

The
CRAFT
Factor



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FRONT COVER: **Lee Brady**, *Nest Weavers*, 2003; fused, kiln textured & kiln formed glass, copper, applied fused mosaic. 40 x 24 cm.

INSIDE FRONT COVER: **Kaija Sanelma Harris**, *Excavations No. 7*, 2003; wool, silk, rayon, 8-harness doubleweave, felting, unraveling, stitching. 114 x 105 cm. (Dimensions 2003 Premier Prize Winner)

BACK COVER: **Barbara Goretzky**, *Jonah*, 2003, paper clay, glazes; hand built. 50.5 x 35.5 x 20 cm.

The CRAFT Factor

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Letter to the Editor

May 21, 2003

Dear Ms. Alaie,

I read with interest the review of "The History of the Crafts Guild of Manitoba" since the book was written by a colleague and it documents the history of an organization that is of great interest to me. On the whole I found the review written by Sandra Alföldy and published in *The Craft Factor*, Vol. 27.2 a wonderful review, but there was one major error which needs to be corrected.

At one point the reviewer commented that "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." This statement leaves the impression that the collections, both the permanent collection and the library, no longer exist.

In fact, the permanent collection of the Crafts Guild of Manitoba operated as a museum within the Guild organization prior to 1997, and has operated independently since that time as a Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library. Although still recovering from a watermain break in 1998, which seriously curtailed programming and exhibits, the Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library now holds over 5,000 artifacts and 2,500 book titles. During the summer of 2003 the organization will be moving back to downtown Winnipeg to a larger and more suitable space where exhibits, programs and activities will resume.

As Curator of the Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library, I hope that all craftspeople in Canada are aware of the unique collections and the wonderful resources that are available for everyone.

Sincerely,
Andrea Earl
Curator, Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library

Invited Response

I sincerely regret that my review left the impression that the Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library was not a functioning organization. The quote on page 232 of From's text "Truly the Crafts Museum and Library may be likened to the phoenix rising from the ashes," led me to believe that the Museum and Library were still being developed. I am thrilled to learn of the Museum and Library's move this summer, and look forward to visiting it to conduct research.

Sincerely,
Sandra Alföldy
Assistant Professor of Craft History
Nova Scotia College of Art and Design

OPPOSITE ABOVE
Barbara Goretzky, *Some Like It Hot* 2003; paper clay, glazes; hand built. 28 x 28 x 8 cm.
Review on page 10

BELOW
Wendy Weseen, *For Unto You We Cry...*, 2002; mixed media. 61 x 66 x 50 cm.
SCC Gallery Exhibition
August 1 - September 21, 2003

SASKATCHEWAN CRAFT COUNCIL GALLERY

The Great Saskatchewan Scarf Show
STRETCHING THE LIMITS
Juried exhibition of hand made scarves
September 26 - November 16, 2003

Dimensions 2003
Saskatchewan Craft Council's annual juried exhibition celebrating excellence in a wide variety of craft media.
November 21 - January 11, 2004

WABI SABI
Contemporary Japanese Ceramics
Exhibition of the works of
Rob Froese, Kazuma Nakano & Yuu Kobayashi
Curated by Heather Smith
Moose Jaw Museum & Art Gallery
January 16 - March 14, 2004

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Kaija Harris - Working with the Grid

profile by Sheila Robertson



*The gentian weaves her fringes,
The maple's loom is red.
My departing blossoms
Obviate parade.
Emily Dickinson*

There is ample evidence, throughout her comfortable Saskatoon home, that Kaija Sanelma Harris is passionate about weaving. There are completed pieces displayed on the living room walls, and some large tapestries rolled up like oversize pillows in a corner. An upstairs bedroom is the workroom, containing two large, 10-harness floor looms. But she is perhaps happiest in the little sunroom on the main floor, a place she jokingly calls "the drawing room." Sitting at the desk, with the adjacent windows overlooking the garden, she is backed by dozens of her drawings, some coloured with pastel shades of pencil crayons. This is where she works through her ideas for future tapestries. There are some photographs, as well, of scenes that have captured her fancy on ramblings with Elvira, her 11 ½-year-old black, flat-coated retriever.

Elvira is a great impetus, even if she doesn't know a warp from a woof. "My dog gives me excuses to go to places I like to wander in," Harris explains. "I don't need to have a friend to go with. I can go at a moment's notice." The two often wander in the brush along the banks of the South Saskatchewan River.

"Everything starts here," Harris says in her drawing room. "I decide how wide a piece should be. I do a drawing, then I have to enlarge that drawing. That's the maquette. If it's a pictorial work, I have another drawing—called a cartoon—with the outlines of the images. The cartoon sits behind the warp. Otherwise, you don't get the proportions right."

At the loom, Harris refers to her drawings and photographs for the colours she chooses. "I feed on colour!" she declares. "If I'm doing anything that is limited to one colour, I get so bored. I try to work with threads, a little of this, a little of that, to bring out the kinds of colours I want to have.

"I can't do what a painter does, putting yellow and blue together to get green paint. But you can, for example, adjust the blue colour by adding a thinner thread. I spend so much time trying to find just the thread that gives me the right kind of colours. It's a slow process, because you forget what you did a week ago."



Kaija posing in front of her weaving titled *Elements* - cotton warp and wool weft, 146 x 198 cm. 1986

She relies on her notes to keep her on track. "It's intriguing. There are so many ways of approaching what I'm doing."

Harris' delight in colour is akin to that expressed by Emily Dickinson. Both the artist and the poet are keen observers of nature; both revel in colour. Dickinson wrote of the "purple traffic" of night, and described summer skies as "inns of molten blue."

There is in Harris' major work much of a poet's yearning to understand and communicate the indescribable. As she puts it, "There's some sort of elusive quality I can't explain with words, and I can hardly ever do it with my work. But that's what I'm striving for."

She has recently started a new tapestry, one that will occupy her for three or four months. It is painstaking work. She expects to complete less than an inch each day. The subject is a thicket—"One more thicker," she says wryly, for this is a frequent theme in her work.

She wants this particular thicket to reveal the slightest tinge of spring green hovering around winter-grey branches. This is the sort of subtlety of nature that captivates her. On her walks, she'll glimpse something, experience some revelation that takes her breath away. It is this she is compelled to share in her work, even though she would never rave about it verbally because, as she says, "I'm not verbal."

The joke is that her intricate tapestries speak volumes. Her

expertise with fibre art, honed over more than 40 years of working with the medium, allows her to be articulate, moving, profound.

"This piece is about spring," she says. "It's based on an old photo I took. There's a moment on the prairie in the spring. You're walking in the bluff, and there're no green leaves yet, but the air around the tree trunks appears to be green. I'm trying to express that."

Harris' eclectic readings also shape her work. She is especially interested in history, politics, and archaeology. She maintains that weaving is a feminist issue since, over the millennia, it has largely been executed by women, and taught to their daughters. She has read about wealthy, male explorers such as Heinrich Schliemann, the British archeologist who found Troy. These men were seeking gold and other precious objects. "Remnants of ancient weaving were not of interest to them, because weaving was women's work. They discarded the fibres they found."

"Textiles go back to the earth. They rot. They get easily destroyed by weather, so they require special places to survive, dry places like Egypt and Peru. There have been finds in the salt mines in the Far East, (because) salt preserves colour."

Typically, ancient fabrics have a plain-woven surface. "It's over and under, the same in the warp and woof directions," Harris explains. "Some more complicated ones have been found in European salt mines."

Not surprisingly, given the history of "women's work," Harris first learned to work with fibre at her mother's knee. In fact, she learned from two mothers, her own and the Swedish foster mother with whom she lived during the Second World War.

She recalls being a four-year-old, charged with responsibility for her three-year-old sister, on the train to the border. There, the Finnish children were put into a hospital, vaccinated, and quarantined for several weeks. It was not a happy start to her stay. However, the Swedish couple, whose only child she was, treated her like a princess. Though it was wrenching to be sent back to Turku, Finland when she was six, Harris often returned to visit her Swedish parents, and remained close to them for the rest of their lives.

Her Swedish mother knit clothes for her, and decorated them with embroidery. Her Finnish mother was an excellent seamstress, who operated a small shop from her house. "Mother had one basic pattern, and she'd measure a customer and make everything from that, including evening gowns and wedding gowns."

Harris acknowledges that the early sense of duality in having two sets of parents, two countries, two languages, has contributed to her life and her work. "I developed different ways of looking at things," she says.

She is interested in racism, religion, things she calls "large ideas." She finds herself puzzled by dogmatic people. "I can't see how somebody could be so narrow-minded," she says. She prefers to weigh options and consider all sides of contentious issues.

An appreciation for life's complexities has drawn her to multi-harness weaves rather than plain weaving. Sometimes, her works play with chords and refrains resembling musical scores.

"I like a grid," she points out. "I love maps, and presenting information within squares." This has been a preoccupation in a number of her woven works, a number of which are segmented into little quilted pockets. Some pockets are stuffed, and some appear as translucent windows for underlying images. Some are later "excavated," as Harris describes her deliberate unravelling of portions of her work. In a sense, it is like an archeological dig, so she can reveal what lies beneath.

"The structure of double weaving appeals to me," she says. "I seem to come up with all sorts of ways of using it, stitching around it or filling it." In addition, she says, "Heavy textiles hang better. But I like things for different purposes. And I like to break the rules, and do some innovations."

The double weaves are based on squares. "I've approached that from so many different directions," she says.

Finnish Takana weaving has two layers, Harris explains. One could be dark and another light, and the weaver decides which threads will be on top. The colours may be changed to some degree, but the result is double-woven fabric revealing both warp and weft.

"It's very limiting in terms of colour," she says, "and it's hard to do, it's tedious. You can weave in human figures, buildings,

trees, birds. You do the design on graph paper and you see movement from square to square within it."

One definition of tapestry is a weft-faced weave, the wefts being interrupted. "They don't go continuously across as they cover the work," Harris notes. "It goes in bits, and back and forth."

