

DOROTHY MCPHERSON

BIOGRAPHY

CURRENTLY:

MCPHERSON, an Ontario Crafts Council member, and Canadian Society for Creative Leathercraft (CSCL) Director, served as CSCL organizer/liaison person for *LEATHER 2010: CONTAINMENT* exhibition, OCC Gallery, Toronto. She headed up an Art Committee to up-date CSCL's Awards and Honours in 2010 and she spearheaded the establishing of 4 new CSCL awards including the NON-TRADITIONAL AWARD that recognizes unusual leatherwork techniques.

She is a contributing writer to *Canadian Leathercraft*.

BACKGROUND:

After graduating from Alma College in 1959 she went on to work at the Head Offices of London Life and Manufacturers Life Insurance Companies. She and husband David resided in the Niagara area (1964-97) while David taught Mathematics. There she pursued a career as arts instructor, columnist, journalist, playwright, poet and folk art dollmaker.

In Niagara, she founded two fine arts guilds (1976 & 1990), and then TRC Gallery, London (2004), to showcase fine Canadian handart. She served as editor for *Focus Newsletter* and *Canadian Leathercraft*, and also *Mobility News*, London, (1999-2009). In 1986 she founded BEAVER FLATS PUBLISHING. Her poetry has been published, exhibited, presented in Vera Cruz, Mexico, and had original music written for it by Canadian composer William Roberts. She received a Canada 125 award for the performance of her seniors' play *Standing Tall*. She incorporated her fibre art skills into fundraiser quilts which she donated to charities. Her community voluntarism has been recognized with several awards including the *Ontario Volunteer Service Award* from two arts organizations.

She served as CSCL's biographer writing 51 *Ontario Volunteer Service Award* bios (1999-2006). As well, she secured notable awards for two deserving leathercrafters.

This international fibre artist has been guest demonstrator at leather conventions demonstrating *jewellery* and *wet-formed leather*. Her work has received numerous awards for excellence in design and presentation. She has been a studio tour guest artist, speaker and retailer. Her work appeared in *Ontario Craft: the Newsletter* (Winter 2004), and in *ONTARIO CRAFT* (Summer 2003). Her work was featured in three solo shows in London and in numerous group shows throughout Ontario including Ontario Crafts Council *Midwest Region Show*, Wellington County Museum (1992). She has competed nationally and internationally and retailed her work throughout Ontario.

INTERESTS

Violin, organ, reading, miniatures, sketching, touring Ontario

THE END

CONDENSED BIOGRAPHY: Leathercrafter Dorothy McPherson (an international fibre artist who has founded arts guilds and a fine arts gallery) has taught, successfully competed, and retailed her work throughout Ontario and also exhibited in solo and group shows.

HIGHLY CONDENSED BIOGRAPHY:

Dorothy McPherson is a writer and international artist in leather and fiber arts.

DOROTHY MCPHERSON

ARTIST STATEMENT

A CUT ABOVE THE REST is part of my COIN CONTAINMENT series that began at Fundy School of Fine Arts with a pottery coin jar. Later at Haliburton School of Fine Arts' *Leather Box-making* course I designed and made a leather coin box with a hole punched in the lid so I wouldn't have to lift off the lid to drop in loose change coins. And, I have used that box continually since then: most useful!

A CUT ABOVE THE REST began its creative journey several months ago. At that time, I had intended to complete it "someday" as a plain, basic box. However, recently I decided to assemble it and cut a hole in it for a hole-in-the-lid coin box - hence its name.

Materials Because a coin container has to be sturdy enough to hold heavy coins, thick, rigid sole leather makes an ideally firm base. The side of the box is substantial 8 oz cowhide wrapped around the base and glued to the base. The hinge is comprised of two pieces of leather and a wooden dowel, and the lid is comprised of three pieces of 6 oz. cowhide.

Technique The coin hole was created with a circular drive punch after all the components had been cut out and assembled. The opening is large enough to accommodate a toonie, and it shows off the lid's 3 layers thus drawing attention to the container's unique easy-access feature. The semi-circular design of the box is appropriate to its use as it resembles a coin's round shape.

TITLE: A CUT ABOVE THE REST

DIMENSIONS: 13 cm long x 9 cm wide x 6 cm high

PRICE: \$150

MCPHERSON is a London folk artist whose work often references characters in myths, folklore and legends.

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ARTIST STATEMENT

READY FOR ACTION

I love creating leather jewellery - especially bracelets. Usually I make dainty bracelets 1/2-inch wide. However, for *Leather 2010: CONTAINMENT* I wanted to try something different, and I watched to see what television celebrities were wearing as contemporary arm decorations. I observed a trend toward very masculine bracelets that had a medieval look. I looked up *medieval arm armour* and discovered that for wearing on the arm there are leather bracers, pauldrons, wrist braces and gauntlets. So, I thought I'd try making a bulky arm decoration – a 2-piece bracelet. In fact, it is two identical bracelets with one contained within the other: a bulky piece that is sure to capture the attention. (They can be detached and worn separately.)

