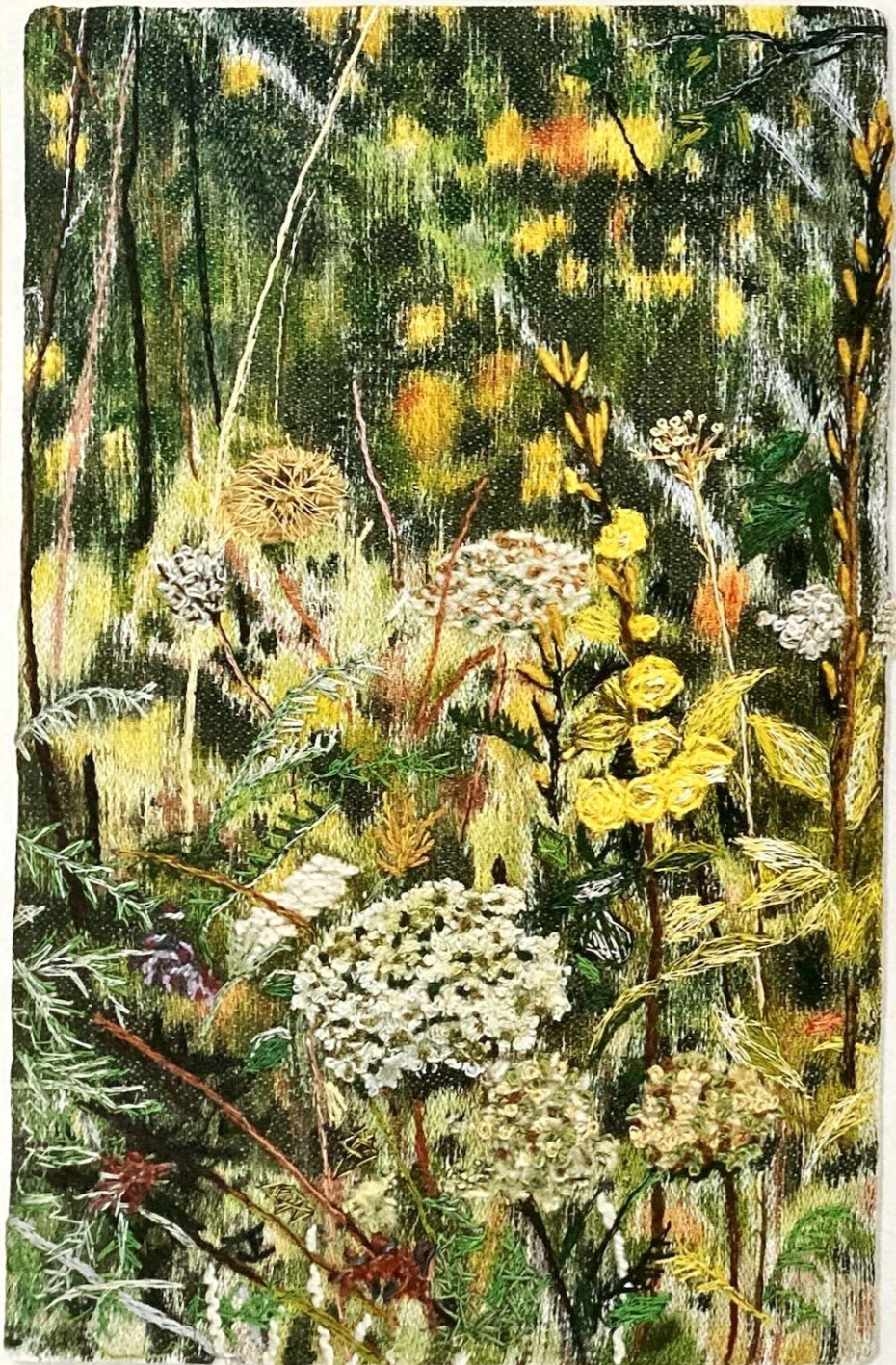


The CRAFT Factor



SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT COUNCIL
VOL. 27.2 SPRING 2003 \$6



Jane A. Evans, *Wildflower Tangle*, 2002, cotton, polyester, linen, rayon, silk, textile paints; warp-painted, handwoven, embroidered, 34.4 x 26.4 x 3.6 cm.



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 Crafts Federation.

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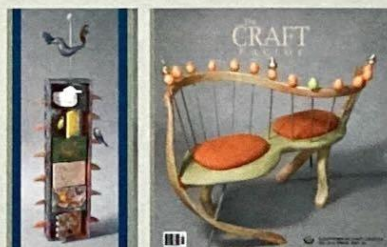
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FRONT COVER: Kiss Bench (Puss-Sale), 2002, Don Newman, Zach Robbins, Anita Rocamora, Tom Ray, Arthur Perlett, Mark Orr, Gordon Pritchard, Bonnie Houston **MATERIALS:** wood, steel, fabric, metal leaf. 79 x 65 x 122 cm. Emma 2002 Collaboration Collection of Miranda Jones & Jim Merrim

BACK COVER: Bird Cabinet, 2002, Michael Hasaluk, Kim Kelzer, Rachel Bliss, Andy Buck, Jamie Russell, Mary Stubbs, Lindsay Embree, Jeff Nachtigall, Anita Rocamora; wood, misc. materials. 96 x 38 x 12 cm. Collection of Lindsay Embree & Arnlin Prugger. Emma 2002 Collaboration

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Susan Robertson

International Entrepreneur

by Cathryn Miller



Sue at a craft sale, 2002
Photography by David Miller

You may have heard rumours about Sue Robertson lately. Well, at least some of them are true. She is selling her work in Eastern Canada and in the U.S., and her projected gross income for 2002 is \$135,000 (Canadian). How did someone who started pottery as a hobby become (if only on a small scale) an international entrepreneur?

Sue began in 1984, taking classes at Panorama Pottery, a co-op in Outlook. She was hooked. Over the next decade she increased her skills by attending classes at SIAST part-time, graduating in 1995. She recalls two workshops in particular: hand-building with Anita Rocamora and mould-making with Charley Farrero. The first introduced her to a way of working with clay that suited her better than throwing ("My brain works better architecturally,") and the second gave her a new method of production.

During this period Sue was also developing business expertise. As well as running The Bird's Nest Motel in Outlook with her husband Ian, she was co-ordinator for several Saskatchewan Handcraft Festivals and Wintergreens. She opened and ran A Wrinkle in Thyme craft shop. When she closed it after five years, people generally assumed it had been a failure. "Actually, it was taking too much time from my work. I would find myself running from my studio to the shop thinking "Can't you just go away?" I had to decide which I wanted to be doing."

By the late 1990's Sue was making what many Saskatchewan craftspeople consider a good living, but she was aware of the limitations of selling only within the province. Promoting her work in markets with larger populations and better economies were the obvious solution, but the expenses and risks involved were frightening. Could she make it in a bigger market? If there was a demand, could she produce enough work to fill it? She thought about trying one of the wholesale gift shows in Edmonton or Seattle but they seemed too intimidating.



Painted mugs ready for glazing.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: the painting area; finished mug in front of moulds; a selection of finished work; plaques - some partially painted, some complete with tags.

Then in 1998, when planning a visit to family in Ottawa, Sue decided to try the spring craft market that would be on while she was there. She wasn't looking for an agent, and the agent she met had gone to the sale with no intentions of signing up new producers. But Sue came home with someone representing her in Ontario.

The next challenge was the American market: a larger population and therefore more potential sales. Sue is a long-time subscriber to a number of free Canadian government newsletters "I'm an information junkie," which is how she learned about the New Exporters in Business (NEBS) trip to Minneapolis. It's a combination of marketing seminars and contact opportunities and cost \$1500. In spite of her initial fears, "Oh no, this is a mistake," Sue connected with an agent who has sold her work as far away as Kentucky. Another result is that she is now in negotiation with a company that is set up for mass production and mass distribution.

The next goal was the Alberta Gift Show, a large wholesale market in Edmonton. Sue decided that the "Uniquely Prairie" section would be the way to go. Designed for first-time applicants to the sale, it is set up as a less intimidating introduction to this type of marketing. Sue sent in her \$50 fee and samples of her work and print materials. Each entrant is graded and provided with a detailed critique and marketing suggestions. Sue was given advice on how to improve her presentation and was accepted. For a further \$150 she had half of a five foot by five foot space in which to show samples of her work. Then she spent several thousand dollars to have a special display system built to meet standards required by the show, and cover other expenses. She only broke even on the first market, but her foot was in the door and she won the award for Best Overall Booth Design in 2001.



Sounds simple doesn't it? But some details have been glossed over. There are significant expenses to be covered out of that projected \$135,000. Agents are paid 15% of any gross sales made through them: the Canadian gets paid when Sue gets paid, the American gets paid when Sue ships. She can spend up to \$1,200 a week on clay alone, not to mention other production costs. Her expenses for attending markets come out of that gross income. She's currently renovating a free-standing six room unit of the motel to handle new production demands and is grateful to the Saskatchewan Craft Council and the Saskatchewan Cultural Industries Development Fund for their assistance in purchasing some equipment. She has two full-time and three part-time employees. So Sue isn't getting rich, at least not yet, though she has just recently decided to go to the Seattle NEBS in January 2003.

Sue works hard: she doesn't hide in the back of her booth at sales and will make an extra effort to keep her customers happy. She develops her own designs but is quick to pick up on ideas suggested by others. She is conscientious about meeting the particular requirements of the sales she goes to: some stipulate that only pieces she has made herself are acceptable; others accept production work and don't care who made it as long as the quality is good.

Sue has apparently boundless energy. She confesses to working sixty hours a week, but one suspects it's often more: "if I were a kid today, they'd have me on Ritalin." She also has the support of her husband Ian in many aspects of the business, and his hand metaphorically planted firmly in the small of her back, urging her forward. "Ian's the risk-taker. I probably wouldn't have taken chances if Ian hadn't pushed me."

