire, 55 x 98 cm
 bottom: Bob Whittaker, *Pride and Joy*, glass, lead, sandblasting, lead overlay, 58.5 x 76.2 cm
 right top: Joan Hiebert, *Frozen In Time*, sand cast heads in birch, molds converted to plaster positive mold then cast in sand, 32 x 16 x 14 cm.
 right bottom: Al Hiebert, *Jason, Bree, Todd and Lorna*, sand cast and patina glass heads mounted on birch 33 x 84 x 5 cm.

Saskatchewan's resources have not been overlooked. There is, for example, an annual bus field trip to Cupar, to the studio of glassblower, Jacqueline Bering, well-known for her glass wheatfield. With such field trips and workshops, which may occur two or three times a year, members are encouraged to experiment in designs and methods new to them. Some Saskatchewan glass artists are now creating work of high technical and artistic merit. Gary Burkholder, travelled widely, looking for local glass art. He observes that, "we have glass artists as fine as can be found anywhere in North America, at least those creating work in the \$200 to \$1000 range." He also says: "I wouldn't be as developed as I am, without my association with the Guild. I now have more techniques than I have time to utilize in my glass work."

Guild members show a great range of techniques and interests. These include leaded and foiled stained glass, glassblowing, etching and sandblasting, painting, fusing, lampwork, beadwork, and lamination in bowls, screens, sculptures, plates, figures, jewelry, Tiffany lamps, window embellishments, and more.

Quality work can only generate so much satisfaction for the artist without an appreciative public, so the Guild undertakes public education, including the annual *Glassart* open exhibition, co-ordinated by, and showing the work of, Saskatoon Glassworkers' Guild artists. April, 2000 marked the twelfth anniversary of this three-day exhibit that included over one hundred and fifty works by twenty-eight Guild members. As Gary Burkholder so eloquently puts it, "It's the perfect setting for an exhibition, and the addition of stained glass, catalyzed by sparkling prairie sunlight creates a vibrant environment that reverberates with an uninhibited spectrum of light and colour." Lynne Bowland, claims that *Glassart* "forces the artists to produce and to push their skills and work in new directions."

A highlight of the show is the People's Choice Award, which is chosen by visitor votes. Studying the work to choose a favourite encourages the 'audience' to become involved with the individual pieces. Being chosen as the 'Choice' is a definite boost for the artist. "I was surprised and honoured," said Lee Brady, whose *Rivers of Pompeii* won this award in 2000.

As well, to continue public education, the Guild contributes displays at other craft fairs and exhibitions, and now presents occasional adjudicated exhibitions, such as *Vitreous Maximus*, held at the Saskatchewan Craft Council Gallery in Saskatoon, November 10 to December 10, 2000.

Walter Julian, a self-taught but beginning stained glass craftsman, became a member of the Guild in 1999, shortly after emigrating from Ontario to Saskatoon. At *Glassart* 2000, he was given the Novice Award for *Flamenco Performers*, a two panel piece inspired by his wife's involvement with flamenco dance. Each panel is approximately twenty inches by thirty, stained glass with lead. The diptych was also selected for showing in *Vitreous Maximus*. Walter Julian found out about the Glassworkers Guild while buying supplies to make stained glass windows for his new house. In his short involvement he has become inspired by established members of the Guild. He says: "Lynne Bowland—I love looking at her work—she's one of my mentors. Lee Brady too, with his hot fusion. His work is fantastic." Walter is now exploring cold fusion and lamination. There have been other benefits for



him. "People said I could sell my work. I hadn't thought about shows and exhibitions and I didn't know how to go about selling. And I was quite surprised when Gary Burkholder phoned to ask to have photos of my work in an article in the *Glass Art Association of Canada Gazette*." Walter has also taken a workshop on stained glass painting offered through the Guild by Bill Popiel. The SGG has provided Walter with affirmation, acceptance and opportunity. He is certain that it is helping him grow as a glass artist.

Sarah Caldwell, the current President of the Guild, loves glass because, she says, "glass is exciting because it transforms space with colour." She has been working with stained glass for about seven years. She has been a Guild member for six years, and in her opinion, members benefit from the fact that workshops are aimed at different levels of experience. And she is enthusiastic about the technical demonstrations that occur at each meeting—such as good solder lines, types of glass, and photographing glass. She stresses the value of the Guild as a resource. The Guild office contains an excellent library of books, patterns, histories of glass art, videos, etc. for members to consult. Sarah's enthusiasm for glasswork carries over to the Guild members. "They're an extra-ordinary group."

