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An Intricate Web(b): American Influences  
on Professional Craft in Canada 1964 – 1974

Sandra Alfoldy

A Thesis

in

The Special Individualized Program

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at  
Concordia University  
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## ABSTRACT

### An Intricate Web(b): American Influences on Professional Craft in Canada 1964 – 1974

Sandra Alfoldy, Ph.D.  
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This thesis explores the impact of American craftspeople, organizers and ideologies on the development of professional craft in Canada during the period 1964 to 1974. Research which has identified this as a key decade in the development of infrastructures also reveals a strong reliance on American craft ideals during this period. In particular, the philanthropy of Aileen Osborn Webb and the American Craft Council is discussed as it provided Canadian administrators with models upon which they based specific aspects of their organizations. Although the American Craft Council and the World Crafts Council, formed in 1964, provided guidance for Canada, they were unable to assist in navigating the growing tensions between Francophone and Anglophone craftspeople, and the emerging self-identity of First Nations craftspeople. It is my hypothesis that rather than negotiating through these difficulties on the national level, Canadian organizers attempted to neutralize them by simply not engaging with the issues. This awkwardness resulted in the 1974 formation of a national craft organization, the Canadian Crafts Council, already undermined by growing dissention.

By undertaking studies of specific exhibitions and conferences during this period, I have highlighted the key personalities, ideologies, and organizations and their contributions to professional craft in Canada. Through this process three areas of debate emerge. First, the recurrence of American “experts” to validate Canadian craft, and the consistent admiration of Aileen Osborn Webb by all levels of administrators and

craftspeople, indicates the omnipresence of American ideals that Canadian craftspeople both embraced and resisted. Second, the differing perceptions of the professional focus of Quebec craft organizations and the nationalistic emphasis on the preservation of craft techniques and traditions presented an insurmountable obstacle to the formation of a unified Canadian craft organization. Third, unlike the American Craft Council which operated independently from the federal Indian Arts and Crafts Board, the Canadian Guild of Crafts maintained contact, but had limited involvement with, First Nations craftspeople. Instead they continued in the caretaking role they had developed during the early part of the twentieth century as the Canadian Handicrafts Guild.



To Christopher Michael Helland

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## INTRODUCTION

The Canadian craft establishment is in general agreement that professional craft activity has grown considerably in the past twenty-five years. Although statistics rarely tell the full story, the November 1972 Statistics Canada's "Canadian Crafts Survey and Membership Plebiscite" revealed that 1701 full and part-time craftspeople were working in Canada.<sup>1</sup> That number had increased to 15,000 full and part-time craftspeople by 1991, and everything suggests a continuing expansion of the craft population.<sup>2</sup>

Both the 1991 and 1996 Statistics Canada reports indicate that craftspeople form one of the most well-educated groups of workers in Canada, with 15% having graduated from community college, technical school or a CEGEP, 40% possessing a university degree, and 8% holding a post-graduate degree.<sup>3</sup> Despite the lack of a national craft magazine in Canada, all ten provincial craft councils circulate newsletters, and Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta publish magazines. Craftspeople are not the only ones increasing their expertise in the area of craft. The public interest in purchasing crafts continues to grow; craft retail outlets and gallery spaces noted that 36% of the general public had purchased crafts between 1989 and 1994, while during 1999 the sale of crafts rose an additional 11.5% to generate an estimated 13.8 million dollars annually.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, Education Division, Cultural Information Section, *Canadian Crafts Survey and Membership Plebiscite*, November 1972, National Archives of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen's Association, MG28I222, Volume 1.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Weinrich, *Report and Recommendations to the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canadian Crafts Council on Crafts Policy* (Ottawa: Canadian Crafts Council: May 12, 1994), Appendix III.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 37. Unfortunately Jacqueline Luffman reports "In general throughout the economy, higher earnings are attributable to higher education levels...However, this relationship does not appear to apply for these cultural occupations." Jacqueline Luffman, "Earnings of selected culture workers: what the 1996 census can tell us," *Focus on Culture*, 12/1 (First Quarter 2000), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Weinrich, *Report*, 10 and Statistics Canada, "Monthly Survey of Retailers," *The Daily*, Thursday, October 28, 1999, 1.

Alan Elder, curator of the 1996 *Transformations* exhibition of Saidye Bronfman Award winners for craft, has argued that the establishment of the award in 1977 corresponded with the emergence of Canada's strong craft community: "It is impossible not to think about the transformations that have occurred over its 20-year history. These transformations mirror the changes that have occurred in Canadian craft over the same period."<sup>5</sup> Although Elder is correct in drawing attention to the strength of Canadian craft in recent years, there are good reasons to look at the period immediately preceding the institution of the well-known Bronfman awards. The 1960s and 1970s provided key moments in the foundation of infrastructures, ideologies and tensions that continue to define professional craft in Canada. In particular, the decade between 1964 and 1974 was an intensely energetic period in the post-war development of professional craft in Canada. It began with the creation of a new national craft organization, the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, something which had not been attempted since the formation of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in 1906. By 1974 the Association and Guild, by then called the Canadian Crafts Council, had merged, hoping to establish a more powerful national body for the representation of professional craft activities across the country. In those ten years, many major craft exhibitions were held, new educational opportunities were structured, and Canadian craftspeople were projected onto the international stage in two "world" events – Expo 67 and the tenth World Crafts Council Congress, held in Toronto in the summer of 1974.

Research which has led to the identification of 1964 – 1974 as a key, although deeply problematic, decade in the development of infrastructures intended to facilitate what is now a multi-million dollar annual business, also reveals a strong reliance on

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<sup>5</sup> Alan C. Elder, "Curator's Statement," *Transformations brochure*, (1996) 3.

American craft ideals during the period. Specifically, the goals set by and articulated through the American Craft Council and its influential sponsor, Aileen Osborn Webb, can be described as dominating Canadian efforts to establish an important place for craft in the national “consciousness.” Webb’s insistence on “elevating” the crafts from the level of the church fair to the art world was forcefully echoed in Canada as early as 1955. The mid-60s to mid-70s witnessed a myriad of activities designed, as Anita Aarons, an arts columnist of the time would have it, to foster the emergence of the “genuine, contemporary craftsman” producing original work without “sentimental desire” or “traditional shackles.”<sup>6</sup>

While there are any number of ways in which a central period in the history of craft in Canada might be studied, this thesis is structured around the issue of American influence, a factor so striking that it should no longer be avoided. An investigation undertaken through an “American lens” helps to situate the equally striking failures which attended Canadian efforts to orchestrate a cohesive national craft identity and a coherent approach to professionalism. Propelled by a desire to emulate successes to the south, Canadian craft organizers appear to have spent little time considering how to integrate the particular concerns of Quebec craftspeople, a geo-political aspect of their task for which the United States offered no instructive parallel. More effort was expended in addressing developments among First Nations craftspeople, who sought to eliminate the perception of their production as “souvenir” material, but again the American situation came up short in the provision of models. There the government sponsored Indian Arts and Crafts Board operated separately from the American Crafts

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<sup>6</sup> Anita Aarons, “Canadian Handicrafts and the Architect,” *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal*, 476, 42/5, (May 1965), 19.

Council; in Canada, national craft organizations maintained contact with First Nations producers but their efforts to foreground Aboriginal crafts often carried with them vestiges of the traditional “caretaker” role assumed by Euro-Canadians. By no means the least of the problems facing Canadian craft organizations as they sought to confront the particularities of their professional goals was the persistent need to garner support, financial and otherwise, from a variety of government bodies and fine arts institutions. Such practical considerations did not belabour their American exemplar: Aileen Osborn Webb threw her considerable philanthropic resources behind the American Craft Council, and by 1956 had gone so far as to establish an influential exhibition venue, the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, located across the street from the Museum of Modern Art.

My consideration of a critical ten years in the history of professional Canadian craft has been structured around studies of specific exhibitions and conferences. Chapter One considers the significance of the 1964 First World Congress of Craftsmen, a gathering which in many respects crystallized the perceived power of the United States in both talking about and institutionalizing advanced professional standards. Underscoring the studies of specific exhibitions and conferences contained in the chapter is the history of Aileen Osborn Webb’s position in the North American cultural field, a focus required by her founding roles in the American Craft Council and the World Congress of Craftsmen. Pierre Bourdieu’s sociological studies on taste, capital, and the field of cultural production have been essential in helping me to situate institutional structures employing the reality of their class, race and gender constraints within a particular field of power. I have utilized theories contained in his books *Distinction: A Social Critique of*

*the Judgement of Taste* and *The Field of Cultural Production*. The concept of “taste,” emphasized by Aileen Osborn Webb during her 1955 visit to Toronto to open the *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.* exhibition runs as an undercurrent throughout all the case studies. Why specific objects were credited with possessing “good taste” by jurors and organizers is part of the larger question of how the tastes of these particular individuals came to be legitimated as the highest standard. Bourdieu argues that taste is an indicator of social class, and is predicated upon the structure of class lifestyles. Taste is part of a system of classification, allowing us to differentiate ourselves from others, “[Taste] transforms objectively classified practices, in which a class condition signifies itself (through taste), into classifying practices, that is, into a symbolic expression of class position.”<sup>7</sup>

The taste of individual agents is related to their access to the capital available within the cultural field. Bourdieu divides this capital into three types: economic, cultural, and symbolic. Economic capital is related to value (both monetary and social), cultural capital results from the possession of legitimated knowledge, and symbolic capital is gained through social stature. Those born into families already credited with good taste and high levels of cultural capital, for example Aileen Osborn Webb and Joan Chalmers, will have an easier time obtaining more capital. This is achieved through “proper” education and socializing, leading to the duplication of power within the group. For the purposes of my thesis, Bourdieu’s analysis of the cultural field is helpful in situating the organizations and individuals involved in Canadian craft. Fields are what mediate the relationships between players. The boundaries of fields are constantly

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<sup>7</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Richard Nice Trans. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), 175.

changing as agents struggle to improve their positions. These shifts occur due to the acquisition or loss of capital; therefore, individuals and groups are careful to maintain the domination of their views within a particular field.<sup>8</sup>

Chapter Two studies the return of delegates to Canada following the First World Congress of Craftsmen and the upheavals within the Canadian craft field caused by the events of the conference. Norah McCullough's election as the Canadian Representative to the newly formed World Crafts Council introduced schisms between the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Canada's preeminent organization, and the "young rebels" excited by emerging concepts of professional art/craft. The 1965 Winnipeg conference that resulted in the formation of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association provides the central case study for the chapter.