Finally, but most important of all, when Sue is asked how she copes with the long hours and the days of stress, her face lights up and she says, "I love what I'm doing!"

Cathryn Miller, a former Marketing Member of the Saskatchewan Craft Council and professional craftsperson for more than a quarter of a century, has yet to make as much money as Sue Robertson.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Sue's new line of frames; finished plaques ready for wrapping; work ready for shipping; Sue's cheap ad: both rear windows for \$150.00.

SOME OF SUE'S INFORMATION SOURCES:

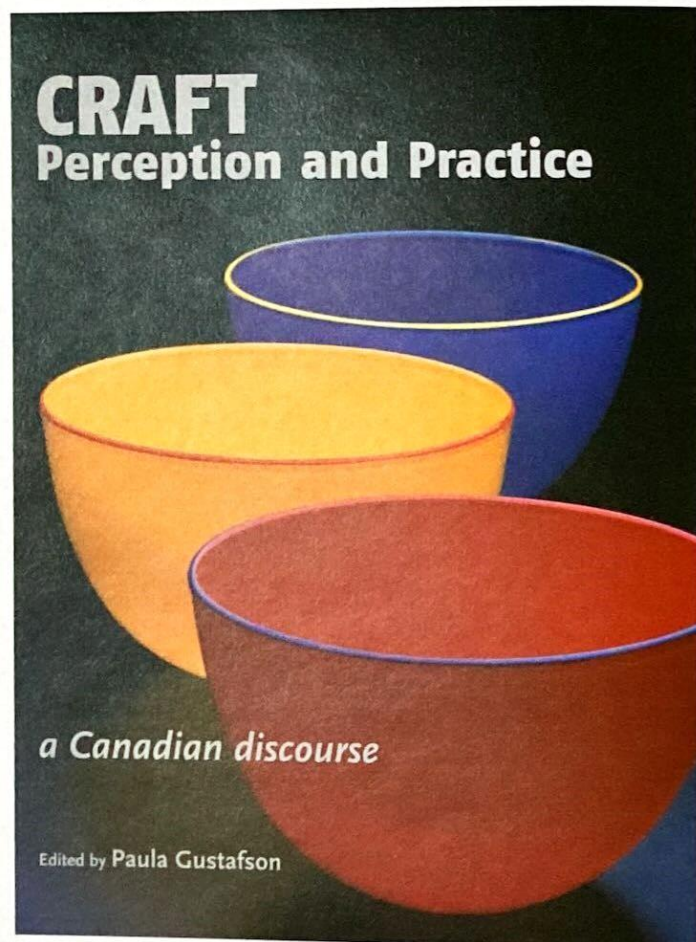
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Paula Gustafson

CRAFT Perception and Practice A Canadian Discourse

Reviewed by Jennifer Salahub



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In a recent lecture on curatorial practice my first-year art students were told by one of the curators of the 2002 Alberta Biennial that she had worked hard placing the seemingly unrelated objects within the spaces so that "conversations" could take place. In their journals several of the students (relying on their own notes and interpretations of what was said) wrote that they were very impressed with this exhibition as it provided a forum in which the artists could meet. While visually literate and critically skilled in the ways of advertising, with its juxtaposition of disparate images, these students were less willing to believe that art curators were equally versed in manipulation or that these constructed relationships (conversations) were an integral part of the process of display and discovery. They were reluctant to consider how the placement of the works added to, even coloured, their responses.

Turning the pages of *CRAFT Perception and Practice: A Canadian Discourse*, I found myself reevaluating my student's experiences as I considered the editor's role in the process of selection and omission (never a neutral act) and in the organisation of the texts that make up an anthology. In this case we are not made privy to these processes. The editor, Paula Gustafson, a well-known and respected author, editor and advocate of craft in Canada, presents a compilation of essays and critical writings about Canadian contemporary crafts prefaced by a very short introduction. These date from the 1990s and were chosen for the "directness of language, the integrity of the work being discussed, and the text's illumination of the critical discourse that has engaged Canadian craft practitioners over the past dozen years." Gustafson wrote the short introduction and six of the twenty-four essays. These essays are divided into chapters, identified only by a title page: "Response and Revelation," "Space and Imagery," "Objects and Objectivity," "Language and Theory," "Making Meaning," and "Redefining Tradition."

General concerns are addressed in the Preface. We are advised that while some crafts have been featured, glass, ceramics, and fibre; there are no articles dealing with wood, leather, or paper. We are told that as exemplary texts become available they will be included in future volumes. This is the first in a series of three texts that will explore the diversity of current craft practice in Canada. There is little doubt that these anthologies will become essential readings for students of craft, craft history, craft theory, and critical thinking in Canadian universities and colleges. This is a useful model and a welcome addition to a field that has only recently become the focus of serious academic interest. As well, *CRAFT Perception and Practice: A Canadian Discourse* is a benchmark in Canadian cataloguing, for "this book and the volumes that follow are the first in Canada to be catalogued as art books."

Given its significance it is refreshing that the author did not use this event to reiterate the secondary role crafts have traditionally played in the history of art. We are left to savour inclusion rather than rage against the unjust history of exclusion. Gustafson has not ignored the history, or politics, of craft. In the Introduction she succinctly deals with Ruskin, Morris, Leach, and Gropius and decries the hegemony of the Euro-centric view of art and art history. It is only when she hones in on Canadian issues that she become expansive, as in taking *The Globe and Mail* art critic John Bentley Mays to task for dismissive comments made in 1986.

In the Introduction Gustafson makes no reference to the specific articles, the authors or the methods employed. Instead, she sets the groundwork for the reader, explaining that a discourse is "an organized framework for discussing theory: the themes, ideas, terminology, symbology and meanings attached to a subject." In doing so she underlines the folly of trying to locate a definitive answer—reiterating that the discourse in Canadian Craft is evolving—a process that demands and celebrates input from a broad base of practitioners as well as enthusiasts, critics, historians, and theorists. Peter Dormer hinted at the nature of the dilemma when he wrote that "Craft relies on tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is acquired through experience and it is the knowledge that enables you to do things as distinct from talking or writing about them." (*The Culture of Craft* 147) Likely this is why so many of these authors are, themselves, practitioners and why it is the informed reader, who is invited to expand the discourse—recommendations for future compilations are invited.

The majority of the essays and commentaries are taken from periodicals, exhibition catalogues, newspapers, and conference papers. One or two lines identify the authors and their areas of expertise and an index cross-references artists, images, and ideas. The individual texts vary in length and complexity. Some are autobiographical. Mary Pratt speaks of a childhood fascination in "The Magic of Glass." Patrick Mahon's review of "Fancy" at the Textile Museum is at the same time a critique and a homage to the arcane language of domestic handwork and that of art criticism. Others are themselves finely crafted works. Amy Gogarty takes us on a poetic journey in "Weaving, Writing, Movement, Speech: Jane Kidd's Figured Tapestries." The colour illustrations are full page and seductive—who can not be enchanted by finally seeing one of Jeff de Boer's articulated suits of armor—*Helm and Menpo of a Samurai Siamese* or intrigued by Sarah Saunder's ceramic *Book of Longing?* Are the several slightly unfocused photographs accompanying this article intended or unfortunate?

Gustafason is a moderator, she does not attempt to explain or defend her choices. She has slyly and confidently provided the means to witness the diverse concerns of practitioners and historians and of collectors and critics on the controversial topics that have prevailed during the past decade. The depth and breadth of the works invite deeper levels of commitment and encourage us to recognize patterns and relationships. A successful editor (*Articboko: Writings about the Visual Arts*), Gustafason knows about the importance of the placement of each text and its relationship to its neighbour and the whole. Certainly the recent works of Greg Payce (*Wane 2000*) provide a model by which to investigate and celebrate reading between the lines. Consider what you would miss if you only studied the vases and not the spaces!

As my students would now tell us, *CRAFT Perception and Practice: A Canadian Discourse* is all about relationships and conversations. You might choose to merely eavesdrop or listen to various authors presenting their views in self-contained essays—picking and choosing those of interest to you. However, the brevity of some of these essays is in itself inviting and the images are so tantalising that you are likely to find yourself enjoying conversational threads that link the articles and draw you into unexpected arenas.

Katharine Dickerson's article "Aho Tapu: The Sacred Weft," is a case in point. I was drawn to the photographs—intimate, tactile, mysterious, seductive... then gobsmacked by the revelations about the author. She explains how a learning disability has, in fact given her a rare ability to work with, and within, cultures where oral traditions dominate. In the author's words, the disability becomes "a natural ability in other cultural contexts." Dickerson goes on to describe her work and her experiences within the context of the textile traditions of aboriginal peoples of New Zealand and the Canadian North West Coast. The implications are staggering. How is knowledge acquired? How is it passed on? Here is a remarkable tool—a case study that clearly illustrates existing biases in perception and practice—presented within a palatable format.

CRAFT Perception and Practice: A Canadian Discourse focuses on Canadian craft practitioners and writers; however, it is not culturally or geographically exclusive. It provides a wealth of knowledge and expertise that crosses boundaries, draws on, and adds to a greater body of writing led by British and American authors. Cultural historians, feminists, semiologists, and formalists vie for our attention and invite input. The conversations are both erudite and down to earth—methodologies practical and theoretical. *CRAFT Perception and Practice: A Canadian Discourse* is an attractive, affordable, and accessible compilation of well written, well illustrated, and well researched essays.

Jennifer Salahub teaches at the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary.

A BRIEF HISTORY

20th CENTURY CRAFT MARKETING

by Sandra Alföldy

Recent emphasis on the marketing of crafts shown by the Canadian Craft Federation's web-site and the Kootenay School of the Arts' Centre of Craft and Design's "Beyond Borders" craft marketing conference, has highlighted the importance of the international promotion of Canadian crafts. This is not a new concern. Historically, Canadian craftspeople and organizations have long struggled to develop effective national and international marketing strategies.