In her workroom, there are stacks of small samples she has woven in order to puzzle out technical problems. She also works out concepts on small, mohair throws, which sell readily at Darrell Bell Gallery in Saskatoon.

"I want my work to last, and I want it to hang properly on the wall," she says. "So I think about all the things I've learned, and what are the worst things that can happen."

Considering the worst-case scenario is perhaps not an unusual approach for a Finn. Harris likes to tell the story of the resourcefulness of the Finnish army, which held off Russian invaders during the Finnish Winter War of 1939. Her father was at the front in that war, and he returned home. "The Russians had tanks, and couldn't move in the snow. The Finns moved an army, wrapped in white sheeting, on skis."

Yet she is modest about her own innovations in weaving. "I can't take credit for anything I do, because it's based on what somebody else has done. It's their invention. All of us do have some sort of signature. It has to do with the colours you like. I choose certain things, and others will choose something totally different."

Tapestry work appeals to her because it embraces emotional content, imagery, colour, form, texture. Yet it is also mathematical, comprising permutations of the grid of warp and woof. She notes that Joseph Marie Jacquard, a French inventor, developed the first computer with his punch-card loom in 1782, and revolutionized pictorial weaving.

In the tapestry that is Harris' life, the underlying structure of the warp threads represents her Finnish identity, while the colours, patterns and rhythms in the weft reflect her subsequent experiences in Sweden, Iceland, the United States and Canada.

Harris trained at the Turku Textile Institute in Finland, before working with a textile designer, who specialized in batik and ecclesiastical hangings, in Reykjavik. She came to the United States in 1968 and began exhibiting widely.

"I lived for three years in Iowa, and I saw a wonderful show in Cedar Rapids that had been put together in New York. There were North American textile artists represented, as well as Polish, German and Swiss artists."

On arriving in Saskatchewan in 1973, "I fell in love with the province early, driving from the south to the north," she says. "I loved the light on the prairie."

She and her then-husband were driving an old Oldsmobile whose radiator tended to boil over. "We had to stop repeatedly to let it cool off, and I kept thinking, 'Boy, this is a nice place to go for a walk.'"

And so she is walking still, and reflecting what she sees in her tapestries. She has celebrated the land's every mood and season, as well as the province's disappearing icon, the grain elevator.

She is intent on creating work that is not only innovative, but solid and durable. Not for her the conceptual pieces that are long on ideas but short on craftsmanship. To her, where and how a piece will be hung and how it will be maintained are as important as the design and construction phases.

She has complained to the University of Saskatchewan, for instance, about the condition of a woven work in its collection. The large wall hanging, by Mariette Rousseau Vermette, is gathering dust in a stairwell in the Murray Memorial Library.

Vermette led a 1977 Architectural Tapestry Workshop at the Banff Centre that Harris terms "one of the greatest experiences of my life. She was very professional, and talked to us about the ethics of doing commissions, and the expectations that public work be maintained."

The work in the university library has a fluffy, brushed surface. "It is collecting dust, so that you don't see the texture of the weave." A worst-case scenario, indeed.

Harris was pleased when her wool, silk and rayon double-woven tapestry, *Excavations No. 1*, was given the top award at "Dimensions," the annual juried exhibition at the Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival in July. It captured the \$2,000 Premier's Prize, and Harris received a merit award from the sponsoring Saskatchewan Craft Council. Harris had also won the top prize in 1978, 1984, 1990 and 1999. She says she feels especially gratified because each of her award-winning pieces has been totally different. She tries to keep pushing the boundaries of her art.

Harris is known far beyond Saskatchewan's boundaries. She has completed several commissions for tapestry wall hangings, including a stunning and monumental work installed at the Toronto Dominion Centre in Toronto in 1985. Comprising more than 700 stripes of colour, it seems to ripple like the northern lights. Her works also hang in Ottawa's Rideau Hall, in Canada's embassy in Warsaw, Poland, and in public collections, including Saskatoon's Mendel Art Gallery and the Canada Council Art Bank. In 2001, Harris was among five finalists named for the Saidye Bronfman Award, one of Canada's largest visual arts prizes.

Harris is happy with recognition, and happy when someone finds her works dazzling, but she shrugs off praise. "I just look at what's pleasing to the eye," she says. "I rely on my eye."

Sheila Robertson is a Saskatoon writer, editor, and educator. She knows her warp from her woof.

2003
WINTERGREEN

28th Annual Christmas Craft Market

November 28, 1 pm - 9 pm
November 29, 10 am - 6 pm
November 30, 10 am - 5 pm

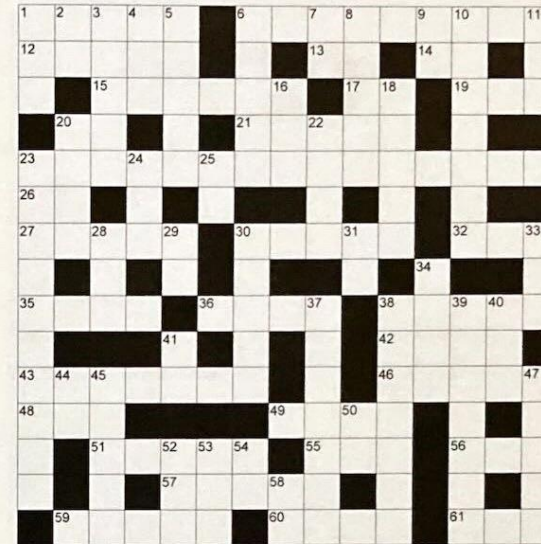
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ACROSS

- 1 Paint, with colour
- 6 Pottery type
- 12 Love a lot
- 13 Protest expression
- 14 Sailor
- 15 Wood to work with
- 17 Rewind, for short
- 19 French island
- 20 Please, please __ (The Beatles)
- 21 Way to go!
- 23 A light artistic result
- 26 Exists
- 27 Light wood
- 30 Fashion cut
- 32 Bow material
- 35 New Exporters in Business, for short
- 36 Oceanscape item?
- 38 Colour
- 42 Giant
- 43 Evocative form
- 46 Crafter's creators
- 48 Another oceanscape item?
- 49 Go __ (work with a lot of energy)
- 51 Skill and artistry

- 55 Garden tool
- 56 Paint alternative?
- 57 A beautiful brown
- 59 Forms lie within it
- 60 Showy
- 61 A little bit

DOWN

- 1 Sculpture material
- 2 Promotion
- 3 Drier
- 4 Period
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- 6 Sudden increase in creative energy
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- 8 Arctic direction
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- 10 Talent
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- 16 Foot extension
- 18 Interlace
- 20 Spanish table
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- 24 Future action word
- 25 Current type
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- 29 Magazine controller
- 30 loco
- 31 Deja __
- 33 __ look
- 34 Othello's betrayer
- 37 It is cutable and curable
- 38 Troy pet got confused for craft product
- 39 Smooth
- 40 Chan __: path
- 41 The right way to __ is to __ (anonymous poem)
- 44 Mother
- 45 Curve skywards
- 47 Fixed
- 50 Maiden loved by Zeus
- 52 Alphabet
- 53 Cost
- 54 Musical scale note
- 58 __p: opening

CROSSWORD ANSWERS ON PAGE 33.

New Faces In Clay & From Fire For Fire

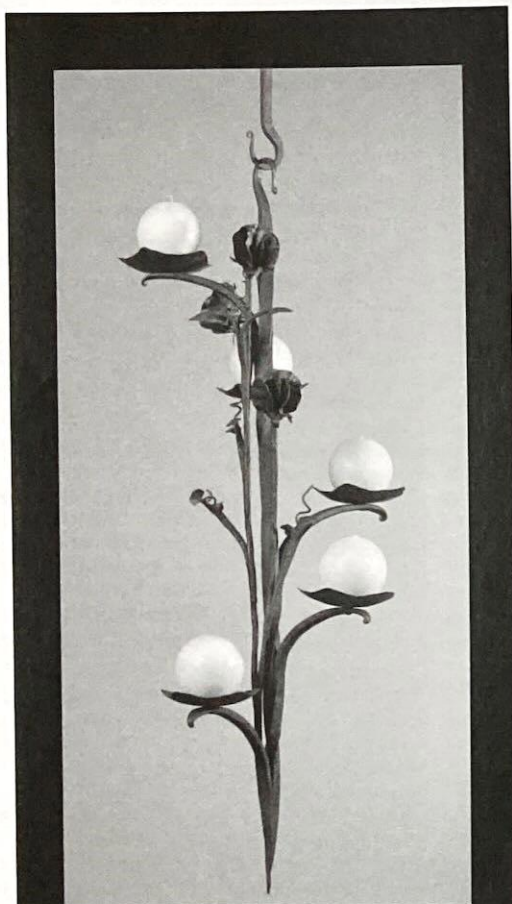
Barbara Goretzky & James Gerlinsky
Saskatchewan Craft Council Gallery Exhibition
March 28 - May 25, 2003