The introduction of the professional Canadian craft artist to the international craft world through Expo 67 begins Chapter Three. Expo 67's official craft exhibition, *Canadian Fine Crafts*, and Norah McCullough's massive craft exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada which shared the same title, provide insights into the increasing stature of the crafts. Despite the growing confidence of Canadian organizations in the professional nature of the nation's craft, many Americans were involved in the exhibitions and conferences held during Centennial year. Daniel Rhodes assisted Norah McCullough in jurying *Canadian Fine Crafts*, and Aileen Osborn Webb was the featured keynote speaker at the Canadian Craftsmen's Association's Kingston conference. Chapter Three will also operate to introduce the exclusions within what was presented as Canadian craft; the growing isolation, in part imposed, of Quebec craft organizations and

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<sup>8</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, Randal Johnson Ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 37 – 46.

the contrasts between the display of Native and Inuit craft objects in national craft displays and their employment as political statements in Expo 67's "Indians of Canada" pavilion.

Ruth Phillips' work on Woodlands souvenir art/craft in *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast 1700 – 1900*, and the analysis of the reception of these "exotic" objects in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Post Colonial Worlds*, provide entries from which to discuss the importance of Native craft production. The transition of Native craft from souvenirs to professional art objects parallels Euro-Canadian craft development. During the 1964 – 1974 period Canadian craft organizations were slowly made cognizant of their exclusionary practices toward contemporary Native production as evidenced through the Canadian Guild of Crafts involvement in *Canadian Indian Art/Craft '70* and *Canadian Indian Art '74*. Despite this growing awareness, the majority of my studies of exhibitions and conferences indicate the continued classification of Native craft as either historic artifact or ethnographic specimen. This disparity can be addressed beginning with Phillip's discussion of the importance of revising the reception of these objects which have been inscribed as "natural," "exotic" souvenirs under western modes of production. Conversely, the ability of these objects to subvert the imperialist cultural fields surrounding them by modernizing the capital possessed by Native craftspeople provides resistance through the preservation of specific craft materials, forms and meanings.<sup>9</sup>

Chapter Four examines the role played by American instructors in educational

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<sup>9</sup> Ruth Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast 1700 – 1900*, (Seattle/London: University of Washington Press, Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 48.

institutions teaching craft and the introduction of fine art ideals into Canadian craft programs. It also discusses the competition between the Canadian Craftsmen's Association and the Canadian Guild of Crafts for federal funding which led to the process of modernization undertaken by the Canadian Handicrafts Guild. The Guild undertook an ambitious exhibition programme designed to highlight professionally educated craftspeople: the 1969 exhibition *Craft Dimensions Canada*, indicates the linked drive for the conceptual in craft objects and the high level of American involvement.

The final chapter is a study of the closest association between Canadian and American craft organizations undertaken during this period, the 1974 World Crafts Council exhibition and conference, *In Praise of Hands*. The amalgamation of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association and the Canadian Guild of Crafts into one national group, the Canadian Crafts Council, was partially driven by the desire to appear as a cohesive unit during this international event. The focus on the international craft community created a sense of intimacy and belonging, which was able to offset the reality of the marginalized nature of many of the demonstrators. For Canada, underlying the theme of unity were national issues that threatened to erode the illusion of a cohesive national organization, namely the lack of participation of Quebec in the exhibition, and the negotiation of a separate exhibition, *Canadian Indian Art 74* for Native craftspeople.

This dissertation is grounded in archival research. The American Craft Council archives and library and the Archives of American Art have provided extensive material on Aileen Osborn Webb and the World Crafts Council. The National Archives of Canada and the Archives of Canadian Craft at the Province of Ontario Archive contained



important material on the Canadian Craftsmen's Association and the Canadian Guild of Crafts. Primary material regarding exhibitions and conferences was made available through the National Gallery of Canada archive, the Royal Ontario Museum archive, York University archives and the Ontario Science Centre archive. Unfortunately some of the archives of the Canadian Crafts Council are inaccessible, stored in a private individual's garage, and many of the Ontario Crafts Council archives are also in storage. A number of personal, telephone, letter and e-mail interviews have been used to expand upon archival material, and in particular, to compensate for those holdings which are not available for consultation.

Recent literature on Canadian craft has also proved to be useful in several respects, though rarely in relation to the central concerns of the dissertation. Since 1998 Sandra Flood, Gail Crawford and Ellen Easton McLeod have published three key histories. Sandra Flood's 1998 Ph.D. thesis, *Canadian Craft and Museum Practice 1900 – 1950*, provides a thoroughly researched, groundbreaking overview of craft activity in Canada during this period.<sup>10</sup> Flood makes the important point that the distinctions between professional and amateur within craft are predicated upon class and gender biases which must be acknowledged. While this is essential to the construction of histories surrounding Canadian craft, I believe that it is imperative to concentrate on the development of professional craft activity when discussing the production of the 1960s and early 1970s. This period witnessed the emergence of the "professionals" as an outspoken, independent group that caused many of the key changes within the Canadian

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<sup>10</sup> Sandra Flood, *Canadian Craft and Museum Practice 1900 – 1950*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, Department of Art and Archaeology (Art Gallery and Museum Studies), 1998. The Canadian Museum of Civilization is currently adapting the thesis into a forthcoming book.

craft community. Flood deliberately avoids any discussion of First Nations' craft. She provides an analysis of the role of craft in constructing a national image for Canada, and ends her thesis in 1950, after the Massey Commission (Royal Commission on Arts, Letters and Sciences 1951) refused to make any recommendations on the formal developments of crafts because "handicrafts in Canada can be most effectively and suitably aided through the strengthening of the appropriate national voluntary organization, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild."<sup>11</sup>

Ellen McLeod's book *In Good Hands: The Women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild*, adapted from her MA thesis, provides an excellent history and critical overview of the role of women in the Canadian Handicrafts Guild. Drawing upon recent writing on women and the applied arts, McLeod critiques the depreciation of arts and crafts by the "master narrative" of Western art. McLeod's book indicates the pivotal 1936 change in status of the Canadian Guild of Handicrafts from a national patron of crafts to provincial branches of the Guild. Her final chapter brings her history into the early 1960s, ending with a brief mention of the Guild's transformation into the Canadian Crafts Council in 1974. McLeod sets guidelines to continue a discussion of the involvement of privileged women in the marketing and promotion of North American craft, but like Flood she does not elaborate upon American influences.

Gail Crawford's 1998 book *A Fine Line: Studio Crafts in Ontario from 1930 to the Present*, offers a well-researched, non-theoretical history focused on Ontario. Many of the figures and exhibitions central to my thesis are included in Crawford's book, but they are utilized as historical examples and are not critically analyzed. Like Flood,

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 206.

American influences receive only brief mention, and apart from an acknowledgement of Webb's philanthropic role in the World Crafts Council and her speech at the 1965 Lake Couchiching conference the numerous interventions of Aileen Osborn Webb are reduced to a footnote, well worth citing here as it helps to illuminate my particular focus: "Mrs. Webb came to Canada again as closing speaker for a conference in Kingston organized by the Canadian Craftsmen's Association in 1967 and for the World Crafts Council conference in Toronto."<sup>12</sup>

Andrée-Anne De Sève's *Hommage à Jean-Marie Gauvreau*, published in 1995 by the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec is a specific study that has been of great value for this dissertation. It considers the contributions of Jean-Marie Gauvreau, the founder of the influential Salon des métiers d'art in 1955 and Director of l'École du Meuble from 1935 - 1966. This book highlights Gauvreau's unstinting dedication to preserving Quebec craft traditions, while providing economic incentives for craftspeople and professionalizing the craft sector. Gauvreau's legacy continues Quebec's emphasis on professional craft, supported by the provincial government to a degree which has not been achieved in any other part of Canada. This unique situation has caused both admiration and resentment among non-Quebecois craftspeople during the various post-war attempts to formulate a national craft organization.