The Canadian Handicrafts Guild, founded in 1905 by Alice Peck and May Phillips, had as its goal helping women to find productive work in the arts, specifically through crafts.¹ While the Guild stressed the preservation of traditional craftwork rather than innovative contemporary craft objects, it was tremendously successful in the marketing of Canadian craft within Canada, the United States, and Great Britain. Initially organized and directed entirely by women, the Guild undertook several major initiatives designed to promote craft. These included the exhibition of Canadian crafts at international expositions, beginning as early as 1904 at the St. Louis World's Fair; an annual Guild exhibition of crafts at Toronto's Canadian National Exhibition (initiated in 1932); and the retailing of Canadian handicrafts at provincial branch shops. Canadians were fascinated by the "exotic" crafts available through the Guild shops, including French Canadian weavings and crafts by First Nations producers. Although the Guild was a national craft organization, many of the crafts it marketed successfully relied on the curiosity generated by the marginalized nature of their producers. Nowhere was this more evident than the craze that erupted for Inuit soapstone carvings. In the 1950s the Montreal headquarters and Manitoba branch of the Canadian Handicrafts Guilds were the only outlets selling these carvings; they attracted enormous crowds, quickly selling out to an international audience.² Despite the ready market for such specialized "ethnic" crafts, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild faced difficulties in providing infrastructure support for the crafts produced by an emerging community of professional studio craftspeople.

With the advent of World War Two, Canadian publishing executive Floyd S. Chalmers investigated the possibility of expanding sales of Canadian crafts to the

United States. Department stores such as Saks and Gimbel Brothers, who had previously retailed the crafts of Axis Germany, and other nations, found they needed new sources of original crafts. Chalmers visited New York City in 1939 where he invited American representatives to Toronto to meet with members of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild. After a series of high-powered meetings a disappointing conclusion was reached. The group agreed that there were two major obstacles preventing Canadian craft from entering the international market: a lack of consistent high quality and good design, and the absence of an organizing body to coordinate orders and supplies. The Canadian Handicrafts Guild was acknowledged for their efforts to undertake this work, but it was believed that the Guild was handicapped by a lack of funds.³ Within a few months the American Craft Council's retail outlet America House had opened in New York City, and quickly thereafter enjoyed unprecedented growth as the American craftspeople they represented filled the voids left by the withdrawal of European crafts in other retail outlets; "America House was able to get high-quality merchandise from Americans, unlike a lot of other stores."⁴

The idea that contemporary Canadian crafts were not at the same professional level as their American counterparts plagued efforts to expand the market for these objects. Although there were exceptions, throughout the 1940s and 1950s Canadian craft in general was criticized for being too underdeveloped to enter the international marketplace. Donald Buchanan, Chairman of Canada's postwar Industrial Design Committee, head of the Industrial Design Department of the National Gallery of Canada, and editor of *Canadian Art*, (1944-59) was appalled at the "adolescent stage" of Canadian crafts.⁵ Buchanan took it upon himself to establish a serious attitude toward design and craft in Canada by staging a number of

exhibitions at the National Gallery of Canada, including *Canadian Designs for Everyday Use* (1948) and *Canadian Fine Crafts* (1957). Buchanan relied on the Canadian Handicrafts Guild to provide guidance in the selection of crafts for his exhibitions. While Canada had several government programmes designed to use craftwork to generate income during the depression, including a million dollar investment in the 1937 Dominion Youth Training Plan of the Department of Labour which trained farm boys and girls in handicraft work, none of these contained adequate marketing strategies.⁶

Despite its inability to work with Chalmers on the large-scale marketing of crafts to the United States in 1939, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild provided the most organized marketing scheme for crafts in Canada during the Great Depression and World War Two. Buchanan's efforts, often in collaboration with the Guild, resulted in increased dialogue regarding the importance of raising the standards of Canadian craft. Increasingly it was believed that for Canadian craft to compete globally they needed to be perceived as professional. This resulted in great debate over the definition of professional, the specific market that was being targeted, and the influence of American ideals on Canadian craft.

Indeed, the United States remained the largest source of influence as well as the largest potential market for Canadian craft. In 1955 the Royal Ontario Museum brought the American Craft Council exhibition *Designer-Craftsmen USA* to Toronto in order to demonstrate to Canadians the high standards that they were seeking in Canadian craft. Director Gerard Brett noted that the Museum could not hold an exhibition of Canadian design and craft as "it is not now at a stage where this museum could hold a large special exhibition devoted entirely to it without great loss of face."⁷ By the 1960s Canadian craftspeople producing professional craft were

frustrated by the continuing perception of Canadian craft as the preserve of hobbyists and traditional craftspeople. Anita Aarons, the vocal "Allied Arts" columnist for the *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal* encouraged Canadians to look to the United States for guidance, writing in May 1965 "Handcraft in the USA is big business... a well organized body of contemporary trained craftsmen is producing highly original, well crafted products in any media."⁸ Despite its long history of successfully marketing crafts, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild was seen as representing an outdated form of traditional craft, and in 1965 the Canadian Craftsmen's Association was formed to promote professional craft of high standards.

The new Association made marketing one of its primary objectives, holding sessions on the subject at its inaugural conference in Winnipeg, February 1965. Government officials present at the Winnipeg conference recognized the power of the new organization to operate as a standard-setting body. Jean-Claude Delorme, the Secretary-General of Expo 67, who had attended the Winnipeg meetings, decided that the new Council held a set of standards high enough for the Canadian Government and appointed the Association to be responsible for overseeing the crafts at Expo 67.⁹ Norah McCullough, organizer of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, Anita Aarons, and the ceramist Merton Chambers formed the triad who largely determined what "professional" Canadian craft was, and what would be most effectively marketed. Their standards for Canadian craft betrayed their well-educated, middle-class social and personal backgrounds, which gave them accredited tools for aesthetic selection, and more important to the classification and marketing of craft, aesthetic elimination. Item six of the new Association's mandate stated that it was "necessary to clear up the existing confusion between the professional designer and the hobbyist."¹⁰ During a May 1966 panel discussion titled "Canadian Souvenirs and Giftware—how can we improve design and quality?" Merton Chambers criticized the poor taste of Canadian souvenirs being created and sold for the mass-market, setting the stage for the Association to push for professional crafts at Expo 67. Dorothy Todd Hénaut's article "1967—The Moment of Truth for Canadian Crafts" supported the Association's argument that professional crafts would distinguish Canada in the international marketplace. She offered praise for the excellence of crafts, the "unknown arts of Canada" which had in her opinion evolved "in the last five to ten years, but particularly in the last two or three" from "hobby puttering" to fine works of art. Certainly Canadian crafts were received with high praise at Expo 67, reflecting their new position as important objects for international trade. This moment marked the birth of the boom in crafts that was to last throughout the 1970s, later sustaining professional Canadian crafts in face of the economic difficulties of the early 1980s and mid-1990s.

Sandra Alföldy is Assistant Professor of Craft History at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. She completed her Ph.D, "An Intricate Web(b): American Influences on Professional Craft in Canada 1964-1974" in 2001 at Concordia University.

- ¹ Ellen Easton McLeod, *In Good Hands: The Women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press for Carleton University, 1999), 1. McLeod provides a most thorough analysis of the influence of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild on early 20th century craft.
- ² Dor From, *The History of the Crafts Guild of Manitoba* (Winnipeg: Dor From, 2001), 106.
- ³ Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5752, Box 7, BW8-CB2, Report by Floyd S. Chalmers, August 29, 1939, "Sales of Canadian Handicraft Products in the United States," p. 1-7.
- ⁴ Oral History Interview with Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb, 16. Archives of American Art.
- ⁵ Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 47.
- ⁶ Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5752, Box 7, BW8-CB2, Chalmers, "Sales of Canadian Handicrafts Products in the United States," 4. See also Sandra Flood, *Canadian Craft and Museum Practice 1900-1950* (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2001).
- ⁷ Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Designer-Craftsmen, 22 May - 22 June 1955, RG 107, No. 14, Box 1. Gerard Brett, *Notes on a Possible Canadian Modern Design Exhibition*, February 1955, 1.
- ⁸ Anita Aarons, "Canadian Handicrafts and the Architect," *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal*, 476, 42/5 (May 1965): 16.
- ⁹ Jean-Claude Delorme, letter to George Shaw, Acting Chairman, Canadian Council for the Environmental Arts, 10 March 1966. National Archives of Canada, MG28I222, Volume 1, Canadian Craftsmen's Association.
- ¹⁰ Report 4 March 1965, *The Formation of a National Association of Craftsmen*. National Archives of Canada, MG28I222, Volume 1, Canadian Craftsmen's Association.
- ¹¹ Dorothy Todd Hénaut, "1967 - The Moment of Truth for Canadian Crafts," *Arts/Canada*, 24/104 (January 1967): 20-22.