review by Glen Grismer

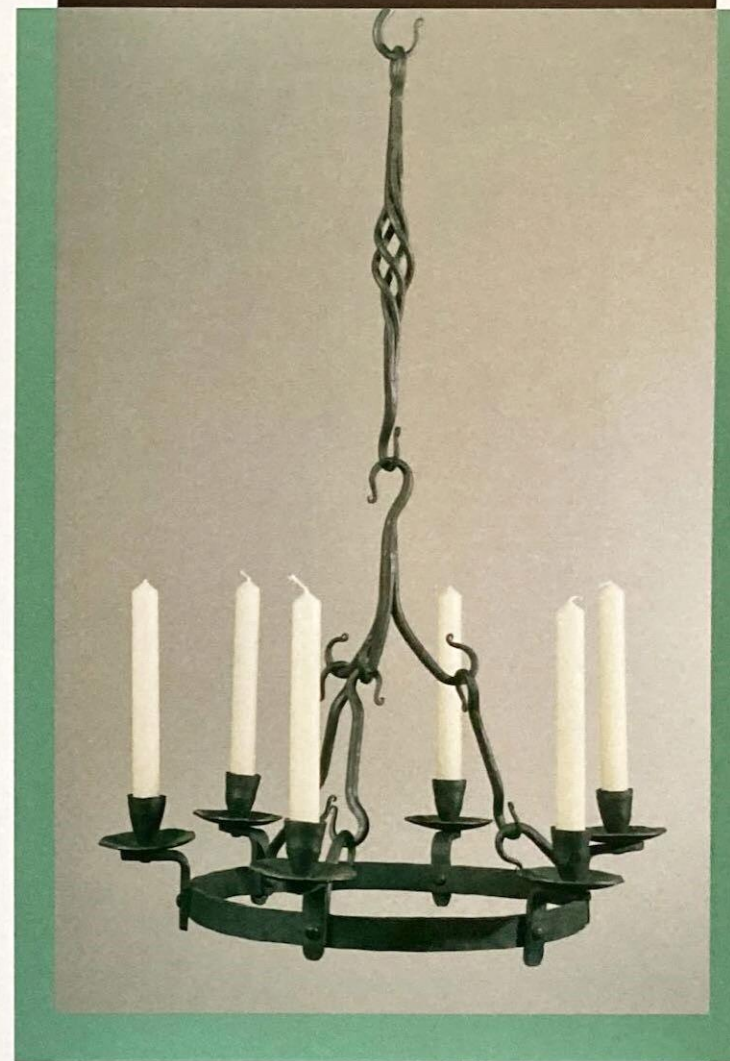
"New Faces in Clay," a diverse paper clay presentation by Barbara Goretzky, and "From Fire for Fire," a forged iron offering by James Gerlinsky were at once exciting, perplexing, and immediately honest. The timing of this show was perfect given the ominous events unfolding in the Middle East.

The combined shows presented obvious contrasts between clay and iron in the forms, colours, and evident precision, or lack thereof, of the pieces. Goretzky's work embodied her formal training, her travels in other cultural settings, and her work with other artists, especially Rosette Gault who introduced her to paper clay potentials. Add Goretzky's passionate and admittedly "no fear" approach and the result was ripe, bursting forms with rich colour and a touch of whimsy destined to enrich some favourite, personal space. In contrast, Gerlinsky presented a traditional, perhaps even historical, body of work inspired by watching his grandfather at the forge, talking to "old-timers", and honed on the lessons of trial and error. Again, add the artist's passion for the forging process and another very personal result emerged for our exploration. Perhaps the very personal and honest approaches of the artists precluded the two attempts at collaboration from being cohesive, but the overall combination of pieces provided an effective interplay of bright colours and matt black, delicate and blunt, precise and rugged, joyous and brooding, subtle and 'in your face'.

Goretzky's clay work sought to depict people's lives. Like the artist, each piece was full of, and fully into, life. Perhaps like Goretzky's hands, the hands of the three wall figures were gentle while firmly cradling what appeared to be precious wares eager to leap into our hands. Kind faces coaxed us to look, enjoy, and maybe purchase for a special place in our home. "Jonah," whose brilliant-coloured fish seemed nearly in flight, was a pleasure to come to know. Lives, not life in general, were celebrated in the colour and fullness of ripe fruit, vegetables, and flowers. Abundance was everywhere, but nowhere more wonderfully than with "Some Like it Hot." Lustrous glaze highlighted the rich colours on these three wall plaques, each with a flower in full bloom appearing to burst through a swirling impressionistic background, uncomplicated and complete. I was surprised, however, when the old gentleman bathing in Goretzky's ceramic tub "Taking A Plunge" stopped playfully spewing water long enough to whisper, "But where is the artist's life?" "Why, all around you," I said, "but maybe especially in 'Adam and Eve'." In this piece the symbols of life, the seeds, and the mystery of sin combined to leave one pondering and unresolved.



James Gerlinsky, *Room Temp B.C.*, 2003; iron, sheet metal; forged. 84 x 36 cm.



James Gerlinsky, *Untitled*, 2003; iron; forged. 74 x 47 cm.

Gerlinsky's poem "Forging," used as his Artist's Statement, revealed his fascination with the forging process with its glowing coals emitting "circles of heat and light, push[ing] back the night's deep dark." As a "link in an unbroken chain, stretching deep into the past," Gerlinsky revealed that in this time of renaissance for his craft he is bound to, perhaps longing for, a time past. Gerlinsky set out to use fire to shape iron into forms that, in turn, control fire. True to his word, his works included hearth tools, candleholders, even a small table built around an old, cast iron heating grate. The work was intentionally rough-finished, but Gerlinsky's patience and precision were amply evident in the almost 8000 pieces of precisely interlocked and richly coloured copper wire on his fireplace screen "Untitled" and the gentle tendrils and delicate Sweet Peas of a spiralling candle holder "Room Temp B.C." Gerlinsky also set out to provide clear evidence that every part of each piece had been "kissed by the hammer," and he evidently wielded an amorous hammer. I sensed that I might have arrived at an inopportune moment, interrupting the passion and finding Gerlinsky's lovers somewhat dishevelled, evidently happy, and perhaps wanting me to leave so they could return to the forge and hammer. Again I was surprised when the Elfen, ceramic heads on an iron hearth set "Fire Face Set" whispered in chorus, "but where is the maker's life?" I paused. "Why... well... hmmm," I said, "... yes, I think it is all around you in the hammer marks on the iron, but maybe especially in "Wait of the World" with its traditional, clear symbolism and resolute statement about the state of the world".

The world news on exhibition opening day reported "bunker busters" falling on Baghdad and repeated the words of powerful people proclaiming high ideals, liberation, or holy resistance. All that was really apparent was war. Seeing friends in the gallery helped a bit. Then there was the apparent and stirring energy in the iron and the full life in the clay. Colours recalled goodness and the iron recalled

strength. In a corner stood "Wait of the World", the truncated shotgun barrels boldly attached to a ploughshare with a flower in one barrel. Out of the other barrel curled a wisp of incense smoke that has, for millenia, been used to carry prayers for peace. The honesty in the work presented by Goretzky and Gerlinsky readily exposed and muffled the lies of the world that day, and at least for a while in this gallery the world was good.

Glen Grismer blacksmiths in his Saskatoon studio, lectures at the University of Saskatchewan, and is an enthusiastic facilitator and participant in metal and multi-media collaborative workshops and conferences.



Barbara Goretzky & James Gerlinsky, *Fire Face Set*, 2003; handbuilt paper clay, glazes, forged iron. 112 x 45 x 24 cm.

Cabinets of Curiosities

An exhibition co-organized by the Wood Turning Center, Philadelphia, PA and The Furniture Society, Asheville, NC

review by Robin Rice



Gordon Peteran, *Chest in a Bowl*, 2002. 50.8 x 55.9 x 55.9 cm. Photography by John Carlano, courtesy of the Wood Turning Center.

In Gian-Carlo Menotti's Christmas opera *Ahmal and the Night Visitors*, King Kaspar, one of the three wise men, sings, "This is my box. This is my box. I never travel without my *box*. In the first drawer I keep my magic beads: One carnelian against all evil and enemies. One moonstone to make you sleep. One lapis lazuli to help you to find water.... In the third drawer... I keep *licorice!*"

The sage's beloved box is a *wunderkammer* or cabinet of curiosities. The German word *kammer*, like its English synonym, can refer to a small room but it might be a portable jewelbox, a desk with pigeon holes and hidden drawers or an entire museum containing anything and everything from candy to priceless treasures.

Last year, The Wood Turning Center in Philadelphia and The Furniture Society selected proposals for contemporary Cabinets of Curiosities from a field of 57 entries. The 14 completed works, on view at the WTC in time for the Furniture Society's annual meeting this past June, will travel to at least ten venues in the next three years. The wizardry of many of these cabinets is distinctly postmodern. The exquisite crafting is timeless. Several justify comparison to the intricate *wunderkammern* discussed by Curator at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, Ursula Ilsa-Neuman, in her engrossing historical essay, one of several in a catalogue which surely will become a model for future exhibition catalogues. Copiously illustrated, it includes a CD-ROM with short digitized sequences displaying significant interior and exterior features of each cabinet.

The need for elaborate encrypted storage has been recognized by most cultures. Cabinets are not only works of art in themselves but interactive puzzles designed to beguile privileged viewers. In Europe, as Ilsa-Neuman points out, cabinets for display and storage were



associated with precious objects, such as jewelry, and armor in the Renaissance, but they are especially identified with the 16th and 17th centuries. Collecting and science were popular avocations in the era preceding the 18th century mania for classification and hierarchy that ushers in Modernism. Thinkers like Descartes inspired confidence that one day the workings of the universe would become as intelligible as clockwork. Physiological oddities, botanical specimens and archeological and geological fragments were promises of secrets to be unlocked, as well as evidence of the intricacy and beauty of God's plan.

In keeping with this tradition of eclectic collections of marvels, perhaps the most emblematic piece in the show is the work of 17 Canadians led by Doug Haslam. Inspired by Ching dynasty *To Pao Ko* (elaborate cabinets of miniatures), the fantastical contents of *Ein Kleiner Wunderschrank (micro thaumata)* include a real tarantula, a board game (Gordon Galenza), a mouse helmet (Jeff DeBoer), and three cat's whiskers (Louise Williamson). The entire cabinet presents a duality of narratives. Each element simultaneously embodies a fictional story and a real history of collaborative interaction. For example, Saskatchewan native glass artist Bonny Houston says, "My contribution... was inspired by the idea of curiosity itself.... It is like a memory capsule, or the lock of hair a mother saves from her baby." Haslam adds, "Bonny's piece for the cabinet came out of an ongoing collaboration between us where we have been casting hot glass into wood forms. The embryonic form of the cast glass piece contains a lock of copper wool that directly reflects Bonny's bright red hair. I created a womb-like environment in a small drawer that doubles as a means of displaying the object...."

Many works allude to nature. All allude to culture. Every structure can be interpreted as a metaphor for knowledge. Po Shun Leong and the late Bob Stocksdale's hinge-articulated cabinet which opens into a human figure with a clock face, suggests that knowledge is human-centered. Though outlines of the boxy figure seem amusingly mechanical, sections of Stocksdale's burl bowls provide unpredictably poetic, interiority.

