

They turn crafts into works of art

By ALAN HURST
Post Reporter

An old general store in Bethany is now a combination studio/gallery/shop that belongs to artists Paul and Beverley Williams and it's one of the 20 that are going to be included on the upcoming Victoria County Studio Tour.

But before they get ready to show that studio off to everyone, they have to put the finishing touches on their work that's going to be displayed at the Lindsay Gallery for the next month.

There is a fine line that divides artists and craftspeople and that was never more than true in the case of the Williams'.

Beverley works primarily in fabric and Paul deals primarily with leather, but the work they create in these two mediums are pieces of art, not crafts.

They have been working side by side in their different mediums for 14 years but they recently started combining those mediums and Beverley says that patrons of the Lindsay Gallery are going to be seeing something different with this new show.

"What I'm trying to do this time is to apply the leather that is usually Paul's territory with the textiles or simply use the leather in a technique usually reserved for textiles.

"I'm weaving the leather and using it as a fabric, crinkling it and putting more texture in it. Sometimes I use ropes and things underneath the leather to create a different kind of look. I'm doing some very different things this time."

She said that Paul usually likes to use the smooth side of the leather "and I tend to take it and scrunch it up and, more often than not, use the rough side."

It has been a long time, according to Beverley, before they both felt comfortable enough in their own medium and work to attempt something in the other person's medium.

"A few years ago we would never have thought about doing this, but now we are at a point where we are both comfortable with our own medium and we don't have to worry about jealousy or feel threatened. We are very familiar with what each other is capable of."

A couple of pieces in the show are projects they have worked on together, including

an intricately woven leather bowl.

"That interaction is important. You burn out working in your own medium all the time. There is always something new and different you can do, but sometimes you just don't see that so you do different things. You work together, you explore different fabrics and leathers."

She said that the public "always likes to see something new and as an artist you crave change. You have to keep moving onward and upward if you are going to achieve anything as an artist."

Since their last show at the gallery about three years ago, Paul has discovered the possibilities of moulding leather over different forms. Trips to various antique shops have unearthed hat moulds and wooden masks and you'll see these incorporated into a number of his pieces.

"I've been using the face masks and putting it into landscapes but I've been trying to hide the mask. Sometimes you can feature it very prominently in the piece but other times there is just an indication. You can have some fantastic things hidden in the scenes or landscapes. I call them fascespaces."

"What we've both been doing," Beverley says, "is exploring more in the artistic and decorative aspects of our medium and we're having some fun."



Beverley Williams has included some weaving in her upcoming show at the Lindsay Gallery, but she says she's excited about the way she's been able to use leather.

Post photos/Alan Hurst



Paul Williams is seen here designing one of his leather wall hangings. His work will be seen at the Lindsay Gallery's April show.