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Jane A. Evans

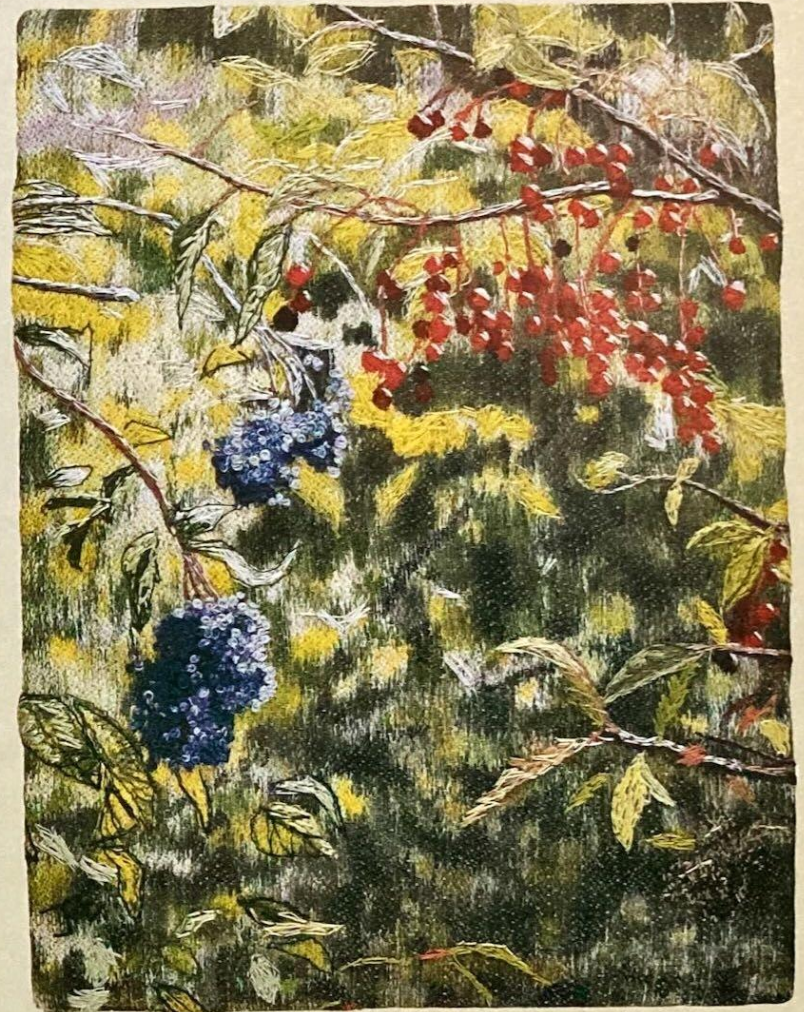
WOVEN LANDSCAPES

by Janet Collins

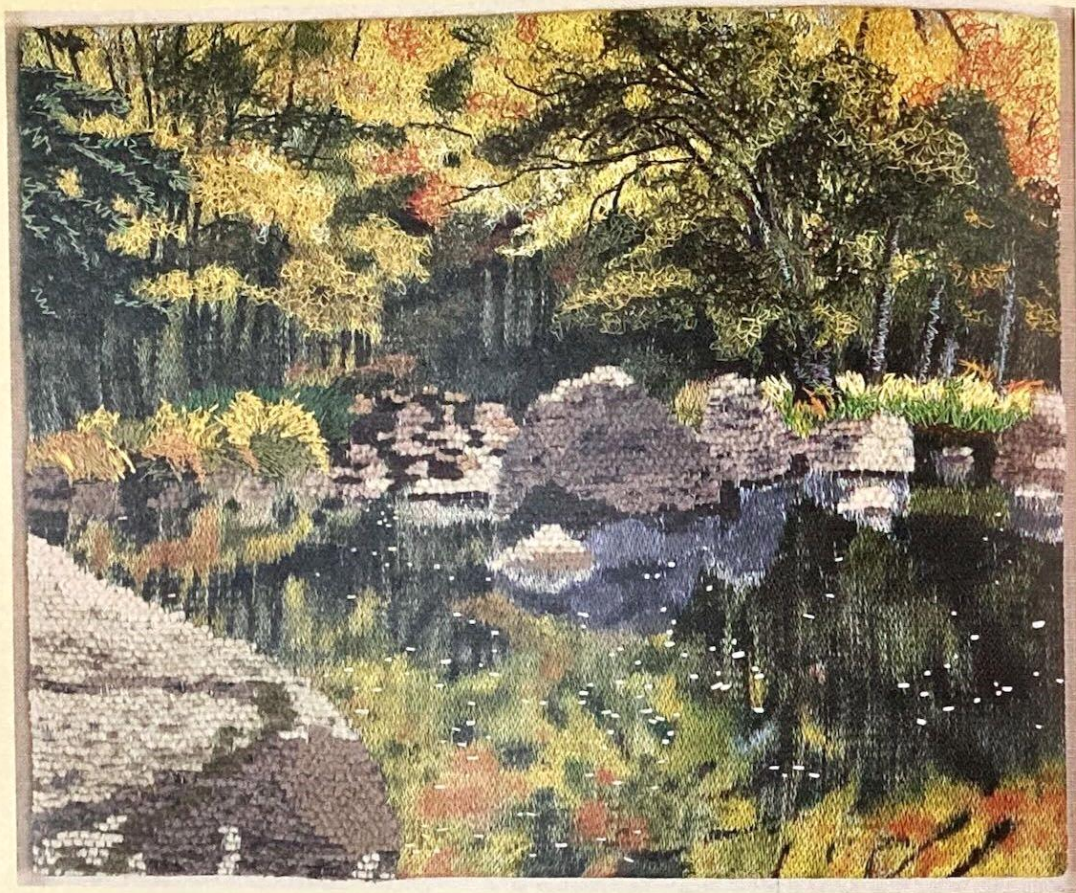


Woods Bouquet, 2002; cotton, viscose, polyester, orlon, nylon, rayon, silk threads, textile paints; warp-painted, handwoven, embroidered. 31.6 x 33.2 x 5 cm.

Nothing stirs the spirit quite like a tranquil landscape, and there is little doubt that Canadian artists have mastered the landscape like no other nation's artists have. Indeed, the land is a quintessential part of the Canadian psyche, so much so, works by noted artists such as the Group of Seven have become national symbols. Canadian landscape art is not restricted to paintings, however, as a recent exhibit of works by Saskatchewan artist Jane A. Evans illustrates.



Berries and Cherries, 2001; cotton, metallic threads, textile paints, warp-painted, handwoven, embroidered. 33.2 x 28.2 x 3.6 cm.



Autumn Fanfare, 2002; cotton, rayon, polyester threads, textile paints; warp-painted, handwoven, embroidered. 41.3 x 46.8 x 5 cm.

Evans' work defies the conventional labels of craft and fibrework. A combination of painting, weaving and embroidery creates a landscape that exudes a depth rarely achieved in painted canvases. Her finished pieces mimic the camera's focal plane: the layering of fibres and techniques is one reason, Evans' keen eye coupled with her deft ability for depicting light and perspective is another. Each piece also reflects the artist's love of, and respect for, the landscape in which she travels (often with her canoe-builder husband, Tom. See *The Craft Factor*, Vol 27.1, Fall 2002, page 12).

On-site sketches and photographs form the starting point for the pieces by providing Evans with reference points for the painting stage of the work. The 'canvas' to be painted is actually threads that have been strung on the artist's loom and placed under tension. Utilizing an innovative four-shaft split-shed technique, Evans is able to

create a textured background for each piece. This weave structure allows both the painted warp and the woven weft threads to show to their greatest advantage. When off the loom, the work is embroidered using a free-motion machine technique whereby Evans 'draws' with the threaded needle. Finally, hand embroidery provides the image details. Since many of the stitches used in both the machine and hand embroidery techniques are applied in different colours and different layers in an overlapping effect, the threads build up and create real shadows on top of the illustrated ones. Muted tones tend to find their way into the background while clearer colours are used in the foreground. The foreground also tends to contain the greatest amount of detail, just as the eye would discern in a real landscape. The overall effect is nothing short of miraculous.

A series of Evans' carefully crafted landscapes was exhibited at the Saskatchewan Craft Gallery in Saskatoon this past November and December, alongside works by bird carver Harvey Welch. The combination works well: if Welch's birds are close-ups of nature, Evans' pieces appear as windows to the greater idyllic countryside.

Autumn Fanfare forms a case in point. In this image, the trees are reflected in a lake that is dappled with fallen leaves. A ring of stones encircles the scene, providing a natural framework for this glimpse of nature. The water is largely free of embroidery, thereby allowing the texture of the woven threads to show through in such a way that they imitate the uneven surface of the water itself. Splashes of paint on the warp threads accentuate the ripples and indicate splotches of sunshine filtering through the nearby trees.

The juxtaposition of water and woodland appears in another striking piece, *River Bend*. One of the few horizontal pictures in the exhibition, the orientation of the piece emphasizes the openness of the depicted landscape image. Here, an arched forest and meadow scene lies beyond the bend of a pale blue river. The scene is at once inviting, calling the viewer to cross over the water to wander beneath the trees or lie in the flower-covered meadow.

Evans' work is not restricted to formal landscape scenes, however. Although woodlands (especially those populated by bright aspen or rainbows of autumn leaves) and flower-rimmed meadows form the bulk of the works in this exhibit, close-up images of autumnal offerings are also included.

In *Berries and Cherries*, Evans uses her multi-layered multiple-method technique to showcase the round succulent fruit that is so much a part of autumn's bounty. Viewed either close up or at a distance, the fruit appears as round as the real thing. Thus, this piece illustrates another aspect of Evans' work: it can be admired as a fine piece of art from a distance while close-up examination will satisfy those most appreciative of her skillful needlework.

No matter how Jane Evans' work is viewed, whether close-up or at a distance, the viewer is sure to find a fresh connection with both the wonders of nature and the scope of possibilities of the fibre arts. Fibre art landscapes by Jane Evans clearly place fibre arts in the realm of fine art.

In addition to being a freelance writer, Janet Collins is a fibre artist specializing in weaving and needle felt. She lives in Sechelt, a coastal village near Vancouver.