Material and Method: It is constructed of rugged cowhide, and Sam Browne fasteners are used to add a touch of glinting metal.

The usual Sam Browne bracelet is only one strip of leather with one fastener. Last year I designed a Sam Browne bracelet with two hinging strips of leather and each strip had one metal fastener. That 2-strip bracelet provided 2 hinging areas that all worked well and provided two glints of silver.

THEN for the Biennial I made two of my hinged bracelets and combined them into one that shows containment as the one can't get away from the other until the fastener is opened and one bracelet is removed from the other bracelet. The 4 hinging joins allow them to settle beautifully around the wrist. The hinging further provides a lovely criss-cross feature when the two are worn at the same time thus creating the desired chunky appearance that I was striving for. I'm quite pleased with this original design as it has glimmer, style, and lots of actual movement. (To wear: Simply fasten one around the wrist, and then slide the second one through the first one, and then fasten the second one.)

This saucy piece that was designed for women has a provocatively aggressive edge to it. It is bulky, black, bold and suggestive of a medieval knight's arm apparel worn at daring feats of strength on the jousting field - or in modern times – by the female in the courting ritual. READY FOR ACTION? *Let the games begin!*

TITLE: READY FOR ACTION
DIMENSIONS: 10 cm each in length
PRICE: \$75 (ORDERS TAKEN)

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PANDORA'S JAR is part of my *Folklore* series. Recently I was inspired to create this ornamental piece when I learned that Pandora's container was actually a jar – not a box! So, I decided to set the record straight by creating an artistic adaptation of that mythical container and I named it PANDORA'S JAR. Pandora was the all-giving earth goddess figure whom some Greeks worshipped centuries ago. When curiosity compelled her to open her famous box she released some bad things on the world. However, a variant myth states that *Pandora's Box* contained blessings for mankind, especially Hope for Mankind, and is often referred to as *the lucky jar*.

Choose whichever version of that Good/Bad myth that appeals to you. The fact remains: Pandora's Box was not a box, but a *jar*. Scholars depict her carrying a *pithos*: *a very large jar, usually made of rough-grained terra cotta, used for storage*.

Techniques and Materials used To begin, I covered a glass vase with soft, white leather to resemble a Greek toga costume. The gently-draped effect emphasizes the feminine curve of the jar leading the eyes around and upward. Touches of gold refer to the gold belt worn with a toga. This method of referencing the jar's Ionian provenance lends an air of animation to the piece. The leather abstract symbol appliqués vaguely resemble some letters of the Greek alphabet.

I added a lid in the same white leather with gold accent to continue the upward appraisal. The lid is to keep Hope and Luck contained within the jar and on hand until needed for a rainy day.

TITLE: PANDORA'S JAR

DIMENSIONS: 18 cm diameter x 36 cm high

PRICE: \$150

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BUTTERMILK This folkart nostalgia/tribute sculpture serves as a small catch-all.

A recent Western movie rerun, *SUNSET SERENADE* (made in 1942), featured Roy Rogers and his wife Dale Evans. I knew that Roy, the singing cowboy, rode *Trigger*, a golden palomino. Just recently I discovered that Dale's movie horse's name was *Buttermilk*, a light buckskin Quarter Horse with dark points: beige with dark ears, feet, mane and tail.

I also learned that Evans wrote the *Sons of the Pioneers*' song that became their very popular theme *Happy Trails to You*, and I decided that she deserved some sort of tribute. So, I created one: an artistic adaptation* of *Buttermilk* using leather as an art medium.

Technique used: Using the *wet-shaping* leather technique I shaped several layers of torn cowhide leather over an armature made from heavy wire. I made the mane and tail wigs from dark rayon thread that drapes nicely. I purposely left the legs plain buckskin colour for visual body balance. Following folkart figure-making tradition I did not add eyes.

Treatment: The name *Buttermilk* sounds appropriately warm, safe and pretty for a cowgirl's horse: especially appropriate for a *lady* horse. So, I tried personifying her by giving her armature soft lines rather than making her look like a powerful war-horse steed. I gave her feet to humanize her gentle nature. I've depicted her in her Golden Years with flat feet from all that galloping around, and with her legs looking a bit unsteady. She looks as if she couldn't have kept up with *Trigger*. But, in her younger days, she did. This tribute acknowledges her movie-stardom past.

DIMENSIONS: 35 cm long x12 cm wide x35 cm high

TITLE: BUTTERMILK

PRICE: \$350

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**An artistic adaptation is not an actual conscious representation of a thing, but it is a whimsical version that vaguely resembles the original article*

OF THE

LAND OFFICE

IN RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE

LEGISLATURE

ON JANUARY 1, 1900

AND

THE

LAND OFFICE