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THE 1994 BI-ENNIAL EXHIBITION

By Betsy Rennie, FCSC

The **Canadian Society for Creative Leathercraft** shared this Bi-Ennial show with **The Oxford Quilters Guild**. Both guilds were happy and successful with this show. The Etobicoke City Hall Art Gallery was very pleased with both of our displays and found the variety to be of interest to visitors coming there.

Thelma Amos convenor of the Etobicoke Parks and Recreation Services welcomed the Oxford Quilters Guild and the Canadian Society for Creative Leathercraft Guild. Heather Stuart, president of the Quilters Guild spoke briefly and welcomed the members of both guilds. Donald Macleod, president of the CSCS welcomed everybody and thanked the judges Dorothy Muma and Buela Reynolds, the Quilters Guild for a joint show, the prize donors Moore-Pearsall, Irva Ford's family, Ruth Haig for guidance and making the show possible. He expressed congratulations to all the Award winners.

The judges Dorothy Muma and Buela Reynolds were pleased with the quality of work but would have liked more articles for the show. The convenor, Thelma Amos attributed Fred Brown with a Special Award for being a friend and a volunteer on the committee since 1982. He has been an authority on colour and on dye work for the committee.

The Fred Brown Award for Best Coloured Leather, sponsored by the Etobicoke City Hall Art Gallery was presented by Thelma Amos to David McPherson for the Three Tier Round Box. This box is blue with a white acrylic finish with dividers in each tier for jewellery.

The Canadian Society for Creative Leathercraft Executive Award for Most

Functional Article was presented by Don Macleod to William Whittingham for the Inverted Design Vanity Mirror. The Vanity Mirror stands up by itself and is carved in an inverted berry pattern with the background dyed a light tan colour.

The Canadian Society for Creative Leathercraft Special Judge's Award was presented by Buela Reynolds to David Windeyer for his Push Box. This box is in a very pleasing medium brown colour. The inside box fits in with a good fit and pushes out much like a matchbox.

The Moore-Pearsall Award for Best Belt was presented by Richard Pearsall to Ruth Haig for her Ranger Belt. This belt was dyed in a British Tan colour.

The Moore-Pearsall Award for Best Carving was presented by Richard Pearsall to Nancy Durham for her Carved Purse. This purse has a natural background with the Wild Rose pattern.

The Michigan Leather Award for Best Soft Leather was presented by Jack McHarg to Hilda Chynoweth for her Deerskin Vest. The vest is in a natural tan finish with yokes and fringe at the top and lacing woven through the seam.

The Irva Ford Award for Best Moulded Leather was presented by Dick and Peter Ford to Loreen Manuel for her Moulded Dry Flower Holder. The flower holder was made in a brown leather over a 7/8 oz base. The edges were finished with a black dye.

These are the participating members that entered leather pieces into the Bi-ennial Show.

Hilda Chynoweth with a Deerskin Vest and Gloves.

Nancy Durham with the Tan and Brown Maple Leaf Tray, Tan Basketweave Ranger Belt, Carved Wild Rose Bag, and a Blue Lasted Box.

Ruth Haig with a Round Tan Trinket Box, Oval Tan Lasted Box, Antique Tan Trinket Tray, British Tan Ranger Belt, and a Round Tan Box.

Loreen Manuel with a Royal Horse Brass Plaque, Leather Mache Basket, Marble Pin Set, Moulded Dry Flower Holder.

David McPherson with a Stamped Black Belt, a 3-Tier Round Blue Box, Rectangular Blue Box with an Agate, and a Holly Jewellery Set.

Dorothy McPherson with a Mallard Duck, 2 Half Decoy ducks, a Bowl, a Teddy Bear, and a Bottle all done in Leather Mache.

Margaret Monteith with a Natural/Brown Pattern Pencil Holder, Green Bracelet and Earrings, a set of Red, Black and Gold Earrings.

Betsy Rennie a Camera Case in natural leather carved with the inverted Wild Berry Pattern.

Buela Reynolds with a Red mottled Weed Pot and a dark Brown Stacked paper Weight.

Bill Whittingham a Vanity Mirror - Inverted Design, Moulded Tray in Red/Mahogany/Cordovan colour.