ATLANTIC CANADIAN

CRAFT & ANTIQUE EVENTS

Spring into Summer
Exhibition Park, Halifax
April 18 - 20, 2003

Sydney Craft Festival
Centre 200, Sydney
August 1, 2, 3, 2003

Autumn Harvest Festival
Moncton Coliseum
October 3-5 2003

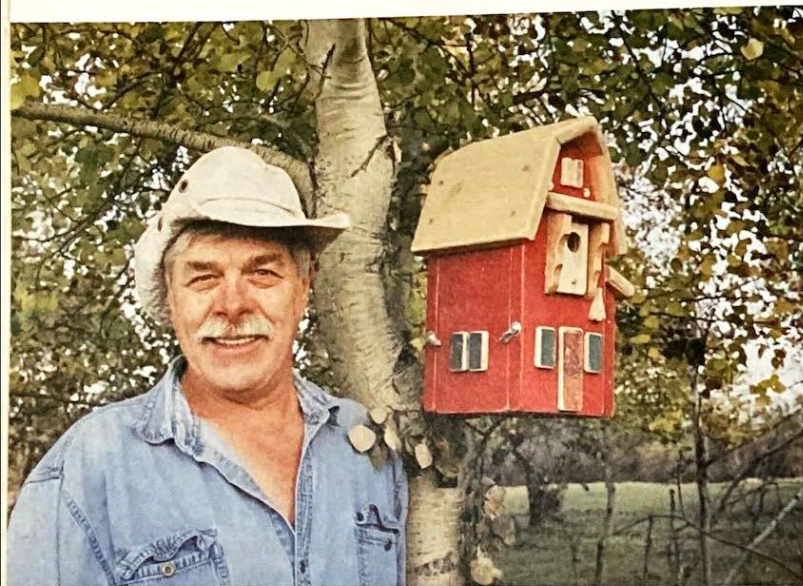
Christmas at the Stadium
New Glasgow Stadium
October 10 - 12, 2003

Sydney Christmas Fair
Bicentennial Gymnasium
October 16 - 19, 2003

Atlantic Christmas Fair
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Reusing Wood and Rebuilding Nests

NORMAN LINKERT

by Suzanne Stewart

Six years after turning his career in a new direction, woodworker Norman Linkert reflects on the development and growth of his business, The Bird House Factory, which he established in 1996. While "the early years were very difficult," he concedes, "record sales" at a number of craft shows in 2002 attest to the success of his endeavour. Marketing his work, Linkert acknowledges, has contributed to that success.

Now a builder principally of bird feeders, bird houses, and furniture, Linkert spent the first thirty years of his career as a journeyman carpenter in the construction industry, an occupation he left in 1989 to build and operate a restaurant. In 1996, he returned to the craft of woodworking, establishing a workshop—The Bird House Factory—on his farm near Walburg, Saskatchewan. In addition to feeders and homes for birds, Linkert designs and builds cabinets, chests, tables, benches, hutches, and mailboxes, among other pieces of furniture, for people. Clearly a carpenter, Linkert is also an "artisan," as he calls himself, for his woodwork is as artistic as it is functional. He reuses old, weathered wood, which he collects and buys from salvage yards, abandoned buildings, and the Habitat for Humanity Restore. Satisfied by the opportunity to recycle wood that would "otherwise go to the dump," Linkert also delights in the creative process of

constructing new objects from used materials, recombining disparate pieces of old pianos, organs, windows, mirrors, doors, floors, and corral boards, for instance, in original, often whimsical works of functional art. Fundamental to the distinctiveness of his craftsmanship is his attentiveness to the authenticity of the wood: its worn surface and original colours, which Linkert protects with a clear coat of finish, are carefully maintained, and the history of the wood's previous location and function, which he shares with his customers, is fondly preserved.

While Linkert is rewarded by this creative dimension of woodworking, particularly the excitement of being "always on the look out" for intriguing pieces of wood and other reusable building materials, he is also acutely aware of the "tough part of the business": the lack of time to build during busy "show times" in the summer and fall, the accompanying necessity of working well in advance, the challenge of anticipating what people will buy in the forthcoming year, and the limitations that incalculable market conditions can place on creativity. Approaching these challenges from a practical and open-minded perspective, Linkert has not only endured the first "difficult" years of his business but also emerged as a keen marketer who recognizes the necessity of patience and innovation.

[T]he fact is that, in a garden, we grow more attached to a tree inhabited by birds.

A nest, like any other image of rest and quiet, is immediately associated with the image of a simple house.

[A]t the mention of a nest, a bird's song, and the charms that take us back to the old home, ... a sort of musical chord ... sound[s] in the soul[.]

Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: **Bird House #1**, wood. 40 x 15 x 15 cm. **Shelf**, wood, wire. 20 x 40 x 20 cm. **Wood Side Board**, recycled wood, hardware. 80 x 120 x 50 cm.

Among the components of his marketing strategy, publicity has been an important factor. Crediting the location of The Bird House Factory as an aid to that publicity, Linkert explains that traffic on the well-travelled highway where his home is situated, coupled with the visibility of his own signage and the arrangement of bird houses on posts across his land, has produced a steady flow of customers, who can see his work displayed in the showroom at his home. Linkert also acknowledges the role of his website, stating that it serves an important "informative" function: it keeps people up-to-date on the shows he attends, provides detailed information about the types of woodwork he produces, and enables customers to place orders or request custom-made works. Mixing information with humour, Linkert's website (www.birdhousefactory.com) has a delightfully friendly tone that suits the earthy quality of his woodwork. Most importantly, participation in a large number of craft shows, Linkert states, is the basis of his approach to marketing. Now attending approximately fifteen shows per year throughout Alberta and Saskatchewan, Linkert anticipates expanding that itinerary to include locations as far away as Vancouver. Continually seeking "new shows," he says, is the means by which he is able "to make a living" from his work.

Another component of Linkert's marketing strategy is his personal interaction with customers. He delights in talking to people: telling them where the wood in his furniture has come from; explaining the carefully-researched features of his bird houses (the precise size of the entrance holes, and the reasons for the drainage and ventilation holes, the interior ladders, and the bare interior wood); and soliciting feedback from his customers regarding their satisfaction with his work. Acknowledging that the pieces he produces are constantly evolving—that he seeks continually to design and build "better" feeders and houses for the birds, for instance, as well as to meet the needs of his customers—Linkert incorporates suggestions from others in his "new designs." His most recent response was to add to his bird feeders and houses a devise that would enable people to more easily mount them; other recent changes include the use of new wood on the interior of his furniture (in cabinets and chests, for example) and the addition of stain on the exterior, which he now combines with the wood's original colours. Acutely aware of the need to determine "what will sell throughout the year," Linkert is quick to respond to "advice" from both his customers and other craftspeople: "I am always projecting," he says, buoyed by the "satisfaction of selling things."



Interior of **The Bird House Factory**, Walburg, Saskatchewan.

A final aspect of Linkert's marketing success is the timely relevance, it seems, of two thematic components of his work: his environmental concern and the importance he attributes to the home. Regarding the first, Linkert is deeply conscious of increasing threats to birds' habitats: the expansion of cities into the countryside, the clearing of land for new developments, the transformation of marginal land into productive areas for crops, and the removal of trees, native grasses and wetlands, all of which erode birds' nesting sites, he explains. Linkert encourages people to take an interest in birds: to engage in bird watching; to leave trees standing, which provide nesting sites; and to mount bird feeders and bird houses, which will help the dwindling bird population to rebuild itself. "Birds need our help," he asserts, and The Bird House Factory is eager to "supply homes and feeders for those who cannot build their own." Hardly simple shelters, Linkert's constructions replicate churches, barns, elevators, farm houses, and A-frame homes, for instance, all of which are designed with "the welfare of the birds in mind," he says.

Linkert's attentiveness to the "home as a nest" is further evident in his interest in designing furniture. Indeed, walking into his display at a craft show is like stepping into a home, for he recreates the warmth and intimacy of a domestic interior through his arrangement of cabinets, chests, mirrors, and other furniture that surround the viewer. Acknowledging that his work projects an "at-home" feel and a peacefulness that has a current appeal, at least in the wake of troubling events worldwide, Linkert remarks that marketers are fully aware of the attractiveness to people of the home: these days, people are "nesting, not travelling," he says.

Straddling natural and human environments, Linkert's bird feeders, bird houses and household furniture are associated with multiple kinds of "nests." Professionally, Linkert has also settled into his own nest: he works from his home, where he is close to his family, and he has returned, with satisfaction, to woodworking, the occupation with which his career began. As well, his approach to marketing, one might say, emerges from that nest: it involves his family (particularly his wife) and, hardly aggressive, it blends practicality with a measure of humour, humility, and enthusiasm for innovation.

Suzanne Stewart is a graduate student in the Department of English at the University of Saskatchewan. Her research interests include art history. She has written reviews of art and craft exhibitions for *NeWest Review* and *The Craft Factor*.

The 2002 Emma Lake Collaboration

by Amy Forsyth

The collaboration at Emma Lake has become a much-discussed, eagerly sought-after invitational event. I regarded my invitation to the 2002 conference as both an honor and a challenge. Where else is it possible to collaborate on projects for nearly a week with a congregation of some of the best makers in the world? Indeed, the collaboration has put Saskatchewan on the map for many craftspeople, who might otherwise have uttered some version of painter Barnett Neumann's famous quip: "who is Emma Lake and where the hell is Saskatchewan?"



ABOVE TOP: Mallet - Capital Punishment; Jogge Sundquist (Suralle); birch, ash, wire, paper, acrylic. 68 x 23 x 16 cm. CENTRE: Emma '02 Croquet Mallet & Ball; Travis Townsend, Peggy Chung; wood, paint. 28 x 78 x 26 cm. BELOW LEFT: Croquet Mallet & Ball "Three Way Play"; Heather Cline, Fabiane Garcia, Michael Hosaluk; wood, rope, epoxy, found objects, acrylic paint. 85 x 19 x 7 cm. RIGHT: The Clobber Club; Brent Skidmore, Michael Hosaluk, Lynne Hull; poplar, maple, aluminum. 88 x 35 x 20 cm.



Growing out of a more conventional, lecture-based conference, the "Emma Lake Experience" in its current incarnation as a five-day tempest of creative activity culminating in an auction of the objects produced, which raises money for the Saskatchewan Craft Council and the Emma Lake Kenderdine Campus, and provides funds for future Emma Lake collaborations. Organizers Jamie Russell and Michael Hosaluk have been extremely successful in attracting an international cadre of talented folks by publicizing this event as a great time not to be missed.



TOP: **Snuff Boxes**, Adrian Ferrazzutti, Rachel Bliss, walnut, tile, paint, 8 x 7 x 7 cm.
 ABOVE: **Untitled**, Al Bakke, Ted Crosfield, steel, African Blackwood, 10 x 22 x 22 cm.