Houses are often surrogates for the human form. Amy Forsyth's house standing squarely on Mark Sfirri's splendid multiple-axis-turned pad-foot legs is home to a sculptural family of chess figures. The peaked roof is a lectern supporting a book. Gideon Hughes and Adolf Volkman's house clings tenaciously to the wall. A convenient flashlight (a symbol, perhaps, of science) illuminates Cartesian interior pulleys and weights which open windows when a crank is turned.

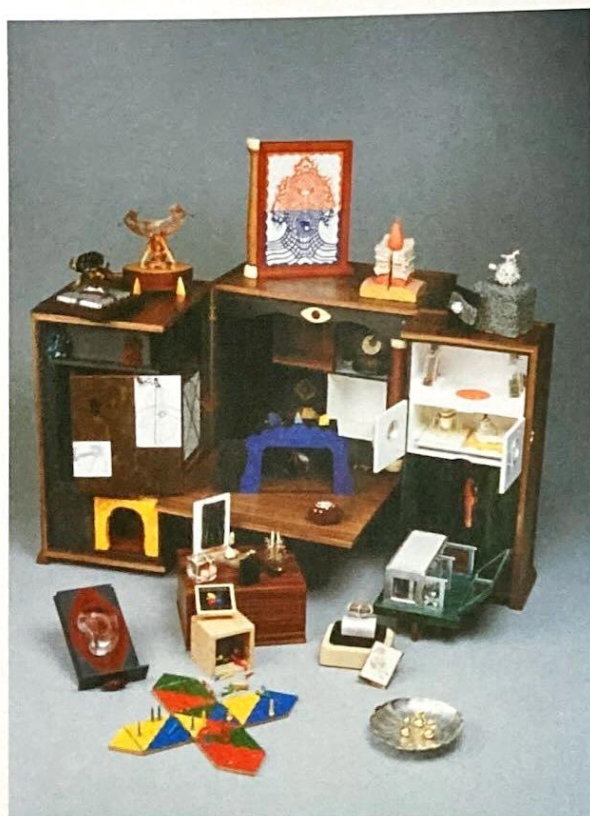
At another extreme of mechanical sophistication, Tony Delong's computerized sensors control the antics of Michael Brolly's team's blue-bellied Buddha-alien resting on a bed of nails. When humanoids approach, it bobs, blinks animatronic eyes (by John Biggs) and reveals treasures beneath its navel.

Microcosm and macrocosm are dual tortoises Kurt Nielsen carved to support and crown the revolving display case of *Seven Wonders*: mystical science as true magic. Behind a real Luna moth under glass, we find a book made by Dan Essig with a Luna moth pupa in its cover. When the case is rotated, new pairings appear. Another mystical work, William Leete and Sam Chung's *Holon Form*, marries straight and curved lines to describe an elegantly modular universe. Chris Becksvort and Alex Dulberg playfully highlight the formal refinement of functional modules: turned Shaker spools and bobbins.

Michael Hosaluk & Mitch Ryerson, *Round Guy Meets Square Guy*, 2002. 195.6 x 61 x 35.6 cm.



Amy Forsyth & Mark Sfirri, *Figurati... (go figure yourself)*, 2002. 137.2 x 61 x 43.2 cm.



Doug Haslam, Linda Chow, Fred Coates, Jeff DeBoer, Debra Yelva Dedyluk, Mark Dicey, Gordon Galenza, Trudy Golley, Christina Greco, Crys Harse, Bonny Houston, Paul Leathers, Kari McQueen, Les Pinter, Colleen Rauscher, Bruce Watson, Louise Williamson. *Ein Kleiner Wunderschrank (micro thaumata)* 2002. 40.6 x 34.3 x 42 cm.

Similarly enshrining a row of identical forms, *Top Secrets*, a vertical wall cabinet built by Christopher Weiland, contains a set of tops ornamented by Kelly Delor. Empowered by 10-year-old Delor's confident use of washes, pencils and crayons, Weiland based his finish on her media and palette.

In *Round Gray Meets Square Gray*, Canadian Michael Hosaluk and Mitch Ryerson of the USA demonstrate that opposites can make beautiful music together, at least with maracas. And, perhaps, that once a round peg gets into a square hole, it may refuse to roll away.

The botanical alphabet *vargueño* (a traveling chest on a stand) constructed by Miguel Gomez-Ibañez and painted by Joseph Reed (both USA) awaits the owner's chosen collection. A free-standing sculpture, *Seeds of Curiosity: Staples of Communication* by Jack Larimore (USA) and Stephen Hogbin (Canada) has the external form of a giant metal and wood plant supported by wings of etched glass. The large pod opens to reveal tiny bottles containing seeds.

Michelle Holzapfel originally suggested the theme for the entire show. Her group's entry is an irregular pile of antiquarian "leather"-bound folios—one is prominently titled *Omnibus*—on a wrinkled linen cloth. The stunning *trompe l'oeil* of carving and paint, imperceptibly merges with real books bound by Donna C. Hawes detailing the history of the work itself. One is slip-cased with an illusionistic twin volume. Here we see "truth" embodied in presentation, perhaps a deconstructionist position. Holzapfel invites everyone to join the collaboration by writing in one of the real books.

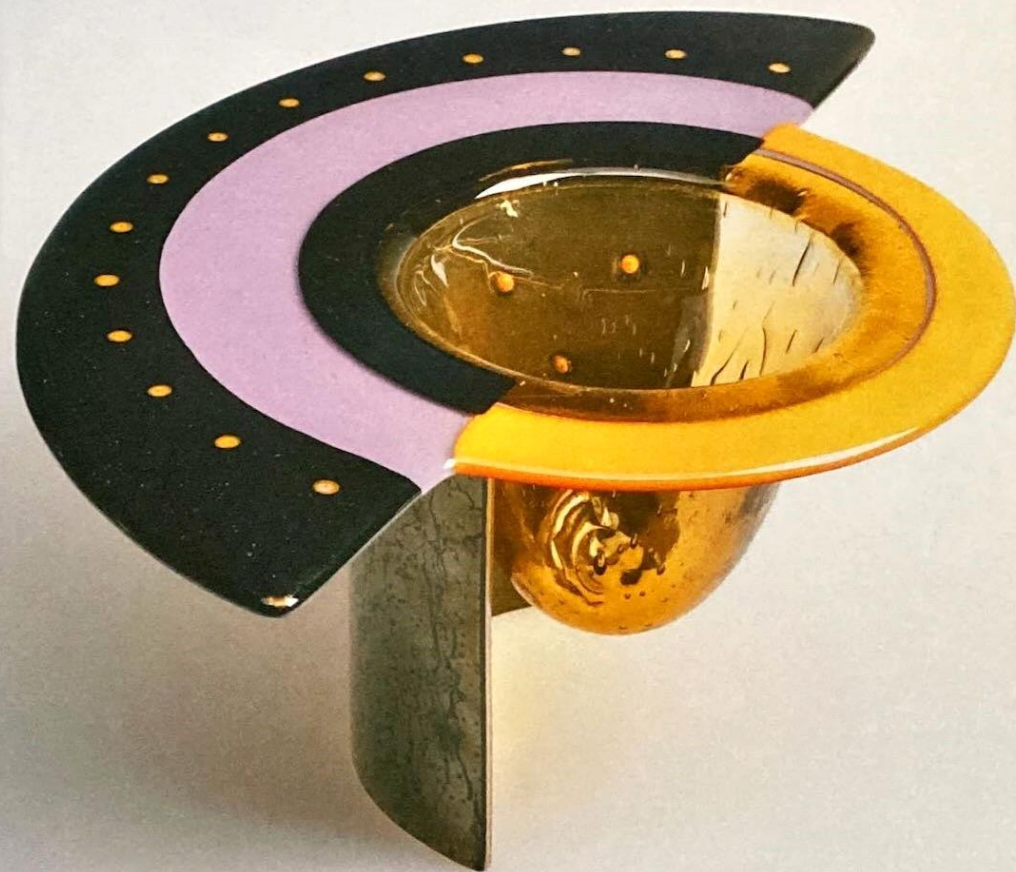
In another paradoxical work, perfectionist Canadian Gordon Peteran constructs a small white-on-white cabinet imprisoned within a bowl: a curiously post-modern encounter with curiosity forever unsatisfied.

The viewer will experience this exhibition as, among other things, a discourse on scale: boxes within boxes within boxes. Some of the smallest items embody some of the biggest ideas. If every cabinet is an allegory of knowledge, the whole of the exhibition is, itself, a cabinet of curiosities, delighting our senses and setting our thoughts on journeys of analytical wonder.