David Windeyer a dark brown Pipe Case with a tan Pig Suede Bag, Elk Gloves, Indian Buckskin Bag, Brown Push Box, and a Ranger Belt.

EMBOSSING

By Muriel McKnight, ACSCL

Embossing is raising the design on your leather, higher than the background to enhance your pattern. This method is achieved by working from the underside or flesh side, with a modeller or a ball-end modeller.

It is important to first know the basic tooling and flat modelling method.

There is information available in the "General Information" by Raymond Cherry (pages 34 - 36) available in the CSCL Library.

1. Trace your design onto tracing film or parchment paper. Place on damp leather, grain side up (2 1/2 - 3 oz.) vegetable tan cowhide. Using modeller tip press onto leather making a clear outline.

2. Hold work in one hand, between two fingers using ball-end modeller. Work gently around the inside of the design forcing leather to raise in an area which is

to be embossed.

3. After area is raised, place the leather onto a marble or hard surface, work over outline with the tip of the modeller and outside edge with the spoon end to gently smooth down the background around the embossing. This procedure may have to be repeated several times.

4. If you can see your design from the back or flesh side, you can work the leather with the modeller pushing into the palm.

5. After the leather is dry, a coat of white glue can be applied to the embossed area to stiffen. Fill the embossed area with bits of tissue, skiving and white glue, or use silicone tube and tile sealant (no turpentine), smooth the filler and level the background leather. Allow to dry.

6. Cement a lining to the underside of the leather.

PLUG EMBOSSING

This method is sometimes referred to as the 3-D embossing.

1. Trace pattern onto splits, millboard, etc., cut out design. Using this design trace outline onto the back or flesh side of the leather with a pencil. Glue in place and allow to dry.

Dampen the leather from the grain side, work first with fingers to see the outline of the design, use the tip of the spoon end until the design is clearly visible and outside edge of design is depressed down to level of background.

Be careful not to press or rub too hard to bruise the leather. If using morocco or textured leather, try not to smooth out the texture.

Embossing and plug embossing require no cuts in leather, unless cut lines are necessary for texture, eg. fur, feather or veining on leaves.

ARTISAN PROFILE ON THE EXHIBITION TRAIL By Dorothy McPherson

I began leathercrafting when a small church in Willowdale asked me to be organist. I needed something in which to carry my music books from where I worked at Manufacturers on Bloor to Heintzmans for hammond organ drawbar lessons. A music case was called for.

David happened to have leather on hand from his teen-years leather crafting. So, I confiscated some and cut out a flat case with a gusset, added a zipper, and machine sewed it together.

Now, 35 years later, the editor of the local newspaper has scheduled interview with us for January 31st, just after we finish setting up our Leathertime Exhibition at Port Colborne Public Library, King Street. By that time we'll know how many pieces are in the show, have an artist's bio written, a show statement written, and be ready for photographing in front of the hung exhibits.

For artisans, keeping track of such facts as shows entered, prizes won, and

courses taken is all time consuming. I keep promising myself that I will confiscate a stray 3-ring binder from around the house and start compiling years of crafting trivia between two covers.

It was only five years ago that I seriously became interested in leathercrafting and began working with levelling splits so my leather bio isn't very long. However, it still takes time to assemble.

By January 31st, both David and I will have our bio typed and a photo page ready for the Leathertime Exhibition. Other leathercrafters might be interested in assembling a similar written description of themselves and their work. It's like fitting together puzzle pieces. Mine will look better by showtime - I hope.

Profile

Leathercrafter, dollmaker, quilter, playwright, editor, writer, and columnist, Dorothy McPherson has a quarter century

of snooping through Canada's annals in search of Mounties, mice and men in her quest for folk customs and costumes. Whether she is recalling her childhood in Canada's Appalachian Mountain foothills, or explaining why her X-Shelty, Toby pines for stardom. McPherson's growing audience of readers say her lively narrative prose is "fun to read", so interesting and informative.

Five years ago, she started specializing in Leather Mache because it was easier to tear splits than cut and carve other leather. When using this technique you tear irregularly shaped patches and then apply them wet over a surface of a form you wish to cover. She leaves the form inside her work. An example of this technique is her teddy bear, formerly someone else's much-loved toy that found its way into the thrift Shop. Rebuilding the armature, cover it with leather, and it becomes a mantel ornament thereby enjoying a new life. Each bear takes about one week to complete.