As it turned out, the camaraderie, the parties, and the crazy productivity far outstripped anything my febrile imagination had anticipated. It's extraordinary what can occur when one hundred makers assemble lakeside, under the aurora borealis, along with overwhelming quantities of tools and materials, borrowed, begged, and donated. There were more varieties of wood, paint, fabric, found objects, and metal there than I've ever seen all in one place before. And by the day of the auction, the raw materials were reduced to a few lonely orphans, and there were tables loaded with finished objects of every description.

How these objects were made is an interesting story. The sociology of collaboration would be a worthwhile study, complete with patterns from nature of dominant and submissive parties, and their attendant phenomena of creative blockages, intense alliances, feverish conversations, insecurities, and impassioned inspiration. Learning how to collaborate comfortably and productively can be difficult for some, while for those who return year after year, it becomes a rare pleasure to be anticipated, generating a sense of belonging and a lively set of creative challenges.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: **Croquet Mallet/Ball (2)**; Zachary Robbins; oak, mahogany, 72 x 30 x 7 cm.
Mallet & Ball; Michael Hosaluk, Kim Kelzer, Matt Hutton; mixed wood, paint, hair, 100 x 11 x 11 cm. **Blunt Object**; Travis Townsend; wood, nails, plaster, acrylic paint, 10 x 60 x 9 cm. **Kiss The Duck**; Kurt Nielsen, Heather Cline; maple, poplar, paint, lipstick, 90 x 62 x 14 cm.

Not everyone is comfortable working in such a complicated venue, surrounded by the differences of others, their opinions, their strengths and methods. One needs to possess an open mind, a sense of fun, flexibility in applying skills, and a lot of confidence. One must also be willing to sacrifice authorship in favor of the group, and subsequently be surprised by the outcome. Such collaboration can provide new methods and ways of thinking about making, a sense of shared purpose, and the knowledge that one is not alone out there. Comfort and trust are important, and are fostered by the camaraderie of peers. Some of the artists already knew one another, either from other Emma Lake events or from The Furniture Society, the Wood Turning Center, the Saskatchewan Craft Council, or other local or regional organizations.

There was a mixture of new and returning participants, and there was also a balance between artists from nearby provinces and those from outside the region and country. The farthest-flung participants were from Japan, Sweden, New Zealand, and Australia, and there were many Americans from different parts of the United States. Some artists arrived with projects in mind, some had previously collaborated with their co-conspirators, while others had no idea what to expect.

In addition to cooperative colleagues, another essential element of collaboration is the method of dividing projects into individual assignments. There are innumerable ways in which this was done at Emma Lake, depending on the intent—should the project be fragmentary or cohesive? Wacky or resolved? Intuitive or rational? On the chaotic edge, some projects were of the "exquisite corpse" variety, in which each participant was handed a piece and told to do something with it, without knowing the intent of the completed object. An example of this was the large maroon bench, the back of which was defined by a wide variety of spindles. As I watched this project emerge, I couldn't imagine how it was possible that the final outcome would have any visual cohesion whatsoever, when each participant used different forms, colors, content, and materials to render his or her part of the project. Just as I began to despair, painter Heather Cline came along and worked her magic on the bench, pulling it together with maroon paint and leather pads of exactly the same shade. As a result, the diverse array of spindles gave the bench a lighthearted, rather than cacophonous quality.

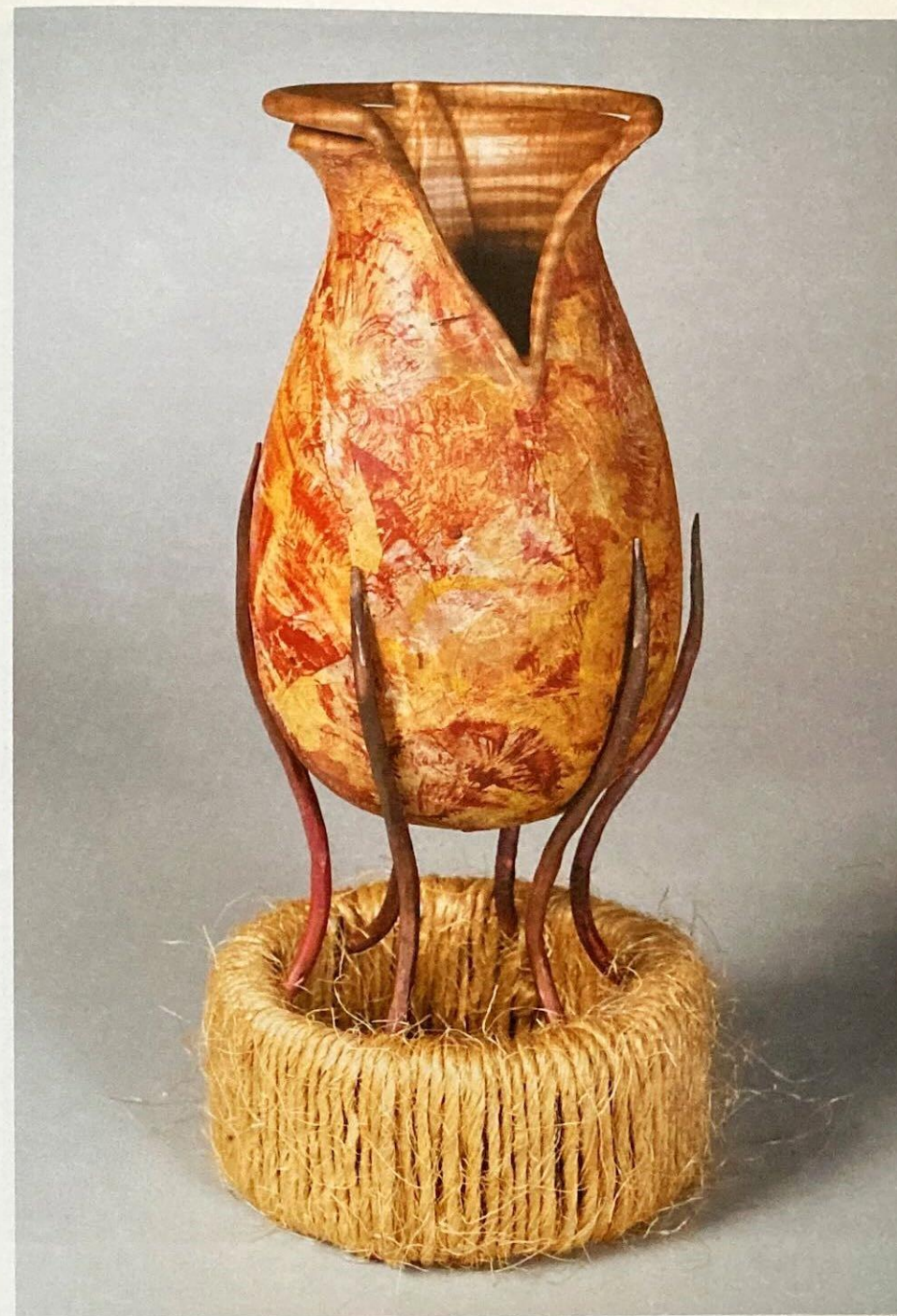
Another *strategy* for collaboration involved single-author pieces that, when assembled, formed a

collection, as in the playful croquet set. Each artist worked on a ball-and-mallet pair. Some employed additional components provided by other artisans working in different materials, such as glass or metal. Generally, however, the nature of this type of collaboration was simply defined by the influence one maker exercised on another as they worked in close proximity. At the auction, the croquet pieces were first offered separately, but the winning bidder, also a participant in the project, took the opportunity to purchase the whole set.

Conference organizer Michael Hosaluk initiated many successful projects in a similar vein, enlisting recruits to make "birds" for the "Bird Cabinet," and "guns" for its partner, the "Gun Cabinet," along with a "Bowl of Pairs," and other such collections. Kim Kelzer, a Washington State resident and long-time Emma co-conspirator, rewired an old toaster, substituting lighting elements for heat coils, and served it up with a platter of "toast," each piece of which was concocted by a different participant, to unique effect.

Emma's own Toronto area wag brought his own twist to the idea of collaboration, by teaming up with the unsuspecting Martha Stewart Company. He purchased a turned wooden lemon reamer at a department store, removed it from its labeled cardboard backing, signed it, and placed it on the auction table, where it sold to someone who was perhaps seduced by his celebrity signature. The idea of this piece continued to develop on the bus on the way back to Saskatoon, when he rediscovered the packaging in the crevice of his bus seat, substituted a left-over wooden turning for the original product and announced his intention of returning this "defective" product to the department store for a refund.

OPPOSITE PAGE: **The Emma Tree**, John McNaughton, Jogge Sundkist; black poplar bark, poplar, oak, maple. 97 x 71 x 16 cm.





L to R: 1. Bill Floate, Michael Hosaluk, Jamie Russell, Ted Crosfield 2. Gordon Peteran, Suzy Wahl, Matt Hutton, Brad Nelson 3. John McNaughton, Gordon Pritchard, Jason Hosaluk, Del Stubbs 4. Brad Nelson, Russell Baldon, Fabiane Garcia, Andy Buck 5. Michael Hosaluk 6. Adrian Ferrazzutti, Jamie Russell 7. Lynne Hull 8. Auctioning the croquet set
Photos courtesy of the incredibly active, and generous, Wes Pound (Emma Coordinator)



Leaving Emma 2002; L to R: Rachel Bliss, Sylvia Lee, Marilyn Campbell, Robin Rice

As these examples show, the idea of collaboration has myriad interpretations, but each breaks the isolation of individual artists and provides opportunities for interaction with others. The quality and type of interaction has solely to do with the personalities of those involved. Some interact as equals, while others bring their expertise to those with less experience. It was revealing to note which participants consistently played the role of teacher, and which ones were brave or modest enough to take on that of "student." On one hand, the most successful projects would naturally be the ones that incorporated processes that the makers had already mastered. However, the true opportunity for the makers in such a gathering seems to be the chance to pick the brains of the assembly for a variety of new ideas. I wonder when one knows enough not to need to do this any longer? I would hope that the answer would be, "Never!" At the introductory slide presentation that was intended to familiarize participants with one another's work, several individuals credited past Emma Lake experiences with major shifts in their work. These were obviously people who had taken the risk of learning something new in the supportive and energetic environment that is Emma.