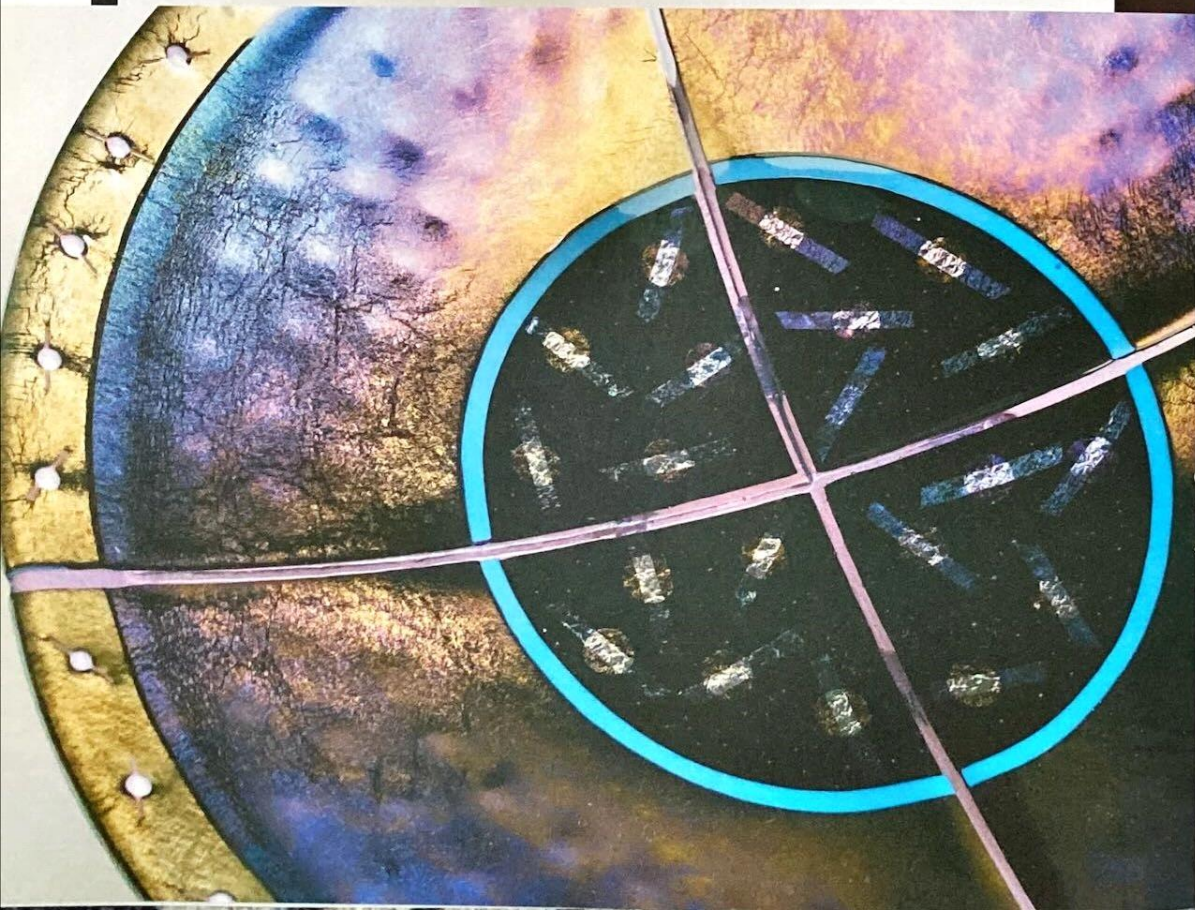
Robin Rice is an adjunct assistant professor at the University of the Arts and resident journalist for the Creative Glass Center of America. Co-author of *Philadelphia Murals and the Stories They Tell* (2002), she attended the 2002 Emma Lake Collaborative in Saskatchewan and is a frequent contributor to *American Craft* and *Woman's Art Journal*. She received a 2003 Fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

Lee Brady in Transition

profile by Harriet Richards



Twilight Bouquet, 2003; fused, kiln textured & kiln formed glass. 46 x 32 x 19 cm.



Marigold Nectar, 2003; fused, kiln textured & kiln formed glass, applied fused mosaic. 43 x 25 cm.

Glass artist Lee Brady grew up in a house sandwiched between two creative playgrounds—an auto painting shop and a lumber yard, and it was there that he first learned to mix chrome, wood, and paint to form his childhood fantasies. Now his fantasies are more perfectly and painstakingly formed using glass, paint, and metal.

Brady was a BFA student in 1975, studying Ceramics with James Thornsby at the University of Saskatchewan, when he was first bitten with the idea of working with glass. He was attending a ceramics workshop in the United States at the time, but it was the glass blowers next door who provided a real revelation in technique. He returned home thinking about the possibilities, and shortly after graduation began developing his skills with glass. In 1980 he opened Glass Eye Studio, where he continues to work.

As all artisans well know, it's a tough road to make a living by doing what you love. Lee Brady acknowledges the help of friends who purchased work in the developmental stages, while he was getting a grounding in his new medium. In those early years he also began to take on small commissions for stained glass work, and this led to a demand from public and private sources which now accounts for a large share of his studio output. His architectural stained glass may be seen in businesses, homes, and churches in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Brady's work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions, both national and international, and is represented in many private collections. He has continued to develop and acquire new techniques in fused and stained glass, as well as sharing his skills by teaching and acting as juror for the Saskatchewan Craft Council, Saskatchewan Arts Board, and the Canada Council. He is a founding member and president of the Saskatoon Glassworkers Guild, and a founding member and supporter of the Saskatchewan Craft Council. In 1992 he was nominated for the Saidye Bronfman Award for Excellence in Craft, has received the SCC's Dimensions' Elizabeth Swift Award for Excellence in Glass twelve times, and won third in the non-functional category at the WG@BE (Warm Glass at Bullseye) 2nd annual international exhibition in Portland, Oregon.

Most recently, a Saskatchewan Arts Board grant allowed Brady an intensive five month period of experimentation in technique and design. During this time he concentrated on taking known techniques further as he combined new shapes, kiln textures, glazes, fired mosaics, and fused copper inclusions, with kiln formed glass. Textures were developed using multiple moulding materials, including layers of refractory kiln paper, a dolomite extruded moulding paste, and clay. All were tested throughout with small prototype pieces. A major shift from previous designs was taking place as well, as he sought "to develop one unifying form that would act as a strong, simple

OPPOSITE TOP: *Blue Ring Basin*, 2003; glass; fused, kiln textured & formed. 47 x 14.5 cm. BELOW: *Blue Ring Basin* (detail)



Crown of Cernunnos (Cernunnos, in Celtic lore is the king of the forest, lord of the animals and a god of fertility), 2003; fused, kiln textured & kiln formed glass, copper. 41 x 23 cm.

structure throughout the work." This meant that the forms would be heavier (up to three layers of glass) and more sculptural, departing from any of the vessel shapes he had used in past work. The first pieces from this exploration resulted in "Transitions," an exhibition at the Darrell Bell Gallery in Saskatoon, July 2003.

Each of his pieces is first sketched out, providing a general sense of the design, before a full scale plan is drawn which considers the layers, opacities, and colours of the glass. Patterns are then made for each layer of the piece, and various kinds of glass are cut, ground, and fitted. These multiple, flat, layers are placed in the kiln and carefully fired to 1500°F, then slowly cooled and annealed to room temperature. The second stage involves manipulations which include grinding, sandblasting, and recutting the glass, plus designing, cutting, and texturing the moulding materials which are then covered with the flat glass. This is fired slowly to a temperature required for the desired effect, then cooled and annealed - a procedure which is repeated many times as textures and new glass elements fill the design. The final, flat, piece is placed on a shallow mould, heated slowly to 1250°F - 1350°F as it is watched to catch the correct drop, cooled and annealed, then placed in a deeper mould for a final firing.

Up to eight sections form the base, which has been designed in reaction to the main bowl shape, and is built as above. Cold work begins once the main bowl is complete, and includes sandcarving, polishing, and adding prefired glass mosaics.

Twilight Bouquet is built with three layers of glass with the edges cut and polished to reveal the centre layer. The support and the bowl use gold iridescent glass with the addition of glass frit (crushed glass), and lampworked glass (the tiny button-like

inserts).

Nest Weavers, also three layers, is edged and seamed on the centre and perimeter to reveal the interior of double iridescent glass treatments. Tooled copper metal inclusions have been fired with the exterior, and kiln-fired mosaic glass has been added cold. The offset rim and base visually develop a fluid movement between the separate sections.

Blue Ring Basin shows a kiln paper textured underside which is transposed to the inside as a dimpled effect. The details on the rim are lampworked, and the transparent seams reinforce the positive and negative play of colours and textures. The interior imagery shows double iridescent glass after the overlaid iridescent black and clear glass have been sandblasted.

Crown of Cernunnos is a piece which expands on the effects of the exterior's copper inclusions. The interior is of a simple design, with silver stain add to the surface glaze. The exterior is textured gold. The turquoise seam on the interior of the bowl, although not clearly seen in the photograph, is picked up by the glass caught between the layers of the base.

Lee Brady's objective of visual fluidity is well achieved—a result of soft edges, contrasts and modulations between opacity and transparency in the glass, alterations in either colour and iridescence accompanying changes in lighting and vantage, and the inset seams which sometimes appear as if suspended. Transitions in texture, complexity, and luminance, as well as in technical ambition and design are the mark of these beautifully realized vessels.

Harriet Richards is a freelance writer and author.

Quilting Connections

by Cathy Watts

On a recent holiday to New Zealand I had an opportunity to meet with New Zealand quilters. While my husband was attending CollabortatioNZ 2003 in the Whangarei area, I spent my time connecting with local quilters. New Zealanders particularly, and quilters all over the world, are known for their hospitality, so I was not disappointed.

I attended their local "club" (guild) meeting. Their group is about the same size as the Saskatoon Quilters' guild so it was fascinating to experience the similarities and differences in their approach and interests. A few days later I was invited to spend most of a day with a group of quilters at the home of Liz Peters.

I am a great fan of the magazine *The New Zealand Quilter*, and the fresh and creative approach found in their published works. The quilts I saw at their club meeting displayed a balance of interest in both traditional and contemporary quilts. When questioned about the uniqueness of New Zealand quilts one woman replied, "we made traditional quilts until we filled the beds, then we moved onto the art form!" Another woman pointed out there was no tradition of patchwork quilting in N.Z. Warm bedding was created with wool blankets and duvets. Consequently they have not had the confines of traditional quilt making and have pushed the boundaries of quilt making in the contemporary world. New quilters, who are generally women in their 20's and 30's, appear to "just do it" without question.

The clear light and vibrant colours in the flowers and native bush are strongly reflected in their quilts. Landscapes including green rolling hills and themes of the ocean are striking. Maori culture is another strong influence that is depicted in certain symbols and motifs.

Many quilters have been involved in challenges and competitions both in New Zealand and overseas, which has encouraged original design and colour expression. They have a strong confidence in their art form and do not appear intimidated to enter their work in juried shows.

Fabric dyeing and painting, embellishment, and appliqué are current interests and areas that have been explored with the local club through workshops and classes. Fabric costs are considerably higher than Canada in the \$25/m range. This may explain the strong interest in fabric dyeing. Machine quilting dominates and is beautifully done.