*Making and Metaphor: A Discussion of Meaning in Contemporary Craft* which grew out of the 1993 conference of the same name, is a collection of Canadian essays on craft published by the Canadian Museum of Civilization. The book seeks to redress the imbalance between the growth in Canadian craft and the relative paucity of writing on the

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<sup>12</sup> Gail Crawford, *A Fine Line: Studio Crafts in Ontario from 1930 to the Present*. (Toronto and Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1998), 194.

subject. It is filled with useful references to William Morris and British arts and crafts traditions, but contains few allusions to American craft ideologies. Virginia Wright's essay, "Craft Education in Canada: A History of Confusion," traces very concisely the influence of Donald Buchanan on attitudes toward design and industry in post World War II Canada but makes no mention of Buchanan's concern for comparisons with the United States. Nor does Wright acknowledge the influx of American instructors during the 1960s and 1970s, an important aspect of both this dissertation and any full study of craft education in Canada.

The March 1999 Harbourfront Centre conference, "The Past and the Future: Exploring Contemporary Craft History, Theory and Critical Writing," involved Canadian, American and British craftspeople and academics. Despite this mix, papers focusing specifically on American influences in Canada were absent from the proceedings. Sandra Flood presented her work on the history of crafts from 1900 to 1950; however, there was no equivalent history given for the crafts after 1950.

Specific views on mutual North American influences were expressed in November 1998 at New York's Museum of Contemporary Crafts symposium "Border Crossings." The daylong session was part of the opening of the *Transformations* exhibition, but the proceedings were not published. Alan Elder kindly shared his paper with me, and in it he referred briefly to some of the concerns raised in my thesis, namely the influence of professional American craftspeople and instructors on Canadian college and university students.

Far less significant for my thesis than the "Border Crossings" session has been craft scholarship published in the United States. Surprisingly, little has appeared in print

on Webb and the American Craft Council. American publishing on twentieth century craft focuses mainly around a series of books edited by Janet Kardon, Director of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York. *Revivals! Diverse Traditions 1920 – 1945* (1994), *The Ideal Home 1900 – 1920* (1994), and *Craft in the Machine Age 1920 – 1945* (1995), are all part of *The History of 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Craft* series that focuses on the early part of the century. Theses that examine American craft include April Aerni's *The Economics of the Craft Industry*, Alice Kling's *American Contemporary Craftsmen: A Way of Work, A Way of Life*, Janet C. Mainzer's *The Relation between the Crafts and the Fine Arts in the United States from 1876 to 1980*, and Faith Agostinone's *A Postmodern feminist text analysis of the pedagogy of popular crafts*.<sup>13</sup> As helpful as this literature has been, one of the central issues to be examined in this thesis – the importance of the American Craft Council for the building of a Canadian craft infrastructure – cannot be grounded in these American publications. According to Trish Lucy, the librarian of the American Craft Council, there has been no academic publishing done on the history of the Council itself, its founder Aileen Osborn Webb, or the First World Congress of Craftsmen.

In the end, the secondary literature which has proved to be most useful is that produced by scholars from the United Kingdom where the government sponsored Crafts Council provides an environment strongly supportive of crafts and craft publications. An important model for my thesis is Tanya Harrod's *The CRAFTS in BRITAIN in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. In this monumental text - 496 pages - Harrod provides a comprehensive history

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<sup>13</sup> April Laskey Aerni, *The Economics of the Crafts Industry*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1987. Alice Jane Kling, *American Contemporary Craftsmen: A Way of Work, A Way of Life*, Ph.D. thesis, George Washington University, 1987. Janet C. Mainzer, *The Relation between the Crafts and the Fine Arts in the United States from 1876 to 1980*, Ph.D. thesis, New York University, 1988. Faith Agostinone, *A*

of British crafts, focusing on the issues surrounding their production. She explores government involvement in the crafts, as well as private patronage of craft, while carefully situating historical events within their social, political and economic contexts. For example, her discussion of the 1973 Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition *The Craftsman's Art* incorporates an analysis of the relationship between the Crafts Centre of Great Britain and the Crafts Council of Great Britain, the anti-regional biases of the World Crafts Council's Lord Eccles, and the difficulties encountered in accommodating the long ancestry of the Arts and Crafts in Britain with modern vision of the Crafts Advisory Committee of Britain.<sup>14</sup> The 1998 publication *Ideas in the Making: practice in theory* grew out of Pamela Johnson's Fellowship in Critical Studies in Contemporary Craft at the University of Anglia. A collection of essays edited by Johnson, this book offers a rigorous look at the relationship between craft practice and theory, such as Johnson's essay "Can Theory Damage Your Practice?" Tanya Harrod, the 1997 Fellow in Critical Studies in Contemporary Craft also published a collection of conference papers, *Obscure objects of desire: reviewing the crafts in the twentieth century*, containing important sections on "The Crafts and Regional and National Identities," "Relations with Modernism and Postmodernism," and "Production, Consumption and Value."

It is evident from my research into contemporary critical writing that Canadian

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*postmodern feminist text analysis of the pedagogy of popular crafts*, Ph.D. thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Tanya Harrod. *The CRAFTS in BRITAIN in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. (Yale: Yale University Press, 1999), 380 – 386. For the purposes of Chapter Five of this dissertation, it is interesting to note that the British entries to *In Praise of Hands* consisted of objects selected from the 1973 exhibition *The Craftsman's Art*.

craft history remains relatively underdeveloped. While Flood and McLeod have done excellent research on the early part of the twentieth century, the period of the 1960s and early 1970s remains largely unexplored. It is important to create a solid body of research on the whole of Canadian craft in order to broaden theoretical examinations of the issues raised within these histories. British academics have demonstrated that there is interest in such histories, and Canadian craft cannot allow itself to remain outside of current debates and writing. Such neglect impacts upon international and national perceptions of the role and importance of Canadian craft objects and craftspeople.

My intention in this dissertation is to explore American influences on Canadian craft at a time when it was wrestling with the problems of how to professionalize its production and its organizational infrastructures. As I stated earlier, there are other equally tenable approaches to an especially active period in the pursuit of a clearly demarcated place for professional craft within the field of Canadian culture. My efforts here, which depart significantly from my earlier work on the rich terrain of the “Craft Fair,” seek to demonstrate that there is a wealth of archival material which needs to receive critical attention.

## CHAPTER 1: THE 1964 WORLD CONGRESS OF CRAFTSMEN: A CRYSTALLIZATION OF THE AMERICAN EXEMPLAR

Margaret Patch spent 1960 traveling the world on behalf of the American Craft Council.<sup>1</sup> A weaver from Massachusetts and founder of the Massachusetts Weavers Guild, Patch had been a member of the American Craft Council since the early 1950s, and had become a close friend of Aileen Osborn Webb, its founder and sponsor. Webb was impressed with Patch's "great belief in organization and statistics,"<sup>2</sup> and had entrusted her with undertaking an international survey of craftspeople. After visiting craftspeople on every continent, Patch returned to New York to inform Webb of the intense interest she had encountered for the idea of designing an international craft project. Her findings aligned neatly with Webb's vision of contributing to world peace by uniting the craftspeople of the world. The 23,500 individual members belonging to the American Craft Council in 1964 regarded Webb as being responsible for the shift in perception of American crafts from rural hobbies to objects forming part of the New York art scene. Now she planned to take on the same task for the rest of the world.

Webb and Patch confidently set about organizing what was to become the First World Congress of Craftsmen, during which they also planned to present a proposal for a world's craft council.<sup>3</sup> (Figure 1) The American Craft Council had already scheduled a national gathering for New York City during the 1964 World's Fair; after Patch's positive reception by those deemed to represent the world's craftspeople, it was decided

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<sup>1</sup> I will refer to the American Craftsmen's Council by its contemporary title, the American Craft Council.

<sup>2</sup> Aileen Osborn Webb, *Almost A Century* (Unpublished autobiography, 1977) 129.

<sup>3</sup> Aileen Osborn Webb was so sure of her vision of a World Crafts Council that she undertook to hire the internationally known lawyers, the Courdet Brothers, to draw up a constitution, organizing the Council as a United Nations-related organization with individual countries as members. Webb, *Almost A Century*, 129.



simply to convert the national conference into an international one. Delegates from many nations attended, but perhaps none were affected as strongly as those from Canada. Not only did they perform the unexpected through their choice of the official Canadian representative to the new World Crafts Council, but many of the thirty delegates returned to Canada more determined than ever to “professionalize” the field of craft. The impact of the New York gathering can only be understood by first considering the nature of the American Craft Council which had given rise to the new “international” organization, the cultural “authority” of Aileen Osborn Webb who had founded both bodies, and the degree to which the Canadian craft community had already been made receptive to American notions of professionalism through their awareness of the American Craft Council and its sponsor.

In 1940 Aileen Osborn Webb had founded the Handcraft Cooperative League of America, an organization through which she intended to elevate standards in craft production. The architect David Campbell, a Harvard graduate and, since 1938 Director of the New Hampshire League of Arts and Crafts, collaborated with Aileen Osborn Webb on setting an agenda for the League.<sup>4</sup> (Figure 2) David Campbell, according to Webb, “gave up a very promising career in architecture because he became so obsessed with the conviction that the creative use of the hands was one of the things which the world needed.”<sup>5</sup> Webb and Campbell agreed that the first step the Handcraft Cooperative

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<sup>4</sup> The New Hampshire League of Arts and Crafts was established in 1931 as the first state-supported craft organization in America. Betty Steele, *The League of New Hampshire Craftsmen's First Fifty Years*, (Concord: League of New Hampshire Craftsmen, 1982) 2.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Cummings, Oral History Interview with Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb, May 7 – June 9 1970, 43. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., mq 240004.