Stool, 2002; Crafted at Emma 2002 by Mason Eyben, Tanya Norman, Niel Stoutenburg, Dave Dunkley; maple, walnut. 35 x 42 x 42 cm.
Collection of Gordon and Corinne McKay

Amy Forsyth lives outside of Philadelphia, PA, USA. She is a furniture maker and an Associate Professor of Art and Architecture at Lehigh University, where she teaches design. She is also a trustee of The Furniture Society, and the Editor of their newsletter, *Furniture Matters*.

Marketing Your Work: SASKATCHEWAN ARTISANS

by Harriet Richards

Successful marketing concerns artisans everywhere, but those in Saskatchewan face some distinctive challenges. This is a big place with a small population, and many craftspeople live and have studios in isolated, rural settings, far from galleries or tourists. Although the public is supportive, it is rare for a professional craftsperson to survive having Saskatchewan their only market, and so must depend on additional jobs to supplement income.

There are artisans here who are represented in well-established shops and galleries across Canada and the United States. Others are fortunate, and hard-working enough, to provide products to a partnered business in a well-established tourist destination. This article will address some marketing issues affecting craftspeople at other stages of their professional development.

Similar advice was given by artisans, market organizers and gallery owners. Most said that a good quality, original product is the primary requirement. Effective marketing also requires attention to self-promotion and presentation, and a professional manner when dealing with the public.

Where does an emerging artisan begin? The Saskatchewan Craft Council sponsors three markets annually: Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival in the Battleford's community; The Waterfront in Saskatoon with the Mendel Art Gallery and Wintergreen in Regina. Participants in these must be approved by a jury of their peers. A great advantage to displaying at any of them is the enormous promotional/marketing effort made on behalf of participants.

Diane Boyko-Banda, co-ordinator of Sundog Handcraft Faire, attributes its 28 year success to the same format: entertainment, food, and lots of crafts. They advertise, and have their website linked, everywhere possible. Partnerships fostered through Tourism Saskatoon include space on the Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan program, and handbills with the Saskatoon Symphony. Sundog's program includes every artisan's name, medium and phone number. They contact newspapers around the province, have a good rapport with local TV and Radio, and a website which for a small fee will provide a link to any member's website. Sundog receives 14,000 visitors every year.

The Festival sees buyers coming year after year for the established work, but also looking for surprises, and new areas are encouraged. They ask for 3-6 slides (not digital images, because the board examines all of the submissions together). Acceptance rides on quality, presentation and innovation.

The same standards set for these big markets apply equally to the best galleries/shops who promote craft. In fact, some of their expectations may be even more stringent, and aside from the body of work which first led them to represent an artist, each piece coming into the shop may be examined.

Most galleries expect to be prepared in advance for a first meeting. Here is a scenario: an unknown artist decides to get her fused glass out in stores, and finally see some reward for all that hard work. She walks unannounced into a busy gallery, plunks down a couple of pieces and says, "I'd like you to sell this for me, okay?" Unless she is the Mozart of her medium, this approach will probably fail. Besides making an appointment, it would also help if she presented a few good slides, and written material which briefly articulates her thoughts on working with glass (and maybe on her life), what is special (I love orchids, pomegranates, and Art Nouveau. These passions are reflected in the somewhat erotic lines of my Fribbets), and where she can be reached.

Good shops get to know their artists, and they sell the artist with the product. The same tactic goes for the artisan as self-promoter. Wherever a piece is sold, give buyers something of yourself or your process which serves to illuminate the work. Such as: my regard for the Adélie Penguin led me firstly to becoming a world-renowned authority on these magnificent birds, and then to recreating them in Italian marble—whose cold polished surface is the Antarctic herself. A tag or enclosure with your name, location and contact information is important. When that Fribbet or penguin arrives as a gift to a delighted someone, they can order ten more.

Know as much as possible about the shop before you consider doing business with it. References from artisans they have dealt with are important. Do the owners keep careful inventory, pay on time, buy outright or take only on consignment, promote the work? Make an informal visit and



L to R: 9. Al Bakke 10. Daniel Newman 11. Ted Crosfield 12. Rear: Andrew Curle, Clifton Monteith 13. Deborah Werner 14. Allison Finn 15. Satoshi Fujinuma, Trent Watts 16. Auction preview 17. Jamie Russell, Tom Ray, Miranda Jones, Mark Orr
Photos by Wes Pound

look around; if your craft is very traditional and what you see is funk, or just junk, go elsewhere. When you do find outlets for your work, keep meticulous records of where and when every piece goes from your studio. Make use of the Internet, which can bring your work to buyers and galleries from around the world.

Traditions Handcraft Gallery in Regina, established in 1995, and a member of the Saskatchewan Professional Art Gallery Association (SPAGA), is owned and operated by weavers Cheryl Wolfenberg and Carol Serediak. Their mandate is to represent only quality Saskatchewan craftspeople, with whom they share a mutually responsible relationship. They both look at work, talk with the artist, keep them apprised of public response, and give constructive criticism or advice. They discuss pricing, consignment contracts, and whether the work can be produced in quantity for wholesale if the gallery is approached. The more information artists give them, the better they can educate the public and sell the work. Customers look carefully for flaws, so each piece must be perfect. Each artist's work is displayed in two or three spaces throughout, and pieces are sold with a card containing their name. Cheryl advises artists to know their galleries, whether they are friendly and will look after their work, and to present themselves well. Although the gallery space is small, Traditions promotes ten shows a year, booked a year or two in advance. Proposals should include a clear, written idea of what the artist wants the show to do for them, and good slides of the work, especially important for unknown artists.

June Jacobs runs The Hand Wave Gallery in Meacham, also a member of SPAGA, and now in its 20th year. Her taste is for the innovative and experimental, as well as quality functional pieces. Over the years, she has seen that hot-selling artists usually aren't those who try to figure out what the market wants, but rather focus on doing good, strong work. She stays in constant touch with clientele, and lets them know when artists have left, or changed, or arrived. The gallery's website is another promotional tool, but she says isn't necessarily the best way to show individual handmade items and advises artisans to use as many avenues possible. Many gallery artisans are either from the province or once lived here, but the primary mandate is to promote quality. June wants to see a body of work, or make a studio visit, before work is accepted, and expects the artisan to keep stock up. If work isn't suitable, she may recommend

other places for them to try. She encourages gallery artists to "take new ideas and go with them," and promotes group theme shows which sometimes generate new bodies of art.

Ceramists lucky enough to have taken SIAST's now-defunct two year program in Prince Albert, had marketing as an important part of their curriculum. Aspects of becoming professional craftspeople included studio design, business and tax laws, book-keeping, spreadsheets, researching the market, and creating displays. They also learned to write critical reviews and artists' statements, and properly document work.

Sandra Ledingham, a co-founder of this program where she taught for sixteen years, advises, "get your name out there." Establish an exhibition record, or maintain a high profile in some other way. Discover a niche market, or research products, such as ceramic murals and tiles, used in other professional applications. Present images and portfolios to interior designers, landscape architects, architects. If you already have a popular line, hang on to it but keep your work fresh and research new options, so you are seen to be growing. Buyers need to know you're a serious professional, especially when investing in a high-end product.

Potter Stephen Girard, is grateful for his studio in Eastend, where his work sells steadily from the Alley Katz shop and café next door to the stream of tourists who come through the Frenchman Valley. The owners believe in his work, and in the deeper understanding of what he does. This partnership allows him the time to dig his own clays, enjoy more studio time, and have somebody else do marketing and promotion.

An alternative to Stephen's rare situation, is for an extremely productive craftspeople to find a good agent and go wholesale. Before balking at the idea of paying someone 15% of your sweat and tears-earned cash, read on: some out-of-province markets, especially in the US, only deal through an agent. Saskatchewan has an appreciative, but limited, market, and large urban centres may be more supportive of certain styles. US markets command higher prices than ours here will bear. An agent may represent fifty artisans, and costs are spread among them. A good agent will bring them to distant markets, advise them regularly on what is selling, how the product might be developed or improved, and what retailers are looking for.

Sue Robertson, profiled in this issue, uses agents, and says they easily earn the 15% in resulting commissions and sales, and by saving her from lost production time when going to many markets every year. She also warns that the craftspeople has to be able to supply, that the worst thing is not delivering the produce. Dealing with US markets involves learning customs regulations, packaging and shipping. She has created a consistent identity for all promotional material: price list, business cards, and hang-tags for her wall plaques, which include photo, website address, bio.

Harriet Richards is a freelance writer and author.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF MARKETING ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS, ARTISTS' REPRESENTATIVES, GALLERIES, ARTISTS CO-OPS, ETC.

THE WEB

- Inexpensive, invaluable. Use it, create your own site, join a site, get linked. Look over some outstanding links from the SCC for ideas

SASKATCHEWAN ARTS BOARD

- Grants for individual artists (creative grants, improve yourself)
- Under Arts Board News, a link to "The Art of Managing your Career" by the Cultural Human Resources Council <http://www.cultural.hrc.ca>, a five chapter guide to Artists and self-employed cultural workers to help them manage the business side of their creative endeavours

CANADA COUNCIL

- Grants for Artists, Fine Crafts (creative grants)
- Outreach Program: New Audience and Market Development Travel Assistance. This program is divided into three components - Audience and Market Development Within Canada, International Marketing and Promotions, and Travel Assistance for International Buyers. In eligible projects, travel assistance is provided to professional presenters (promoters, programmers and festival artistic directors) curators artists' representatives (managers, agents, tour directors, distributors, art dealers and gallery directors) artist-run centres, artists' associations, arts organizations and presenting network
- Note: individuals may be eligible for Travel Grants

SASKCULTURE

Grants available for Training, Travel, Projects

CARFAC in Saskatchewan

- Provides a variety of professional development workshops for artists throughout the year
- Publications: Gallery Survey (biennially); Saskatchewan Visual Arts Handbook, 2003
- On CARFAC's website, under Special Interest, find: "Artists and the Internet" an on-line resource and interactive forum for artisans and visual artists

CANADIAN CONSULATE

- A publication free to Canadians: Marketing Guide for Fine Contemporary Craft in the United States. 1-800-267-8376, or www.InfoExport.gc.ca

CANADIAN CRAFTS FEDERATION

- Website lists information on marketing, professional development, advocacy and inspiration

Dot From

The History of the Crafts Guild of Manitoba

Published by Dot From, 2001
ISBN: 0-9730253-0-1

Review by Sandra Alföldy

The Crafts Guild of Manitoba (1928 - 1997) was formed by a group of visionary women who utilized crafts to promote Manitoba, preserve ethnic craft traditions, and educate women of all economic, social and cultural backgrounds. It becomes clear in Dot From's well-researched book *The History of the Crafts Guild of Manitoba* that the Guild has done all of these endeavors. From's book presents the reader with extensive factual information culled from the Guild's archives, memos, newsletters, and minutes. Presenting this material in a concise format was achieved by breaking the story of the Guild into a chronological history. Chapters one through seven guide the reader from the 1930s to the 1950s year by year; chapters eight to eleven describe the 1960s to 1990s as decades.