Dorothy says she is mostly interested in experimenting with leather as an art form. It's definitely not traditional leathercrafting. Our Studio's master crafter, David, follows traditional methods and thus helps to keep alive a useful, ancient, and well-respected craft. I hope to continue to explore new avenues by trying to make my work reflect light. I would like to combine paper and leather to mix and cross mediums. My work tends to result in decorative pieces such as non-wearable masks.

After graduating from Alma College, Dorothy McPherson studied at the University of Guelph and Niagara College, as well as New Brunswick Summer School of Fine Arts and Sir Sanford Fleming College Summer School taking leather box-making.

Recipient of over 40 ribbons for all excellence in handwork. She studied and

received certification and acclaim as an International Dollmaker, and taught folk art and needle arts in Adult education classes for five years with the Niagara South Board of Education. The McPherson's did a Leather mache demonstrations at the 1993 CSCL Annual in Norland. Dorothy won a Craftsman and Salon ribbon for her leather dolls, bowl and decoys at the CSCL Annual juried shows.

The most recent exhibit was at the Etobicoke City Hall Art Gallery for Leather '94, Port Colborne Public Library, and Ancaster Public Library. More gallery exhibitions are planned for the near future. Gallery-on the Lake in Buckhorn, and Rail's End Gallery both in Haliburton carries her varied pieces of work. By this summer, she hopes to have her visual leatherart masks included with her work.

Dorothy McPherson has published fiction and non-fiction in several periodicals as well as a collection of adapted columns. As a columnist for the past 8 years she wrote three columns: About Town, Midpoint Pelham, and Walkabout for the Welland/Port Colborne Tribune. She has written a hardcover, a local history book founded on two fine arts' organizations, the Port Colborne Quilting and Stitchery Guild and Port Colborne Writers Guild. She is currently writing a novel. Her writing is a blend of fine art, folk art, and folklore.

Dorothy McPherson is a member of Ontario Crafts Council, Niagara Guild of Crafts, Canadian Society for Creative Leathercraft, and the Canadian Authors Association. In the past four years she has organized three public performances of Guild work and has overseen the publishing of several Guild anthologies. Currently, she is President of the Writers Guild and editor of their newsletter Notebook.

Beside writing and crafting, she enjoys music and camping, does volunteer work for local charities having served on the local executive Arthritis Society of Ontario and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. Husband David recently retired as a mathematics teacher. They have three children with the youngest in University.

Most recently, for her on-going support of fine handart in Niagara, she received a Ministry of Immigration and Culture 10-year volunteer award in 1992. That year she also received an Ontario 125 Outstanding Contribution Award for adapting her play Stand Tall for seniors' use. Her play is now being workshopped by Arbor Theatre in Peterborough.

**The Canadian Society for
Creative Leathercraft
45th Annual Meeting**

The Woodstock Branch of CSCL invites all member to come to the Quality Inn April 28, 29, 30, 1995.

There will be a Specialty Table. Bring a leather article that will stump the CSCL Members. Please have all articles set up by 8:00 p.m.

On Sunday morning there will be a final presentation on Dream Catchers.

All CSCL members please pay your Annual Dues to the Membership Chairman, Madeleine Mitchell or to your Guild treasurer to which you belong.

Nancy Durham needs all CSCL reports for the Annual Report. The past few years we have had a couple of reports missing, so could these people please send one to Nancy.

Nancy Durham needs all CSCL reports for the Annual Report. The past few years we have had a couple reports missing, so could these people send one to Nancy.

Have all Weston Trophy, Associate, and Fellow pieces in to Dorothy Muma's for judging by 10:00 a.m. March 18, 1995

To all CSCL members, please write or find an article for the Bulletin. This is your Bulletin and this year has been the worst for articles. We only had enough for two issues as for the usual four.

The new editors, Dorothy and David McPherson will need lots of support as Lois McPherson and Betsy Rennie have had. Please help out and send the bulletin material to David and Dorothy McPherson, 133 Hampton Ave. Port Colborne, Ontario L3K 5R9.