League should take in its national battle to have designer-craftspeople accepted as artists, was to hire a professional to develop a programme. Frances Caroe, the daughter of Frank Lloyd Wright, was thus hired and brought to the League, constituting an important link to established cultural capital in the United States. Webb respected Caroe, whom she described as strong-minded, bold and imaginative, with a “vision of the future of the crafts...far ahead of mine.”<sup>6</sup> In 1940, under the direction of Caroe, a cooperative retail shop operated by the League was established as America House.<sup>7</sup> The chief mandate of America House was to ensure the quality and perfection of production. Caroe and Webb were confident they would be able to create markets if they offered a high standard of craft objects.

During this time the Handcraft Cooperative League of America faced competition from an organization with similar aims, the American Handicraft Council, founded in 1939. The Council was headed by Anne Morgan, the daughter of the financier John Pierpont Morgan. Allen Eaton, famous for his books on American craft, and Holger Cahill, head of the craft program of the Works Progress Administration, were members of its powerful board of trustees.<sup>8</sup> In 1942 the two organizations merged into the American Craftsmen’s Cooperative Council, Inc., an act which has been formally acknowledged as an agreement between Morgan and Webb to eliminate the duplication of efforts. According to Webb’s autobiography, a contributing factor to the merger was Anne Morgan’s reluctance to provide large amounts of financial support to the group, her

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<sup>6</sup> Webb, *Almost a Century*, 71.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 72. America House was based in New York City. It was initially located at 7 East 54<sup>th</sup> Street from 1940 to 1943, moving then to 485 Madison Avenue in order to provide space for expanding Council activities. In 1949 America House moved to 32 East 52<sup>nd</sup> street where it remained until 1959 when it moved to 44 West 53<sup>rd</sup> Street. The shop closed in 1971.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

money going instead to a variety of different causes.<sup>9</sup> Webb was not so reticent, and with a single national craft organization operating in the United States, America House was now able to provide the only large-scale merchandizing of high-quality crafts and thus, a solid foundation from which to build a future for American crafts.

Emerging from the success of America House was the American Craftsmen's Cooperative Council Inc.'s publication, *Craft Horizons*. The journal was originally published in 1941 as a newsletter addressing problems of marketing for the groups soon to be participating in the Council. Webb met with two Council trustees, the poet Mary Duryea and Horace Jayne of the Metropolitan Museum, who agreed the sheet should be transformed into a professional publication. Webb put her financial support behind the project, and through contacts at the magazine *Antiques*, an office for *Craft Horizons* was set up in their headquarters.<sup>10</sup> The first issue of *Craft Horizons* was published in May 1942, with a distribution of 3500 copies and a professional editor.<sup>11</sup>

The interest in crafts produced by American craftspeople was steadily increasing. America House continued to operate profitably, moving in 1943 to a prestigious Madison Avenue location purchased by Aileen Webb. (Figure 3) This allowed the operations at America House to expand to include a new Educational Council, the activities of which

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 73. Webb writes "I do not think Anne was ready to advance too much material aid. The financial problems were the reason for my willingness to help Anne Morgan's program." For more information on Anne Morgan, see Alfred Allan Lewis, *Ladies and not so gentle women*, (New York: Viking, 2000). Many of Morgan's papers are at the Pierpoint Morgan Library in New York. Archival records of the American Handicraft Council are available at the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Art, mq235547, reel 3466.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>11</sup> The first editor of *Craft Horizons* was Mary Lyon, who was hired in 1947. Rose Slivka, famous for her support of sculptural ceramics, was the editor of *Craft Horizons* throughout the 1960s and 1970s. *Craft Horizons* changed its name to *American Craft* in 1979, with Lois Moran appointed editor in 1980.

encompassed educational workshops, craft exhibitions, and the publishing of periodicals, books and pamphlets on crafts.

In her memoirs, Webb recounts a 1943 meeting with a soldier that had convinced her of the importance of providing craft education. The soldier entered America House and urged Webb to purchase a large plantation in the American South and start a craft school for returning veterans.<sup>12</sup> Again, Webb's connections provided the possibility of establishing such a school. Owen D. Young, the Chairman of the New York State Board of Regents and "warm friend" of Webb's father, wrote to her suggesting that they consider becoming part of Alfred University in northern New York State.<sup>13</sup> As a result the School for American Craftsmen was formed. The School was initially located at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, but moved in 1946 to become part of the Fine and Hand Arts Division of the Liberal Arts College of Alfred University, moving again in 1949 to become an affiliate of the Rochester Institute of Technology. (Figure 4) This affiliation with the university milieu was considered to be important for the status of crafts in America:

#### The significance of the invitation to the School for American Craftsman

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<sup>12</sup> Webb, *Almost a Century*, 110. Webb's brother, General Frederick H. Osborn was an advocate of the Army Crafts Program which he helped to initiate in late 1941 under the Facilities Section of Special Sources. See Noelle Backer, "Arts and Crafts in the U.S. Army: The Quiet Side of Military Life," *The CraftsReport Online!* <http://www.craftsreport.com/december96.army.html>.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 114. Owen D. Young was the board chairman of the General Electric Co. and Radio Corporation. He had been involved in the 1924 Dawes Plan and had chaired the 1929 Second Reparations Conference in Paris. He was named *Time Magazine's* Man of the Year in 1929. His second wife Louise was involved in several craft projects. Her first initiative was a firm called Powis-Brown, based in the Philippines, where she had local women embroider her designs onto lingerie and table linens that were sold in New York, Chicago, and Paris. Through his involvement in the Bankers Trust, Young established credit for his then friend, Louise Brown. After Owen and Louise Young were married in 1937, she set up new craft projects in Van Hornesville, New York, first turning her home into Van Horne Kitchens where local school girls produced over 78 varieties of canned goods and preserves. Her second project began in 1939 when she began purchasing six old houses that were renovated into artisan studios for weaving, pottery and painting. Due to his wife's own endeavors, Owen D. Young was probably receptive to Aileen Osborn Webb's craft-based initiatives. For more information on Young, see <http://www.time.com/time/special/moy/1929.html> and Josephine Young Case and Everett Needham Case, *Owen D. Young and American Enterprise*, (Boston: David R. Godine, 1982) 689-694.

on the part of the Trustees of Alfred University is very great. In one step it lifts the educational status of the Hand Arts from that of vocational training, on a par with radar or refrigerators, to training on the Liberal Arts level. The focus will thus be changed from mere technical ability to that of creative art. Once again, craftsmen will be considered as artists rather than artisans.<sup>14</sup>

Expanded facilities at America House allowed for individual artists to be given featured shows, increasing both the visibility of American craftspeople and the increasing standard of quality and design of products. A formal gallery at America House was opened in 1949, and large-scale exhibitions were organized by the Educational Council. Sponsored and organized by the Council, *Craftsmanship in the United States 1952* was displayed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, while *Designer Craftsmen U.S.A. 1953* traveled to ten major American museums. Following a 1954 conference on "Craftsmen and Museum Relations" at the Art Institute of Chicago, Aileen Osborn Webb and David Campbell set to work designing the Museum of Contemporary Crafts which opened in September, 1956.<sup>15</sup>

It was fitting that the first large exhibition of American craft premiered at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, as Aileen Osborn Webb's father, William Church Osborn, had been the President of the Board of Trustees from 1941 to 1948, and her maternal grandfather had been an earlier member. As the mention of such names as Frances Caroe, Anne Morgan and Owen D. Young already betray, Webb brought to her support of the American Craft Council the benefits of a privileged upbringing. Webb's philanthropy was predicated upon her social, economic and cultural position within the

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<sup>14</sup> "American Craft Council: A Chronology," *American Craft*, August/September 1993: 137.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 138.

upper echelons of New York Society. According to Pierre Bourdieu's theories, the field of cultural production employs three types of capital: economic, symbolic and cultural.<sup>16</sup> Aileen Osborn Webb had access to all three. Agents within the cultural field occupy positions dependant upon the distribution of capital, and the recognition of this capital. As a result of her advantaged childhood, Webb understood the power relations contributing to the position she occupied as a cultural agent. Her interest in world equality for craftspeople was predicated upon the social reform and internationalist orientation of her family.

Born in 1892 in Garrison, New York, to William Church and Alice Dodge Osborn, Aileen entered a family described by the *New York Herald Tribune* as "the public-spirited family of Osborn."<sup>17</sup> (Figure 5) Both her maternal Dodge and paternal Osborn families were considered American "royalty," possessing independent fortunes, involved in New York and federal politics, and playing prominent roles in the development of Princeton University.<sup>18</sup>

Her maternal background was especially strong. Aileen Osborn Webb's mother was the granddaughter of William Earl Dodge who had amassed a large fortune through his company, Phelps, Dodge and Co., North America's largest importing house of metals. Known as a "copper baron," Dodge also made shrewd investments in railway lines,

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<sup>16</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, Randal Johnson Ed., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> William G. Wry, "Uniting the World's Craftsmen," *New York Herald Tribune*, 7 June 1964: 11.