It becomes clear after reading *The History of the Crafts Guild of Manitoba* that the Guild occupied a powerful although often overlooked position in the province of Manitoba. The Guild was formed in 1928 and used the Canadian Pacific Railway's New Canadian Folksong and Handicrafts Festival, held in Winnipeg in June 1928, as its "launching pad." From offers a number of reasons for the decision to form a Manitoba chapter of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, including the generation of income for provincial craftspeople, the solving of rural problems and the preservation of the crafts of new Canadians. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, many craftspeople, including those from destitute farm families, relied on the Guild to provide them with a source of income. As the Canadian government began to gear up for World War Two, the Guild played an important role in "the development of a real Canadian citizenship." From describes how the Guild played a role in the assimilation of craftspeople from a wide range of cultural backgrounds by

bringing together these disparate groups through their shared love of the crafts. For example, Mrs. Stanislaw Zwolski, the wife of the Polish Consulate in Manitoba, was a frequent guest lecturer at the Guild, and before leaving Manitoba gave the guild three authentically dressed Polish figures for their permanent collection of crafts. Of course the Guild was also instrumental in offering the talents of its members for service during the war effort, assisting in the "Voluntary registration of Canadian Women" to ascertain their talents "for patriotic service in war or peace."

After the war the Guild found itself positioned as a strong and financially independent organization, boasting its own retail outlet, educational initiatives linked to the University of Manitoba, a guest speaker programme, and in 1951, its own "Guild House." From describes how the Guild's financial status was boosted by its willingness to embrace the "new Arctic industry" of Inuit carvings, in 1952 receiving and immediately selling out its first shipment of soapstone carvings. During the 1950s and 1960s the Guild had a preminent position in Manitoban, and Canadian craft circles, with a reputation for introducing innovative educational initiatives. By the mid-1960s the Guild was breaking records for the number of students attending craft workshops and classes, and in 1962 was invited to participate in the meetings of the Canadian Association for Adult Education held in Ottawa. By the 1970s the Guild was in a position to benefit from the "unprecedented interest in crafts," registering more than 1029 members in 1974 and 829 students in its craft classes during 1976. Unfortunately, From's final chapters relate the slowing down of educational programmes during the 1980s and 1990s. While the Guild's outlet enjoyed increasing sales, they were not enough to cover the expenditures of the organization. In the 1980s and 1990s, despite the best efforts of the Guild, its growing permanent collection, which the Guild had always envisioned as forming the nucleus of a Craft Museum, did not find a public exhibition space. From ends her history with the closing of the Crafts Guild of Manitoba in 1997. Rather than describing this moment as a negative, she focuses on the accomplishment of the Guild by quoting long-time Guild teacher Geradine Strong, "I believe that the Guild has fulfilled its mandate."

From wishes that the book will appeal to researchers because it contains many valuable insights and facts. For instance, From describes the founders of the Guild as "independent, creative, and energetic" and stresses that these were Canada's earliest career women. The histories of these women and their artistic and social achievements have long been forgotten, but thanks to research such as From's, they are slowly being recovered. It is inspiring to read how women of all classes and racial backgrounds worked together to help each other through the difficult years of the Great Depression and World War Two. The particularities of the Manitoba craft experience—a relatively small population base, great distances from the headquarters of the national guild, rural assimilation, and large numbers of new immigrants—are important to understanding the complexities of the history of the crafts in Canada. While From's book is not a rigorous academic history (for example she offers no critical perspective on the assimilation of various ethnicities, including Inuit and First Nations, into a national craft identity), she provides readers and researchers with an important starting-point for further studies. This is a heart-felt book and a labour of love. From published the book herself and it is obvious that she has tremendous respect for the women who founded the Guild and those who continued their original vision. She is also dedicated to the important role played by the province of Manitoba in the history of Canadian craft.

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Evening Grosbeak, 2002; by carver Harvey Welch
tupelo, acrylic, walnut, cherry; carved, painted. 50.5 x 20 x 11 cm.

Harvey Welch

CARVED BIRDS

by William Davenport



Gray Jay, "Whiskey Jack," 2002
jeltong, acrylic, walnut; carved, painted. 39 x 29 x 22 cm.

The lady beside me, noticing the "Please Do Not Touch" sign above the carved songbird, said, "How do I know these aren't real feathers if I can't touch them?" Familiar praise to consistent "Best of Show" champion carver, Harvey Welch! Harvey's carved birds were exhibited in a show titled *The Fresh Connection*, at the Saskatchewan Craft Gallery, November 2002 through January 2003.

Motivated initially by a desire to own an expensive decoy, he decided to carve his own. Poor tools, limited carving experience, and an inadequate knowledge of his subject led to frustration. A professional educator, he took a logical step, enrolling in Cam Merkle's beginners' carving class. He has since studied with World Champion Carvers Ernest Muehlmann, Greg Woodard, Dan Williams, Bob Guge, and Del Herbert. Now giving back to the carving community, he teaches summer classes at Red Deer College and from his garage studio.

Early prize winning creations were full sized loons and ducks, somewhat similar to the "smooth-finish" *Long-tailed Ducks* in this show; however, large, fully detailed waterfowl are time consuming. Influenced by Muehlmann, a songbird specialist, Welch turned more and more to these birds, particularly his speciality, *Black-capped Chickadees*. "The Fresh Connections" includes two of these captivating renderings. Still, Welch's signature piece is the full size *Western Meadowlark*, head thrown back in spring-welcoming song, perched on a weathered, barbed-wire wrapped fence post... all make believe!

His pieces begin as bandsawn blanks of, usually, tupelo gum wood, rough shaped with power tools, including a Foredom and a micro-motor machine. Knives and chisels are also used. Texturing is "stoned-in" with power carvers; details, including feather shafts, barbs, and splits are added with a burning tool. Legs and feet are soldered brass shaped with the power tools. The carved post is tupelo; the inserted tongue is holly. Wooden parts are sealed in thinned lacquer, undercoated with gesso, and painted with multiple coats of acrylic, blocked in by brush and blended with airbrush. The eyes are the only parts not created by the



Evening Grosbeak, 2002 (detail)
tupelo, acrylic, walnut, cherry; carved, painted. 50.5 x 20 x 11 cm.

artist, but their correct placement is a delicate and essential step. In a carving, correctness and appropriateness of the head and its placement are integral to overall success; at this, Welch excels.

This show includes fourteen additional carvings. Two are modern interpretations of traditional "stick-up" shorebird decoys. These are not carved in full detail, but are left as "smoothies," exquisitely painted in an accurate yet impressionistic style.

There are four other smoothies, all miniatures; three are tiny, but still superbly carved and beautifully painted. Perhaps the best is a *Sandhill Crane* with delicately undercut tail and wings, head painted with spectacular detail. The fourth is considerably larger, but still a miniature... *A Great Blue Heron*. The show brochure states, "Welch's carvings capture his subjects and freeze them for a single natural moment in their lives." This bird, quietly alert on its created branch, epitomizes such a moment in time.



Snowgoose, blue phase, 2002
miniature decorative decoy; tupelo, acrylic, walnut; carved, painted. 12.5 x 20 x 13 cm.

Two snow goose carvings differ from the above in that, while miniatures, they are "decorative decoys"... flat bottomed birds, richly stoned and burned to full detail, simply placed on walnut bases. With the *Blue Phase* carving, Welch demonstrates what a truly skilled artist can do even in restricted size. This bird has uplifted tail, undercut wing lifted slightly above side feathers, revealing primary, secondary, and tertial feathers, all allowing Welch to show off a full range of painting skills, including delicate shading and light play.

"A good carving reflects the essence unique to each species" (show brochure). This is vividly illustrated in an extraordinary trio of Jays. His presentation of the *Blue Jay*, set as if above the viewer, thrusts forward in its quintessential, raucous stance. The *Gray Jay*, quietly confident in a mugo pine setting, stealthily awaits its chance to snatch supper from some unwary camper. Thirdly, the *Steller's Jay*, distinctive crest erect and brilliant colours proudly displayed attest to its intelligence and resulting disdain for camouflage. These are the poses, the

colours, the attitudes, the "essence unique," reflecting truly "the spirit of the bird," reflecting truly great art!

In his own words, Harvey Welch is, "... a carver; more specifically, a wildlife carver," becoming, "a soapstone carver, and, eventually, a bronze artist." Moving to soapstone is an attempt to free up and loosen his pieces, a move away from the restricting emphasis on detail. It is a logical progression for, as he says, "I'm concerned with all the elements that an artist is concerned with. Carvings, at their best, become art."

As I prepare to leave the Saskatchewan Craft Council show, an elderly gentleman, recently through the door, smiles and says, "They look too much like real birds to be wood." Indeed, they almost do.

William Davenport is enjoying an active retirement in Saskatoon.

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