The Guild demonstrates an appreciation of its home community, through the attention it gives to architectural stained glass in Saskatoon. The Guild sponsors regular walk-abouts for members of the Guild to view stained glass in various churches.

Such a tour includes information on the artists and studios that created these windows. In addition, the Guild is photographing the windows and gathering related documentation, and creating an archive. This is an important heritage initiative—a 'community' memory, and a record that can be accessed in case of a window's destruction.

The Glassworkers' Guild, after nearly fifteen years, has reached a respect-worthy plateau of effectiveness. Its value and benefits are proven and visible. Some of its artists have achieved national and international reputations. Novice creators and dedicated hobbyists have been enriched and encouraged by the Guild's presence and activities. Members' works have lit up the faces of visitors at shows and shops. So where can the Guild go from here? It will continue with its mandate, and *Glassart* 2001 is in the works for April 20-22 of this year. And Gary Burkholder has some new ideas. "We could put together a travelling show to send around the province and beyond our borders. We could publish a book of glass designs," he suggests. He has also been contemplating an intensive week-long summer workshop at Emma Lake, which would feature eminent glass artists as guest resource people.

For Gary, and for many members, the Saskatoon Glassworkers' Guild and the art of glass are intertwined. All that is required is time and creative energy, and the rewards can be both radiant and magical.

Steven Ross Smith is a Saskatoon poet and writer.



COMMISSION



right: *LuLing (Dragon of the East)* by Don Hefner
New and recycled copper wire and mesh, hand tooled and sewn wireworks; 22"(w) x 30"(h) x 69"(l). The mythical Chinese dragon arches its traditional serpentine body poised on five-toed limbs while contemplating viewers with a disarming expression that neutralizes intimidating claws and fangs. Commissioned by Hugh McPhail, installed December 2000 in Edmonton, Alberta.

left: *Curious Cub* by Don Hefner
New barbed wire treated in acid, oxidized, hand tooled wireworks; 30" x 11" x 10". Underfoot, a recycled railroad spike plate balances the young curious walking bear in a subtle juxtaposition epitomizing the interface between humans and wildlife such as bears. Commissioned by Bronwen Jones, installed October 2000 in Rimbey, Alberta.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Just received the 25th anniversary issue of *The Craft Factor* and as usual I was pleased and disappointed. Perhaps the idea of a classic plain cover shows our maturity. But we missed a great publicity event for the membership. Blending together the chronicles of SCC, SPG and the 25th anniversary exhibition, with regular craft factor items, did not read well.

This is our 25th Anniversary—BE BRAVE! Very few volunteer organizations get to this age. Blow the entire budget on the celebration. Print an extra *Craft Factor* if necessary.

If cost is a factor, approach our suppliers, funders, financial institutions, accountants & photographic studios that do business with the SCC, to place adds of congratulations or sponsor a photographic retrospective of past premier prize winners. What good company doesn't like a little PR.

INVITATION

Craftspeople are invited to submit professional quality photographs, transparencies, or slides illustrating their commissions for private and public use or installation. Include identification; title; dimensions; materials/techniques; client; date completed or installed; exact location on site; gallery, agent, interior designer or architect involved. Those works chosen for publication will be featured on the Commissions page in upcoming issues of *The Craft Factor*. For more information, contact: Editor, *The Craft Factor*, SCC, 813 Broadway Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7N 1B5 306-653-3616 ; fax 306-244-2711
E-mail; saskcraftcouncil.editor.tcf@home.com

If there are decisions or dilemmas with content or concept, six past chairpersons are at your beck and call. 25 years of energy and volunteering is a vast reservoir of sage thinking. We have a strong organization and in order to serve those who formed it(us) we need to talk.

This organization and its magazine are more than a marketing opportunity! Our original mandate was also to increase the quality of crafts produced in the province and to increase communication between our members. Workmanship, criteria, and innovation at Battleford and Wintergreen are in decline. They are no longer premier shows. We are creative people—lets be creative with our craft council.

Mel Bolen, SCC founding member

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Saskatchewan Craft Gallery

Turned Multiples II
an exhibition of turned wood
sculptural and functional objects
March 2 - April 15, 2001
Curated by Michael Hosaluk,
Merryll Saylan and Hans Weissflog
Opening: April 6, 7:30 pm

DIMENSIONS 2001 JURYING
Gallery Closed-April 16 - 24, 2001

QUINT-ESSENCE (clay)
Paula Cooley, Puck Janes, Bonnie Bailey
Teresa Gagne, Mark Listoe
April 27 - June 10, 2001

Fe2 (functional metal sculptures)
Michael Jozsa
June 15 - July 22, 2001

The CRAFT FACTOR



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