<sup>18</sup> By 1975, twenty-four members of four generations of the Dodge and Osborn families had attended Princeton. Henry Fairfield Osborn, Aileen Webb's uncle, was Princeton's first professor of comparative anatomy, later becoming the president of the American Museum of Natural History. Her father served as a trustee of Princeton, and her brothers Frederick H. Osborn, major-general responsible for the army's education program in World War Two, and Fairfield Osborn, president of the New York Zoological Society and author of the book *Our Plundered Planet*, were Princeton graduates. Her mother funded an American History chair at Princeton, and today Dodge-Osborn Hall, part of Woodrow Wilson College, honours the history of both families.

[http://www.ton.edu/CampusWWW/Companion/dodge\\_osborn\\_hall.html](http://www.ton.edu/CampusWWW/Companion/dodge_osborn_hall.html)

timberlands and lumbermills, owning between 100,000 and 400,000 acres of land in each of five states, and “extensive tracts in Canada.” Upon his death in 1883 Dodge was revered not so much for his fortune as for his charitable works. Like the famous American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, Dodge was a devout Christian, and in his roles as Vice-President, then President of the American Chamber of Commerce from 1858 to 1880 he encouraged other business people to contribute generously to charities. He funded the first Young Men’s Christian Association building, was on the board of directors of the American Bible Society, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the New York Children’s Aid Society, the American Natural History Museum, and was President of the National Temperance and Publication Society. Dodge believed in the importance of equality in American society and “devoted himself to the work of educating colored people and the Indians,” giving large sums of money to the Lincoln University for Colored Students. An estimated fortune of \$6,000,000 was divided among his seven sons, who continued their father’s philanthropy.<sup>19</sup>

Webb’s mother was the daughter of one of those sons, William Earl Dodge Jr., a prosperous New York merchant. She was involved with a number of charities, in particular the New York Children’s Aid Society. A more prominent force in philanthropy was her eldest sister, Grace Hoadley Dodge, a well-known social reformer who, especially concerned with the situation of women in the United States, founded the first Working Girls Society in 1881. She was a principal benefactor of Teachers College at Columbia University, the Industrial Education Association, the Young Women’s Christian Association, the New York Travelers’ Aid Society and the American Social

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<sup>19</sup> “A good life-work ended,” *New York Times*, 10 February 1883: 8.

Hygiene Association.<sup>20</sup> It is estimated that Grace Hoadley Dodge donated \$1, 500,000 to her various causes.<sup>21</sup> Alice and Grace Dodge's brothers Cleveland H. Dodge and D. Stuart Dodge, were involved in the establishment of the American University of Beirut. Cleveland H. Dodge cultivated his international connections, serving as a trustee of Robert College in Istanbul and directing the United War Work Campaign during the First World War which raised funds for the Y.M.C.A, the Red Cross and for the relief of war victims in the Near East.<sup>22</sup> It was thus a developed sense of social responsibility that Alice Dodge Osborn took into her marriage with a fellow philanthropist, William Church Osborn. He was a graduate of Princeton and the Harvard Law School, with interests in mining companies, railroads and real estate. Described as "full of good works," he acted as President of the Children's Aid Society, and trustee for the Ruptured and Crippled Hospital. William Church Osborn was interested in art, serving not only as President of the Metropolitan Museum until his death in 1951,<sup>23</sup> but also bequeathing his extensive art collection to the institution, reserving several works by Monet and Van Gogh for his children.<sup>24</sup>

Aileen Osborn, future founder of the American Craft Council, began her own philanthropic activity through the Junior League, started in 1907 by Mary Harriman, Dorothy Whitney and Frederica Webb, the older sister of Aileen Osborn's future husband Vanderbilt Webb. "They called a meeting every autumn of carefully handpicked, and

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<sup>20</sup> Like her grandfather, Grace Hoadley Dodge worked toward providing equality for American citizens. The New York Traveler's Aid Society assisted poor immigrant women and children through education.

<sup>21</sup> "Grace Hoadley Dodge," *New York Times*, 28 December 1914: 9:5. See also, <http://1web.tc.columbia.edu/exhibits/dodge/dodge12.htm>

<sup>22</sup> His twin sons continued their father's love of the Near East. Baynard Dodge served as president of the University of Beirut in Lebanon, and Cleveland E. Dodge was the president of Princeton's Near East Foundation. See: [http://www.ton.edu/CampusWWW/Companion/dodge\\_osborn\\_hall.html](http://www.ton.edu/CampusWWW/Companion/dodge_osborn_hall.html)

<sup>23</sup> "William Church Osborn," *New York Times*, 5 January 1951: 20:3.

<sup>24</sup> Webb, *Almost a Century*, 3 – 11.



socially eligible girls, elected a president and vice-president and turned them loose to run a play or pageant to make money for charity,” recalled Webb, who became president of the Junior League in 1910.<sup>25</sup> Her social ideals were heavily influenced by the Democratic politics embraced by her family:<sup>26</sup> William Church Osborn having served as the New York Democratic State Chair from 1914 – 1916, and run as the alternate candidate in the Democratic primary for Governor of New York in 1918.<sup>27</sup> Her maternal uncle Cleveland H. Dodge was the largest single contributor to Democratic candidate Woodrow Wilson’s presidential campaigns in both 1912 and 1916.<sup>28</sup>

Aileen Osborn Webb was active in politics herself and early on made some interesting acquaintances. She was the Vice President of the Women’s Democratic Committee in Putnam County around 1912, and hosted a Democratic picnic where Eleanor Roosevelt was the speaker: “I think it was the first political speech that Eleanor Roosevelt ever made.”<sup>29</sup> Roosevelt played a role in Webb’s later interest in social assistance through the crafts, as Roosevelt and her friends Marion Dickerman and Nancy Cook had generated the idea of Val-Kill Industries in 1927. Val-Kill was an arts and crafts colony producing colonial revival crafts, inspired by the Roosevelt “cottage” located on their Springwood, New York estate near the Val-Kill stream.<sup>30</sup> This initiative was emulated by Webb and her friends Nancy Campbell and Ernestine Baker, who in

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 23. Between 1910 and 1929 Webb was occupied caring for her four children, Derick, William Osborn, Richard, and Barbara.

<sup>26</sup> Rose Slivka, “Aileen Osborn Webb, David Campbell: a reminiscence,” *American Craft*, 53/4 (August/September 1993): 136.

<sup>27</sup> “William Church Osborn,” *New York Times*, 5 January 1951: 20:3.

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.ton.edu/CampusWWW/Companion/dodge\\_osborn\\_hall.html](http://www.ton.edu/CampusWWW/Companion/dodge_osborn_hall.html)

<sup>29</sup> Paul Cummings, Oral History Interview with Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb, May 7 – June 9, 1970, 3. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., mq24004.

<sup>30</sup> Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt: Volume One 1884 – 1933* (New York: Viking Press, 1992), 47.

1929 set up Putnam County Products in Garrison, New York, to market local crafts.<sup>31</sup>

Webb recalls that the women had expected the local people to arrive ready to sell “string beans and eggs,” and were instead delighted when the women produced needlecrafts and the men woodwork, demonstrating “the latent art consciousness in people.”<sup>32</sup>

By 1936 President Roosevelt had established the “New Deal,” providing marketing and financial assistance to craftspeople along the same lines as Eleanor Roosevelt’s Val-Kill Industries and Aileen Osborn Webb’s Putnam County Products. Perceived by some as a source of national pride during economic hard times, President Roosevelt’s “New Deal” provided America with federally funded art programs under the title of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Holger Cahill who would participate in Anne Morgan’s American Handcraft Council, was appointed to head this program. The WPA sponsored over 3000 projects and exhibitions of craft, and through the Farm Security Administration, experiments in handicraft production and craft fairs were carried out in nearly every state.<sup>33</sup> Cahill’s largest project was the Index of American Design, intended to “pioneer the appreciation of Americana” by employing 500 painters in 32 states to produce over 23,000 watercolours and drawings of traditional American craft objects.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Webb, *Almost a Century*, 69. Like Webb, Nancy Campbell and Ernestine Baker were upper-middle class women from New York City who owned vacation homes in the scenic region of Putnam County, New York. Ernestine Baker’s husband Edward was a well-known artist who did a number of cover illustrations for *Time* Magazine.

<sup>32</sup> Webb, *Almost a Century*, 68.

<sup>33</sup> Harvey Green, “Culture and Crisis: Americans and the Craft Revival,” Janet Kardon Ed. *Revivals! Diverse Traditions 1920 – 1945: The History of 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Craft* (New York: American Craft Museum and Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 39.

<sup>34</sup> Francis V. O’Conner Ed. *The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology of Memoirs* (Washington D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1972), 73. Scholarship on the Index of American Design includes Nancy E. Allyn, *Defining American Design: a history of the Index of American Design, 1935 – 1942*, unpublished MA thesis, University of Maryland, 1982, Clarence Pearson Hornung, *Treasury of American Design: a pictorial survey of popular folk arts based upon watercolour renderings*, (New York: HN Abrams, 1972), Erwin Ottomar Christensen, *The Index of American Design*, (New York: Macmillan, 1950).