Many quilters expressed a feeling of being isolated from mainstream quilting as determined by the US market. On the other hand, their isolation is probably a significant strength in producing innovative and unique quilts. Combined with their use of vibrant colours and a strong interest in a contemporary style, New Zealand quilts are a stimulating and joyful experience.

Cathy Watts is a physiotherapist who has a passion for quilting. She published a book "The Hidden Hazards of Quilting" to help quilters prevent back and neck problems.

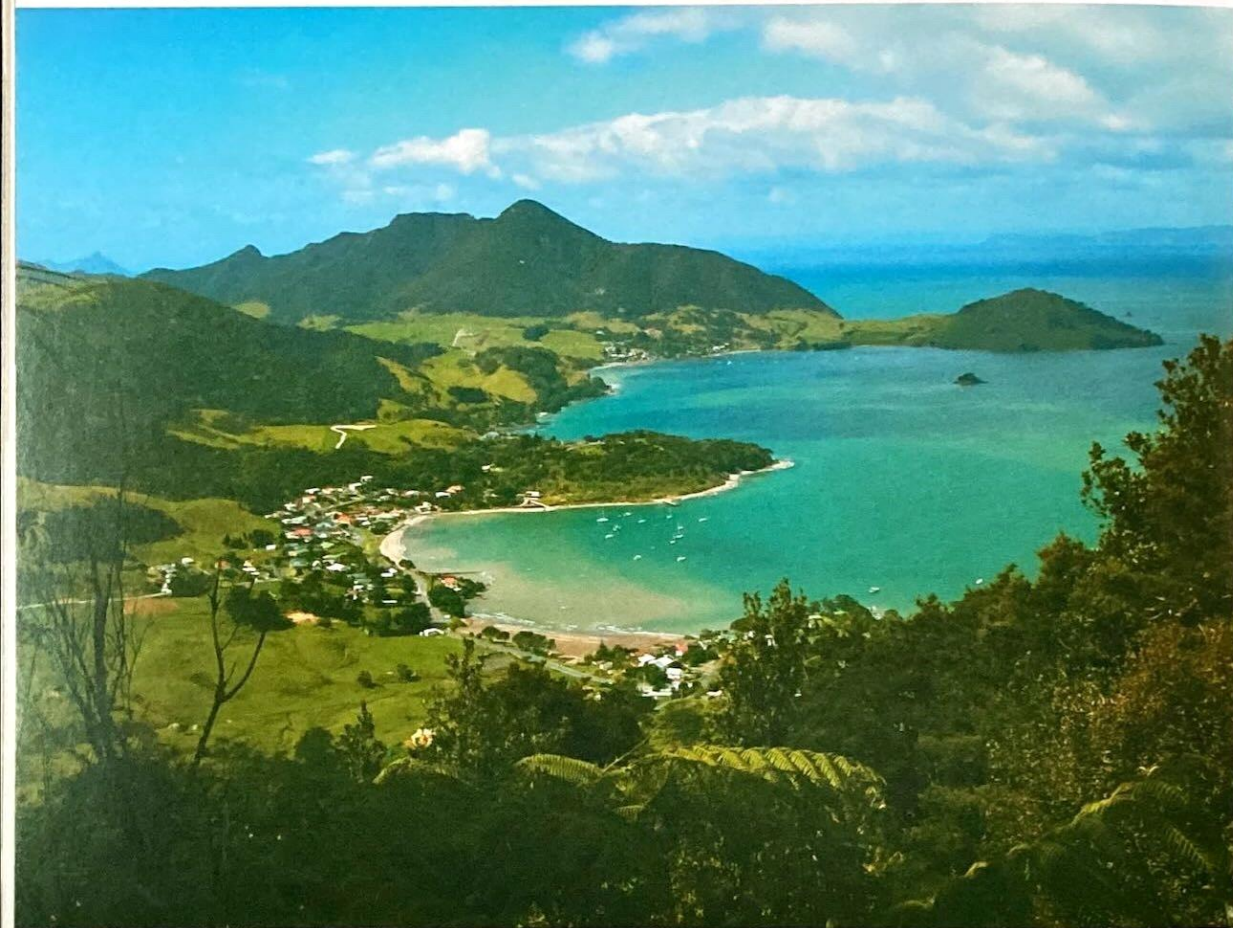


Quilt portions from members of the Whangarei Patchwork Quilters.

CollaborationNZ '03

New Zealand

article and photography
by Trent Watts



View from Mount Manaia, which overlooks the collaboration site.



Event location, McGregor's Bay.

The 'Collab', as it is affectionately known, is held every second year at McGregor Bay, Whangarei, New Zealand. It has grown from a small group of local artists, to an international event bringing together 70+ individuals, whose purpose is to get together, have fun, and "make stuff." Artists from four countries were treated to green grass, a cyclone with horizontal rain, warm sunny skies, an ocean bath tub at our doorstep, vibrantly colored flowers, and a hastily constructed tent city to keep the rain off all the donated equipment. Such was the setting for a wildly successful, high energy, creative gathering of well known and emerging artists.

One of the features of CollaborationNZ is a huge selection of disciplines brought together to share talents. All in one location were: jewelry artists, wood turners, blacksmiths, metal sculptors, a foundry, furniture makers, bone carvers, a neon glass maker, ceramists, an upholsterer, a glass blower, stone sculptors, fabric artists and glass makers. This is the fourth time people from many countries have gathered to participate in a frenzy of creative expression involving a wide range of media. Graeme Priddle, a wood artist from NZ, initiated this collaborative event a number of years ago. He has since been joined by an enthusiastic group of tireless workers, who plan this event, carry it off with great success, promptly declare they will never do it again, rest for awhile, and then begin the planning meetings to do it all again two years down the road.

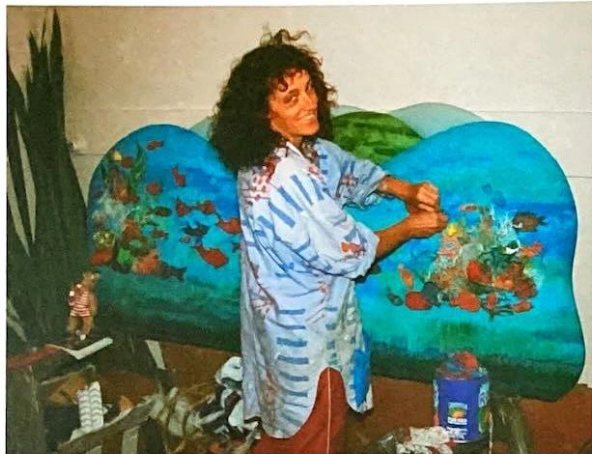
The feeling of a large international family reunion remained with me throughout the event. Past participants embraced, shared stories and caught up on past and current events. Some had never met and needed time to establish new relationships. The party types partied late into the night, the outgoing ones had a great influence on activities, the organizers deserve more credit than they ever receive, a few squabbled, all worked, and everyone would like the organizing committee to do this all over again.

This type of collaborative process has matured over the last ten years, since it was initiated by woodturner, Michael Hosaluk at Saskatchewan's Emma Lake 1996. Veterans of the collaborative process, whirl around dipping into many projects while tentative newcomers wander around the edges trying to make sense of the mayhem. Soon, a seasoned veteran will help cut up these pieces... paint this face... make a leg... finish this decoy...? Before long the newcomer is making, cutting, painting, and working on more projects than they can handle. "Don't make eye contact" became the mantra of those seeking to avoid involvement in yet another project.

Over the last few years, as more people dive in and experience this rather chaotic method of creation, many finished pieces have become more resolved artistically with a greater sense of completion. There is a greater understanding of the collaborative experience and on the whole people are ready and willing to turn over a project to another artist, sometimes with little input into future design or construction. The serendipitous, spur of the moment, connections with other artists are truly encouraged and celebrated. In my view collaborations are fully worthwhile for the artist who is open to new directions and mediums intent on having fun, and wants to experience a creative burst of energy.

Trent Watts has been a woodworker for even longer than he has been a veterinarian. He lives in Saskatoon where he balances part-time work with full-time fun.

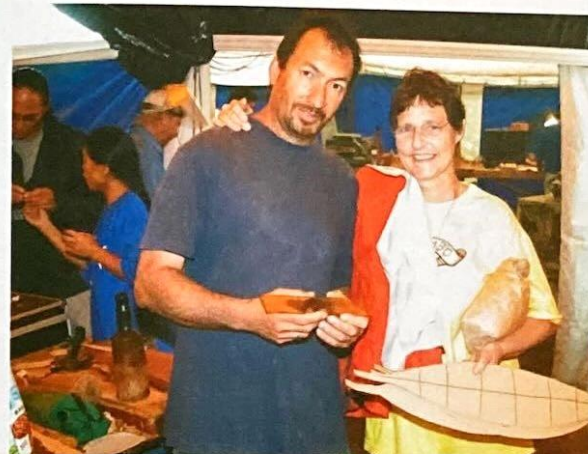
"I am grateful to the Saskatchewan Arts Board for funding my attendance at CollaborationNZ '03 through their individual development grant process."