The WPA's craft initiatives were remarkable in that their profit-making abilities were secondary to the provision of improved public and individual morale. The emphasis on individualism and improved confidence espoused by this government philanthropy had been reflected earlier in the writings of Andrew Carnegie and the charitable activities of William Earl Dodge. Carnegie's philanthropist philosophies were outlined in his 1889 essay "The Gospel of Wealth," where he claims to echo Christ's words regarding the betterment of all man:

The man of wealth thus becoming the mere trustee and agent for his poorer brethren, bringing to their service his superior wisdom, experience, and ability to administer, doing for them better than they would or could do for themselves.<sup>35</sup>

As we have seen, Aileen Webb's family were philanthropic leaders, with her grandfather William Earl Dodge encouraging similar aims to Carnegie.<sup>36</sup> She herself was fully attuned to the "obligation" of distributing her surplus fortune, once informing Rose Slivka, editor of *Craft Horizons*, that "it's the privilege of money to help those who don't have it. And believe me...it's a privilege."<sup>37</sup> While Webb followed Carnegie's philosophy, her gender would probably have limited her access to the determination of

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<sup>35</sup> Andrew Carnegie, *Gospel of Wealth and Other Timely Essays* (New York: The Century Co., 1889, 1901), 15. This vision would be accomplished through the creation of ladders by which the aspiring could rise, namely free libraries, universities, works of art, parks and recreation, all aimed to improve the public taste. Carnegie, who made his fortune through the Carnegie Steel Company, was the son of a poor Scottish weaver. When he sold his company to J.P. Morgan, the father of Anne Morgan, in 1900 for \$400 million dollars, he dedicated the rest of his life to the dispensing of his fortune. By the time of his death in 1919 he had given away \$350, 695, 653. Considered to be the wealthiest human being of his time, Carnegie urged other monied philanthropists to "Set an example of modest, unostentatious living, shunning display or extravagance; to provide moderately for the legitimate wants of those dependent upon him; and, after doing so, to consider all surplus revenues which come to him simply as trust funds, which he is called upon to administer."

<sup>36</sup> While Webb's grandfather was a trustee at the Metropolitan Museum of Art it became the object of Carnegie's praise, "In the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York we have made an excellent beginning. Here is another avenue for the proper use of surplus wealth." Carnegie, *Gospel of Wealth*, 31.

<sup>37</sup> Slivka, *a reminiscence*, 134.

the spending of the wealth of her husband and father, but any such problem was solved by the surprise intervention of her “Aunt May,” the heiress of a large copper fortune. Aunt May was most almost certainly Alice Dodge Osborn’s cousin May Cossitt Dodge, another one of William Earl Dodge senior’s granddaughters:

Aunt May took Van for a drive one day, telling him she was making me her residual legatee...As far as I was concerned I was appreciative, of course, but the thought of money one way or another has never meant much to me except it gave me the freedom to say, “Yes” to people who asked for help. As a result of Aunt May I was able to help financially in the backing of the development of the American Crafts Council, supporting *Crafts Horizons*, American House, the Museum of Contemporary Crafts and the School for American Craftsmen. I did not feel that I was skimping on my children’s lives in way as both Van and I had plenty of money for that part of the future. I also felt justified as my Aunt would have been the first to appreciate such a use of her money. I say this because of her great taste, and the money she herself spent on objects of art in all media.<sup>38</sup>

With Webb’s inheritance she had the economic capital to work with her already large cultural and symbolic capital. Her choice of philanthropic activity was her own individual choice, but the ideals of her father, her friends such as Eleanor Roosevelt and the spirit of her own times, made the crafts seem a natural option. By the time Webb began working towards the establishment of the Handcraft Cooperative League of America, she was in a position to operate as the dominant agent delineating a new territory for crafts in the social and cultural fields.

Webb was able to institutionalize the crafts in the United States and then to attempt the same on a global level due to her ability to constitute symbolic capital for the group, coupled with the economic capital that supported large-scale craft projects.

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<sup>38</sup> Webb, *Almost A Century*, 86. George Eggleston Dodge’s obituary indicates that he died in England, where he had gone for “his health and family.” As his daughter May Cossitt Dodge maintained an English estate, where Aileen Webb recalls staying with “Aunt May,” I have drawn the conclusion that this is the

Although born into a privileged position and raised by parents who themselves were agents in the cultural field, her notions of proper standards of good taste were informed by a number of external factors including education, social contacts, and the objects considered appropriate for consumption and appreciation. At the age of seventeen Aileen Osborn spent a year at a girl's school in Paris, where she was exposed to "opera, La Comedie Francaise, the museums and exhibitions."<sup>39</sup> During her time in France she made frequent visits to England where her Aunt May maintained an estate. Webb wrote of her first trips hunting with Lady de la Warr in Buckinghamshire, as well as viewing the coronation of King Edward VII in the company of the Highnesses of Sax Coberg, to whom Aunt May had lent her Warwick house. Like the Dodge and Osborn families, Muriel Brassey, the Countess De La Warr, was heavily involved in philanthropic activity. She and her daughter Idina Sackville were founding members of the East Grinstead Suffrage Union, and she used her wealth to support the fight for women's suffrage.<sup>40</sup> As a result of these encounters with members of the British and European nobility, by 1908, her debutante year in New York City, Aileen Osborn was centrally located in the social activities of the American elite, forming contacts that would enable her to independently establish the American Craft Council, and providing substantial symbolic capital for her future activities.

In September 1912 Aileen Osborn married Vanderbilt Webb, the great-grandson of "Commodore" Vanderbilt, the railroad and shipping baron and son of Dr. William Seward Webb, who was responsible for supervising Vermont's railroads, and for building

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same "Aunt May" who left her fortune to Webb. "George Eggleston Dodge," *New York Times*, 15 April 1904: 9.

<sup>39</sup> Webb, *Almost a Century*, 22.

<sup>40</sup> George Lansbury, *Looking Backwards – And Forwards*, (London: Blackie, 1935), 76.

the much-admired model farm in Shelburne, Vermont that occupied some 3800 acres he had accumulated.<sup>41</sup> Following his junior year at Yale, Vanderbilt Webb attended Harvard Law School, and then began to work for the Rockefeller family. The couple's courtship included time at the Breakers, the grand Vanderbilt mansion at Newport, Rhode Island, which was a mecca for the social elite of the United States prior to World War One. After their marriage, Vanderbilt and Aileen Webb maintained a home on Park Avenue in New York City, a country cottage in Aileen's hometown of Garrison, New York, and inherited the farm in Shelburne, Vermont. Their life-style was extremely privileged, involving many servants, with Webb later associating this with her organizational abilities: "All this sounds unbelievable to those who struggle along now with no help, but it was a liberal education in managing people."<sup>42</sup>

Aileen Webb's sister-in-law, Electra Havemeyer Webb was also interested in the crafts. Rather than supporting contemporary craftspeople, Electra Webb was an avid collector of Americana, specifically folk-art and early utilitarian crafts. She was the daughter of Henry Osborne Havemeyer, the president of the American Sugar Refining Company. From this "the sugar king," she received an inheritance in 1907 large enough for her to pursue her collecting full-time.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, upon the 1947 retirement of her

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<sup>41</sup> In 1886 William Seward Webb and Lila Vanderbilt Webb began Shelburne Farm. The history of this model agricultural estate is outlined in John Foreman, *The Vanderbilts and the gilded age: architectural aspirations 1879 – 1901*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991). The Smithsonian Institution offers tours of the farm as part of its annual study tours, <http://www.Smithsonianstudytours.org>.

<sup>42</sup> "We had a nurse, a nursemaid, a chambermaid, a waitress, a cook, of course, and a kitchen maid, to say nothing of a laundress by the day, who drank and whose grandmother was about to die periodically." Webb, *Almost A Century*, 33.

<sup>43</sup> The Havemeyers were serious collectors of impressionist painting, bequeathing a major collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Electra's mother Louisine Elder Havemeyer was lifelong friends with Mary Cassatt and played a pivotal role in encouraging American interest in impressionist painting. The family was also interested in the decorative arts, and in 1890 they commissioned Louis Comfort Tiffany to decorate their New York City mansion. See: Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, *Splendid Legacy: the Havemeyer Collection*, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), Frances Weitzenhoffer, *The Havemeyers: Impressionism comes to America*, (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1986).

husband, James Watson Webb, she was able to create her dream of a museum to house her American folk art and craft collection. The museum today is comprised of thirty-seven historic buildings on forty-five acres of land. The Shelburne Museum backs onto Shelburne Farm, so it was inevitable Aileen Osborn Webb and Electra Havemeyer Webb were in close contact, making Aileen's unusual commitment to contemporary artistic craft all the more compelling.<sup>44</sup>

While Aileen Osborn Webb was aware of the power bestowed upon her through her privileged position, she regarded the success of the American Craft Council (and subsequently the World Crafts Council) as her true vocation. Dealing with her responsibilities to both councils as a job, she showed up for work every day at the New York headquarters, helping with all aspects of the organizations. Aileen Osborn Webb's conviction that the crafts were as important as art, and could achieve proper status through an increase in standards of production and an improvement in public taste, held considerable sway. This was particularly evident in the large-scale traveling exhibition *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.*, organized in 1953 by the American Craftsmen's Educational Council.

Considered the first national survey of contemporary crafts in the United States, *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.* was intended to impress the American public with the highest

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<sup>44</sup> For more information on Electra Havemeyer Webb and the Shelburne Museum see *An American Sampler: folk art from the Shelburne Museum*, (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1987), [http://www.shelburnemuseum.org/htm/museum/mu\\_hist.htm](http://www.shelburnemuseum.org/htm/museum/mu_hist.htm), for background on the Havemeyer family see Daniel Catlin, *Good work well done: the sugar business career of Horace Havemeyer, 1903 – 1956*, (New York: D. Catlin, 1988), <http://www.bartleby.com/165/do/DosPassoJRa.html> and <http://www.mcny.org/byron/GCAhome.htm>

quality of crafts available in the United States.<sup>45</sup> Comprised of objects designed and executed in ceramics, textiles, wood, metals, leather and glass, the exhibition embodied the principles of art, sophistication, high standards and good taste envisioned by Aileen Osborn Webb when she began the American Craft Council. To this end, the exhibition was carefully planned and elegantly designed, and traveled major museums and galleries across the United States, starting at the Brooklyn Museum, New York.<sup>46</sup> *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.* presented craft as fine art, utilizing the approval of Mrs. Webb's powerful gaze to catapult the crafts into the national light of fine art spaces. American crafts were being used for nationalistic purposes.

Dorothy Giles' essay in the catalogue of *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.* emphasized the ability of craft to unite Americans of all backgrounds while arguing that the noble history of American pioneers continued in the 1950s through their revolutionary approach to traditional crafts. Echoing Aileen Webb's vision of global harmony through craftsmanship, Giles wrote "it would seem as if the crafts were determined to break down racial and national barriers in order to unite men in the recognition of their common humility."<sup>47</sup> Words like "daring," "youthfulness," and "vigor," play throughout Giles' piece, culminating in her claim that "the American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas and form new ideas." Giles used the focus on the new to make a strong distinction between American craft of the 1950s with

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<sup>45</sup> "There had never been an exhibition of the work of American craftsmen before 1953," Paul Cummings, Oral History Interview with Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb, 12. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., mq 240004.

<sup>46</sup> American Crafts Council Archives, ACC/WCC, Box 2. Dorothy Giles, *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A. Catalogue* (New York: American Craftsmen's Educational Council, 1953), 2. The exhibition traveled coast to coast: The Art Institute of Chicago, The City Art Museum, St. Louis, The Cleveland Museum of Art, the Currier Gallery of Art, the Denver Art Museum, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the San Francisco Museum of Art, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 11.



its changed sense of form and reduced emphasis on ornamentation, and the “old-fashioned” perspective of the arts and crafts movement:

The precious little communities dedicated to the Arts and Crafts which sprang up here and in England following Ruskin’s and Morris’s rediscovery of the importance of craftsmanship as a way of life and as a corrective of some of the baleful effects of the machine age, have gradually died of their own neuroticism.<sup>48</sup>

Poised to take on the museum world by 1954, and as we have seen shortly to open its “own” Museum, the American Craft Council had not escaped the notice of Canadians. Indeed the organization had made important gestures towards the north: crafts by Canadian artists had been featured in small exhibitions at America House beginning in the 1940s, and in an effort to make its audience pan-North American the very first issue of *Craft Horizons* had included a long article on “Handicraft Activities in Canada,” written by Deane H. Russell, Secretary of the Interdepartmental Committee on Canadian Handicrafts, Ottawa.<sup>49</sup> In the article Russell provided an overview of the history of crafts in Canada, careful to mention the role of First Nations craftspeople and French settlers. Russell highlighted the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, and stressed the importance of Canada’s “mosaic of peoples,” comparing Canada to the United States with its emphasis on free expression for the new settlers. As part of Canada’s post-war recovery Russell argued for an emphasis on good craft and design, which he felt, could “play a major part

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>49</sup> The Interdepartmental Committee on Canadian Handicrafts was organized by the Federal Government from 1941 and 1944 in an effort to administer all Canadian craft activity during the war. It fell under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture with Russell as its head. For more information see the National Archives of Canada, War Files, Interdepartmental Committee on Canadian Handicraft, Activities of Deane H. Russell, RG 17 Agriculture, Vol. 3418, File 1500-40-1. Deane Russell was a craftsman who produced knives.

in a national reconstruction programme designed to afford an emotional stability which is so universally desired and necessary.”<sup>50</sup>

However, other forces were equally responsible for a growing attentiveness to the American craft scene. Indeed, at the very time Webb was working towards establishing her national infrastructures, Floyd S. Chalmers was investigating the expansion of sales of Canadian crafts to the United States, and was not happy with what he found.<sup>51</sup> After a visit in 1939 to New York City, where he met with Douglas S. Cole, the Canadian Government Trade Commissioner, and the heads of the retailing giant the Gimbel-Saks organization, Chalmers reported the increased need for exporting Canadian crafts for retail sale in the United States. This opening was created from the loss of millions of dollars of products imported from markets now considered off-limits, notably Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Italy. Chalmers invited Mr. Cole, Jacques Blum, President of Messrs. Gimbel Brothers, and Joseph Kelly, Chief Buyer for Gimbel’s, to come to Toronto in August 1939 to meet with representatives from the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, the T.Eaton Co., Simpsons, and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. During the two days of meetings, the group came to the conclusion that there were two major obstacles preventing Canadian craft from entering the international market: a lack of consistent high quality and good design, and the absence of an organizing body to

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<sup>50</sup> Deane H. Russell, “Handcraft Activities in Canada,” *Craft Horizons*, 1/1 (May 1942): 19-21.

<sup>51</sup> Floyd S. Chalmers was involved with the *Financial Post* from 1925 to 1942 as President and Chairman, holding every major executive position at Maclean-Hunter, Ltd. As one of Canada’s leading philanthropist families, Chalmers and his wife Jean and daughter Joan contributed both time and money to a wide range of artistic activities from crafts to the performing arts. A 1979 article on the Chalmers stated that “Over the course of the last half century and more, this Toronto family has set a brilliant example of community service in the contribution of time, attention and personal resources to the support of the arts in our community.” The Ontario Arts Council is now the organization that oversees the distribution of thirteen Chalmers Awards of \$25,000 each in the following areas: Dance, Music, Crafts, Visual Arts, Artistic Direction, Arts Administration, Canadian Play, Theatre for Young Audiences, and Documentarian Awards. Arnold Edinborough, “Chalmers and Arts: Time, thought and money,” *Financial Post*, 15 September 1979: 73:7.

coordinate orders and supplies. The group acknowledged that the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, founded in 1906, had struggled to do this work, but was believed to have been handicapped by a lack of funds.<sup>52</sup> Within a few months America House had opened, and quickly thereafter enjoyed unprecedented growth as the American craftspeople they represented filled the voids left by the withdrawal of European crafts in other retail outlets; “America House was able to get high-quality merchandise from Americans, unlike lots of other stores.”<sup>53</sup>

Chalmers was frustrated by the results of the Toronto meetings, and suggested that Canada should consider bringing in Europeans and Americans to train Canadians in high-quality handicraft work. Across Canada artists, designers and architects continued to search for a distinctive national style, and crafts, with their use of local raw materials, were often used as the focus point. In 1949 the Vancouver-based “Art-In-Living” group under the supervision of Fred Ames and B.C. Binning, instructors at the University of British Columbia, held an exhibition *Design for Living* at the Vancouver Art Gallery with the goals of popularizing crafts, improving standards, widening markets, and employing local materials. It was hoped that craft hobbyists would be inspired to professionalize their production into commercial designs. While that did not happen, the exhibition did succeed in introducing over 14,000 viewers to the idea of improved standards of taste and production in handicrafts.<sup>54</sup> In her book *Domestic Goods*, Joy Parr outlines other reactions to the problem of increasing standards in Canadian crafts. J. Murray Gibbon,

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<sup>52</sup> Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU 5752, Box 7 BW8-CB2, Report by Floyd S. Chalmers, August 29, 1939 “Sales of Canadian Handicraft Products in the United States,” p. 1 – 7.

<sup>53</sup> Oral History Interview with Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb, 16. Archives of American Art.

<sup>54</sup> Paula Gustafson, “Mapping the Terrain,” *Made By Hand* (Vancouver: Crafts Association of British Columbia, 1998), 14-15.

the president of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild during the war, believed that a closer tie between the fine arts and crafts in Canada would contribute to better product development, while O.D. Vaughan, senior member of the T. Eaton Company, hoped to use the Scandinavian and French design examples which he imported for sale to improve the standard of taste among Canadians.<sup>55</sup>

Parr highlights the 1945 Royal Ontario Museum exhibition *Design in Industry* in discussing how craft and design were central to the plan to rebuild Canada's industry following the war. As part of an effort to generate national pride, *Design in Industry* celebrated the raw materials and finished craft products available in Canada, as well as furnishings and appliances from international sources, mainly the United States. (Figure 6) The message behind the show was that Canadian secondary manufacturing should focus on the crafts with their small-scale production and high-quality goods. The wealth of raw materials in Canada was highlighted in the publicity for the show, "It has become the national cliché to refer, especially at election time, to 'our vast natural resources,' but the greatness of a country does not depend upon the extent of its resources but upon its capacity to make effective use of them."<sup>56</sup> The Canadian Handicrafts Guild and Toronto's Primary Textiles Institute sponsored the two keynote speakers, both Americans. Richard S. Cox, Dean of the Philadelphia Textile Institute lectured on "Technique in Textile Design" and Rene d'Harmoncourt of New York's Museum of Modern Art delivered a paper on "The Hand in Industry." By involving high-profile American design "experts," the Canadian organizers hoped to bring attention to the

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<sup>55</sup> Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 40 – 63.