TOP
Catrina Sutter (participant)
fibre/paint/textile artist.
New Zealand

CENTRE
CollaboratiNZ 03 participants
holding the "fish board"

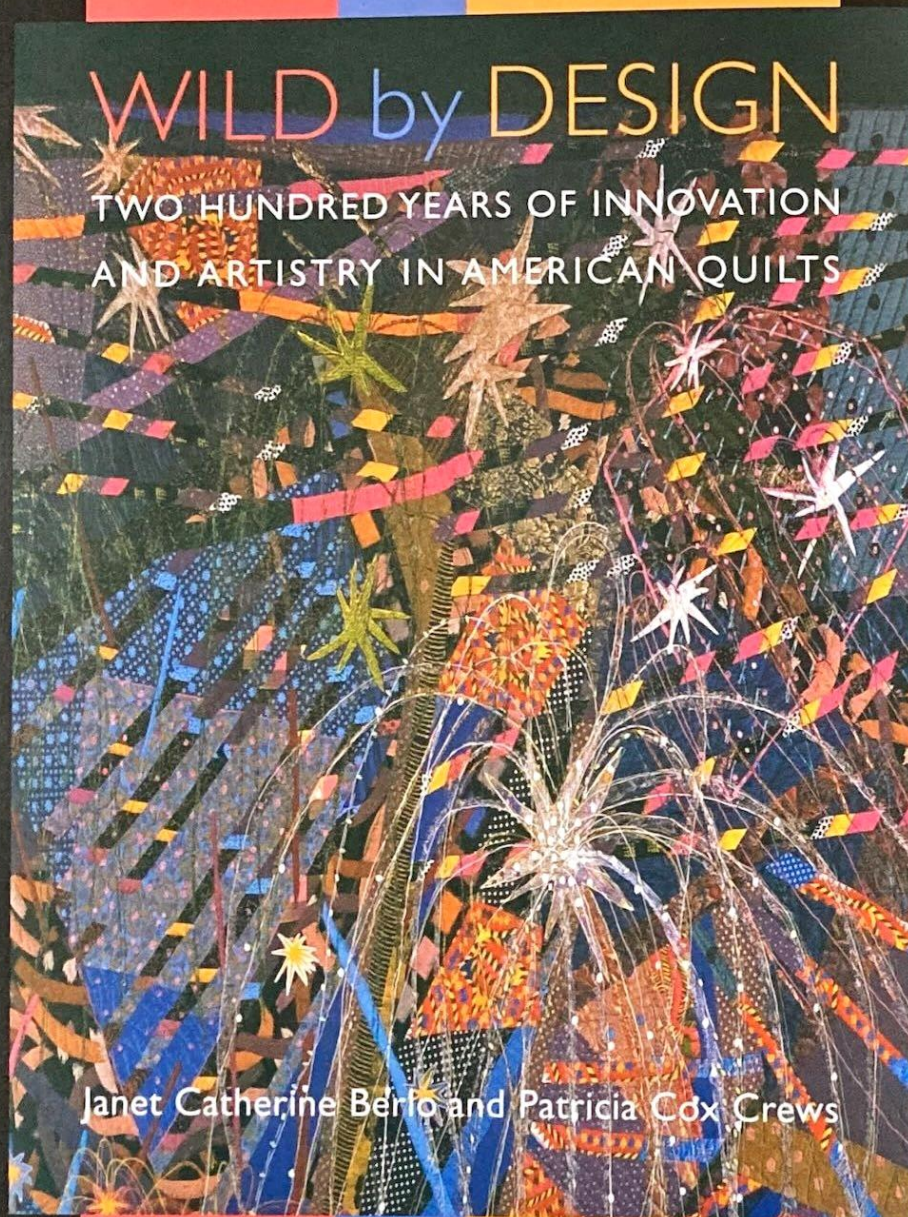
BOTTOM
Gary Nash, New Zealand Glass
Blower



TOP
L to R: Lionel Grant, Maori wood carver,
sculptor. Shona Firman, event coordinator,
glass caster and glass blower.

CENTRE
The Present Moment, 2003; blown glass,
neon glass, wood, paint, metal.

BOTTOM
Red Hot Poker plant, common to the region.



WILD by DESIGN

TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF INNOVATION AND ARTISTRY IN AMERICAN QUILTS

review by Paula Gustafson

Janet Catherine Berlo and Patricia Cox Crews
International Quilt Study Center
University of Nebraska, 2003
176 pp., 66 illus, 48 colour plates, bibliography
\$35 US, paper cover. ISBN 0-295-98309-4

In 1971, when Jonathan Holstein first called attention to the aesthetic qualities of nineteenth century quilts in the groundbreaking *Abstract Design in American Quilts* exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, he opened the door to legitimizing women's handwork as valid artistic expression. Two years later, art historian Patricia Mainardi published *Quilts: The Great American Art in the Feminist Art Journal*, asserting that quilt making "should occupy the same position in Women's Studies that African art occupies in Black Studies."

While subsequent investigation into domestic textile production and "women's work" has built a solid body of scholarship, quilt making has also become the subject of sentimentalized homespun narratives that, for instance, link certain historical quilt patterns to anti-slavery coded messages or eulogize women's innate ability to make-do (the scrap bag myth).

University of Rochester art historian Janet Catherine Berlo's excellent essay in *Wild by Design* discusses the accumulation of theories associated with the history of North American quilting and dispels some of the more commonly held misconceptions. One such is the event that became known as the quilting bee. Originally, "bees" were communal efforts for mundane tasks, such as corn husking. When quilters got together to stitch a quilt, it was called a "frolic." Frances Trollope, the British writer who lived in Cincinnati during the 1820s, noted that "the assemblings are called quilting frolics, and they are always solemnized with much good cheer and festivity." Berlo suggests that these frolics were a manifestation of the emotional bonds women developed at a time when social interaction was rigidly divided by gender. "The quilt frolic was the female equivalent of the art academy and the salon—institutions that until the very end of the nineteenth century routinely excluded women," she writes.

While not dismissing the scrap bag myth, Berlo removes some of its nostalgic gloss. Noting that the majority of historical quilts feature backing cloth that was new at the time the quilts were made, Berlo asserts that "...the idea that most quilts were made from scraps and recycled materials does not hold true for most nineteenth-century quilts in museums and private collections. Examination of these quilts only strengthens our belief that these are deliberate artistic constructions, composed of the finest materials within the artists' means." Acknowledging that scrap quilts were made

(particularly in rural areas during the Great Depression of the 1930s), Berlo nevertheless makes the point that the use of scraps to make quilts is "neither the defining feature nor the motivating factor in this art form."

Pieced quilts are perhaps the most widely recognized form of "scrap" constructions. Despite the widely shared use of repeating block patterns such as Log Cabin or Robbing Peter to Pay Paul, quilters rarely duplicate one another's work. Answering the question of quilters supposedly lacking sufficient ingenuity to devise their own geometric designs, Berlo writes, "When artists in other genres (poets, for example, conforming to the unyielding formal conventions of a sonnet or a haiku) work within the "confines" of their chosen medium, it is not judged as a limit on creativity. Why should it be so for the quiltmaker? Indeed, for quilt artist and sonnet writer alike, part of the pleasure of the act lies in the challenge of working both within and against the parameters of the chosen form."

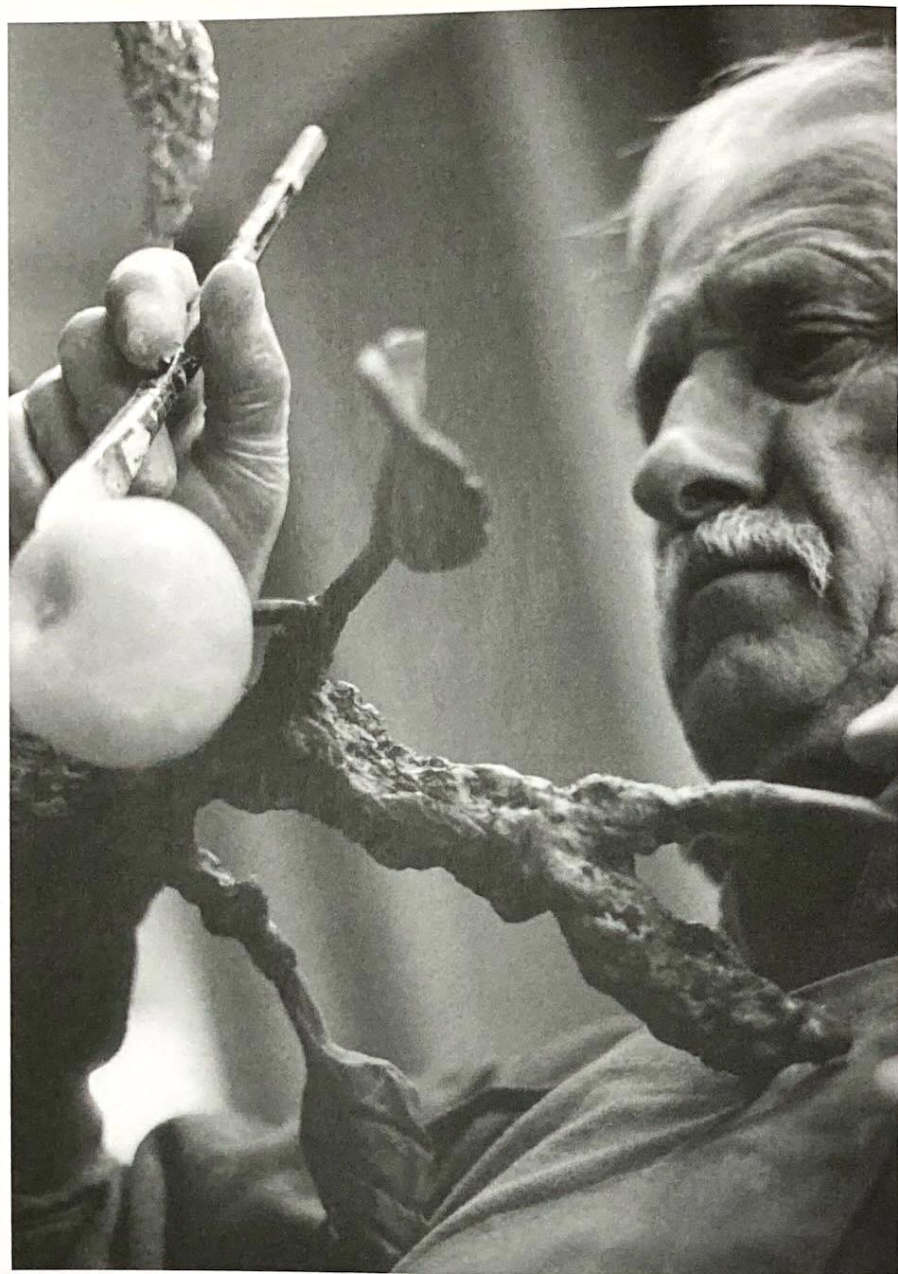
Probing an as yet unexplored area of textile history, Berlo questions the crossovers in patterning between historical quilts and woven coverlets. "By the early nineteenth century, American coverlet weavers were creating textiles on multi-harness looms with imagery that looks remarkably like geometric pieced quilts of repeating block designs," she writes. "Many coverlets are patterned in geometric designs similar to those used in pieced quilts—variants of Four Patch, Nine Patch, Irish Chain, and others, which usually had different names in the weaver's lexicon. In patchwork, of course, the maker readily experimented with color, while most early-nineteenth-century weavings were done in two or three colors." When Jacquard looms, which could weave intricate curvilinear motifs, became plentiful in the mid-1800s, the weavings often featured central floral designs and "pine tree" or "picket fence" border patterns, prompting Berlo to ask, "Indeed, could Jacquard coverlets have been a design model for appliqué quilts in general?"

Elsewhere in her erudite 26-page essay, Berlo examines the influences (mostly Christian missionary) that resulted in the genres of Hawaiian, Amish/Mennonite, Plains Indian, and African American quilts, and briefly cites the work of Faith Ringgold, Miriam Schapiro, Jean Ray Laury, Nancy Crow and other prominent players in the Art Quilt Movement begun in the 1970s.

Each of more than fifty historical and contemporary quilts (illustrated on the book's right-hand pages) is accompanied by transcripts (on the left-hand pages) of discussions between Berlo, Jonathan Holstein, and the University of Nebraska's International Quilt Study Center director Patricia Cox Crews and curator Carolyn Ducey. Their insightful commentaries about each quilts' visual qualities, construction, and history includes intriguing anecdotes and speculations, making *Wild by Design* a valuable addition to any textile art library.

Paula Gustafson is the editor of *Artichoke* magazine. She has written extensively about historical and contemporary crafts in Canada.

Wild by Design is available from:
University of Washington Press
PO. Box 50096
Seattle WA 98145-5096 USA



Victor Cicansky painting an apple in his studio. Photo: Dona Stobert

Vic Cicansky and the Natural World

profile by Don Kerr

I've been visiting Vic Cicansky's studio in Regina for two years now watching him work, talking to him, as the main way to write a book about him as one of Saskatchewan's best ceramic and bronze sculptors (he works as well in lazer-cut steel and wood carving). When I most recently visited Vic in June he was at work on a brand new series—of bones, dem clay bones—to be planted in pots and bowls as his celebration of Regina—pile of bones—turning 100 this year. In November the Susan Whitney Gallery will feature Vic's "Bouquets of Bones."

Vic makes molds to begin a new series, and I watched him make a press mold for one of the larger bones, about ten inches long, four high and three wide. He'd already modeled it in clay, as a simplification of a bone on his table. Vic makes a four-wall house around one side of the clay bone, with what he calls garbage clay pounded by hand and rolled with a rolling pin to be made into the two end walls, a board to finish the house. He smooths the clay bone with a knife, a small spatula, a small kidney-shaped rubber scrapper dipped in water. He holds the house together with small dabs of clay, then pours in the plaster, which doesn't adhere to clay. Side one of the mold. Next morning he does side two, easier since there are no end pieces. Then he'll turn the bone over—from where I sit it also looks like a thin-nosed fish—and make the bottom mold. He's already made six bone molds, has six to go, including a large horse skull which will feature corn cobs growing out its ear like horns. Weird eh.

Vic will then become a traditional potter, throwing pots and bowls on the wheel to house his bones. The bowls will have a cover with slots cut into them to feature the bone bouquet, and you can imagine your own names for the works—bare bones, bones of contention, dry bones, dem bones, are some of Vic's likely titles. Bones have a deeper resource than the Regina celebration. "Bones," says Vic, "don't recognize borders," for "these things come from the earth and go back to the earth." That he imitates so basic a rhythm of natural life is true of almost all his work.

In his studio that June he had three bonsai trees and two tables, all bronzed with leaves and fruit yet to be painted. All have a random structure, twisting this way and that in unpredictable ways, though the tables also have a discipline—to be steady enough and strong enough to carry a heavy glass top. About a decade ago, after a crisis in his own life, Vic spent a week at Stoney Rapids in Northern Saskatchewan where he became suddenly aware both of the harmony of the land and of constant change, from water, wind, ice, climate. Of creating out of that world Vic says about a 1977 show for Susan Whitney:

I set out with purpose to create something randomly like nature does from the forest floor. My materials were the twisted branches, the deadwood and the rocks I had collected and brought back with me. I began with a few twisted branches and worked spontaneously. I played with these fragments and assembled them freely and easily with other elements in the studio. This assemblage guided my vision. The images were illusive at first and fragmentary. Sometimes I didn't understand where they were going but unique objects and meanings emerged as I worked. The work almost shaped itself representing in part the forms where it came from.

I had watched Vic assembling fragments when he lay out a bench back (life size like the one in the Agriculture Building at the University) according to his new vision and with wood collected from the Qu'Appelle Valley, primarily hawthorn because it is so twisted by nature. He laid out the branches on the floor, played with them, chose first the branches that would form the top of the back, drilled holes in the hard wood, combined branches with dowels—cut-up chopsticks—and held them together with epoxy glue. Then he planted branches on top for the 'tree' branches and fruit, say a Gala apple. He then worked on a lattice work of branches below that bench top, grew more and more satisfied with his pattern, that I couldn't see until I realized Vic was paying more attention to the spaces between the branches than to the branches themselves. He will later wax the wood, to thumb thickness, carve it to give the texture of wood and take it to the foundry to be transformed into bronze so skillfully the bronze looks like wood.

I saw a piece of Vic's installed in Miller High School in Regina, consisting in bronze of a shovel filled with fruit, a long tree branch growing out of the shovel, with a beautiful apple at the far end. Students wanted to touch it—Vic's work is tactile because only by touching it could you tell it's bronze not wood, so complete is the illusion and skill.

That shovel growing a tree is the basic structure and metaphor for all the bonsai trees and a second way Vic looks at the nature world, as the cultivated world, that shovel digging in earth to produce gardens and food. The bonsai, long transformed by humans, grows out of a blue bowl (potassium ferric cyanide and ferric nitrate) filled with art dirt, then the short, bent tree, complete with apple or pear or orange, twists its hawthorn way upwards to a height of three feet or so. Both shovel and bonsai declare the dominion of man over nature, the centuries of control we've exerted upon earth.

The shovel can also point to the garden, Vic's third model for his work. In the studio that June day there were twenty of Vic's jars of preserves, including gorgeous pints of raspberries which I'd not seen before. His two most common jars are corn and pickles, the latter glazed with Dark Straw, Autumn Green, Marigold Yellow and Foliage Green when I saw him on pickling day. He doesn't know how many jars he's made, how many thousands. They're his print series he says, and they go back to his youth.

Vic grew up in Regina's east end, a central European immigrant area known as garlic flats, where everybody grew gardens and laid down preserves for winter as a way to survive. All of Vic's clay-made vegetables—there are two kinds of squash as part of a big pantry on that June day—are memorials to gardens. Look at veggies as one part of his celebration of the old immigrants over the elevators on the first floor of the Sturdy Stone Building, in downtown Saskatoon. His home studio looks out on the marvelous gardens planted by him and his partner Donna Stobert, amazing gardens to match amazing art. His grandmother grew the cabbages which are another of Vic's trademarks, preserved her garden produce for the winter in pantries to hold those jars, and there's a pantry too in the June studio, ten shelves, with wider and wider spaces at the bottom, to hold and display Vic's art preserves, including his new generic jars, that look like tomato relish or chokecherry jelly and the like, plus veggies and fruit. Of the pantry he says, "We always had a pantry. Most homes had pantries. The pantry always reminded me of this room at home with this colour and glass and it was like a treasure chest of stuff we could eat."

Vic has made a great world of art. But he's never made things you could eat or drink out of. One of his early Regina responses to making the useful was to create a casserole dish with a clay top, zipper and clay vegetables. Later, asked to make cups he made a pyramid of them all stuck together. Once, imbued with "the romance of clay"—for it was "something basic, close to nature—you'd use your hands, your imagination, and the wheel and fire seemed basic too" he was invited down to work at a studio potter's shop in Kleinberg. He started work at seven, threw mugs til coffee, when he said, "You don't do this every day?" but they said they did, so Vic quit. "I was a studio potter for two and a half hours." Already he had made a central decision.

"I wanted to do something different. People would look at my work and say, 'there's a Cicansky'." Forty years later he's in the studio seven days a week adding every day to a marvelous body of work, sometimes working on the old, like the jars or bonsai trees, sometimes on the new, like the "Bouquet of Bones" to celebrate Regina's centennial.

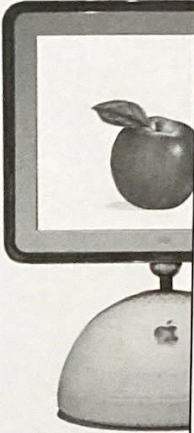
Don Kerr is a writer, professor and member of *The Craft Factor* Editorial Advisory Committee.

OPPOSITE
Blue Pot Peach Bonsai, 1999; patinated bronze. 61 x 40.6 x 35.6 cm.
 Photo: Courtesy of the Mira Godard Gallery

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INVITATION

Craftspeople are invited to submit professional quality photographs, transparencies, slides or digital images illustrating their commissions or favourite works for private and public use or installation. Include identification; title; dimensions; materials/techniques; client; date completed or installed or favourite works; exact location on site; gallery, agent, interior designer or architect involved. For more information, contact: the editor at 653.3616 ext. 23 or email: scc.editor@shaw.ca



Gary Burkholder, *Captiva Island*, 1999; bevelled and stained glass, copperfoil, sandblasted. 64 x 87 cm. Collection of Larrissa Tusa.
 Contact Gary Burkholder at 306.373.6044 or gburkholder@shaw.ca