<sup>56</sup> Anthony Adamson, "Exhibit Sets New Goals for Industrial Design," *Saturday Night*, June 2, 1945, p. 4. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Design in Industry, RG107, Box 1, File 5.

importance of the show. Conversely, d'Harnoncourt's position as the Director of the Museum of Modern Art's new Department of Manual Industry, established in 1945, meant that he was encouraged to promote design and crafts throughout North America.<sup>57</sup>

The exhibition proved to be popular, with almost 25,000 people attending during its brief three-week run, but the curators were upset by what Parr calls "the blurred boundaries between retail and museum display." The lack of proper labeling and quick assembly of the exhibition was perceived to be typical of craft displays. What becomes obvious looking at the correspondence and reports surrounding the exhibition (no official catalogue was published) is the resentment the curators and museum staff felt toward the Canadian Handicraft Guild volunteers who helped in the organization and display of the show. The final report on the exhibition makes it clear that the mostly female volunteers were considered to be hindrances, "There is also a certain publicity value in having volunteer workers...but as a rule volunteer workers are apt to be more of a liability than an asset."<sup>58</sup> Their lack of experience in setting up formal displays and jurying objects was noted in the report as contributing to the negative reaction to *Design in Industry*.

Most upset of all, it appears, was Donald Buchanan, the Chairman of the National Industrial Design Committee.<sup>59</sup> (Figure 7) According to Parr, "Buchanan was appalled

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<sup>57</sup> A Museum of Modern Art news release of 1945 spoke of the Department of Manual Industry's mandate to "study the potential contribution of manual industry to the modern world and to assist in its development. Its activities will not be confined to the United States but will include all the American Republics and Canada." News Release 1945, *The Museum of Modern Art New York Appoints Rene d'Harnoncourt Director of New Department*. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Design in Industry, RG107, Box 1, File 5.

<sup>58</sup> Report on the Design in Industry Exhibition, July 1945, 11. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Design in Industry, RG107, Box 1, File 5.

<sup>59</sup> The study of organizational structures for industrial design would form another completely different thesis, one which would focus on the National Design Council. At particular points the Design Council was concerned with Canadian craft, particularly in relation to exhibitions. In 1955 the National Industrial Design Council distributed brochures titled "The story behind the design centre" during the *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.* exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum. The brochures encouraged the public to ask a number of questions before purchasing objects, including "Is the form suited to the job it has to do?" and

by what comparison with European and American work in the show revealed about the 'adolescent stage' at which Canadian production remained, 'heavy handed and lacking in both lightness and grace.'"<sup>60</sup> The choice of exhibiting 'minor crafts' rather than design and craft objects utilizing new Canadian technologies seemed backward to Buchanan. The privileged son of a Lethbridge, Alberta senator and newspaperman, Buchanan had been educated at Oxford and the Ruskin School of Art. Returning to Canada in 1935, he founded the National Film Society and during World War Two he was hired by the National Film Board of Canada to obtain enemy footage for use in Canadian propaganda films.<sup>61</sup> Following the war, Buchanan was made the Supervisor of Special Projects at the National Film Board, a position that was primarily concerned with industrial design. The National Gallery of Canada requested that this work come under their jurisdiction, and in 1947 Buchanan was made the head of the Industrial Design Department of the National Gallery of Canada, where he established a Library of Industrial Design.<sup>62</sup> He was also the editor of *Canadian Art* from 1944 – 1959, a position he used to espouse his nationalist values in art, including his belief following the 1945 *Design in Industry* exhibition that the "encouragement of very minor arts"<sup>63</sup> played no role in the future of Canadian industry.

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"Is there an absence of unnecessary and meaningless ornament?" The brochure listed Floyd S. Chalmers as the Vice-Chair of the Council, and Donald Buchanan as its Secretary. In 1974 the National Design Council instituted special Craft Awards designed to "stimulate good craft design," "increase public awareness of the craft industry," and "develop products for the domestic and export souvenir gift markets." The winners were exhibited at Ottawa's National Art Centre in June 1975. See "The story behind the design centre," Royal Ontario Museum archives, *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.*, RG107, No. 14, Box 1. Sonja Bata, "Forward," *National Design Council Annual Report 1974-1975* (Ottawa: National Design Council, 1975): 29.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>61</sup> Gloria Lesser, "Biography and Bibliography of the Writings of D.W. Buchanan (1908 – 1966), *Journal of Canadian Art History*, 5/2 (1981): 32.

<sup>62</sup> National Gallery of Canada Archives, Buchanan, Donald William, DOC/CLWT.

<sup>63</sup> Donald Buchanan, "Design in Industry – A Misnomer," *Canadian Art* 2 (Summer 1945): 194-197.

Buchanan attempted to overcome the disgust he felt toward the poor products displayed at the ROM in 1945 by organizing the 1948 exhibition, *Canadian Designs for Everyday Use* at the National Gallery of Canada. Through it Buchanan sought to establish a serious attitude toward design and craft in Canada. In the forward to the exhibition catalogue he makes clear his vision for “proper” Canadian products, stressing the importance of avoiding meaningless ornament while focusing on pleasure in use. His main concern for both economic and aesthetic reasons was that the objects demonstrate strict standards. Unlike *Design in Industry*, Buchanan’s *Canadian Designs for Everyday Use* was said to prove that “Canadian products of original and distinctive merit in design are now available.”<sup>64</sup> The exhibition did not promote individual craftspeople, focusing instead on production pieces, such as anonymous milk jugs from the Medicine Hat Potteries in Alberta, and wooden salad bowls and dishes from Quebec’s Habitat Woodworks. Buchanan’s exhibition was touted as a success, however it was almost a decade until the National Gallery of Canada hosted another exhibition of Canadian craft and design.

Although Buchanan’s exhibition made Canadian production pieces its focus, he was aware of the important role played by the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in promoting crafts in postwar Canada, as later evidenced by his reliance on Guild officials for guidance in the selection of crafts for his 1957 National Gallery of Canada show *Canadian Fine Crafts*. While Canada had several government programmes designed to use craftwork to generate income during the depression, including a million dollar

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<sup>64</sup> National Gallery of Canada Archives, Exhibitions in Gallery, 5.5C – Canadian Designs for Everyday Living 1948, Catalogue.

investment in the 1937 Dominion Youth Training Plan of the Department of Labour which trained farm boys and girls in handicraft work, none of these contained adequate marketing strategies.<sup>65</sup> The Canadian Handicrafts Guild provided the most organized marketing scheme for crafts in Canada during the great depression and World War Two. The Guild was not solely responsible for designing craft programmes for returning veterans. In Canada, the Canadian Legion Educational Services in Ottawa in co-operation with the Canadian YMCA War Services, Toronto, published a "Make Your Own" series of pamphlets outlining handicrafts for service personnel. McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, also offered booklets on craft techniques written for returning veterans.<sup>66</sup> With Guild shops set up in Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg, markets were made available for Canadian crafts.

Canadian women engaged in philanthropy similar to that practiced by Aileen Osborn Webb had established the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in 1906. However, Webb's wealth gave her a certain measure of independence, whereas Alice Peck and May Phillips were not in a position to eliminate institutional and administrative problems. In her book, *In Good Hands: The Women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild*, Ellen Easton McLeod offers a clear picture of the women involved in the establishment of the Guild. Alice Peck was from a comfortably upper-middle class Montreal family, had been educated in England, and had traveled extensively in Europe. Mary (May) Phillips was the daughter of a Montreal lawyer who had died while she was young, leaving the family in debt.

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<sup>65</sup> Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5752, Box 7, BW8-CB2, Chalmers, Sales of Canadian Handicraft Products in the U.S., 4. See also Sandra Flood, *Canadian Craft and Museum Practice 1900 – 1950* (Doctoral Thesis, University of Manchester, 1998), 221.

<sup>66</sup> Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5769, Box 24, DQ3-D4.



Although she possessed less economic capital than Peck, Phillips and her wealthier associate were involved in the same upper-class Montreal social circles.

Funding herself through teaching, Phillips trained as an artist in New York City at the New York Art Students League from 1884 to 1889, and after her return to Montreal she began an extensive exhibition schedule before becoming the co-principal of the Victoria School of Art, Montreal, in 1892. By 1895 Phillips was the principal of the re-named School of Applied Art and Design. From 1903 to 1904 Phillips traveled the world, an undertaking that gave her increased cultural capital in the Montreal social scene, and assisted her in establishing the Canadian Handicrafts Guild.<sup>67</sup> Peck and Phillips became respected cultural leaders due to their status as recently enfranchised women McLeod argues; however, their privileged economic position was equally important.<sup>68</sup> Noting that the women involved in the Guild were operating from a sense that their privilege entailed responsibility, McLeod is careful to outline the social constraints that were placed upon their proper role in a public organization, which included the inability to be voting members in most organizations or to incorporate the Guild without the assistance of a male sponsor.<sup>69</sup>

Once the Guild was established, it was able to offer a certain amount of economic support to Canada's craftspeople through its shops, which reflected its dedication to the preservation of traditional skills through the sales of crafts produced by new settlers in Canada, as well as members of the First Nations. During the depression, both the federal

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<sup>67</sup> Ellen Easton McLeod, *In Good Hands: The Women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild* (Montreal and Kingston: Carleton University by Queen's University Press, 1999), 24-24.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 1. McLeod points out that women from prominent families had opportunities in higher education and access to power and positions relative to the working classes, the Indian settlers and the many new settlers in Canada, 60.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 264.

and provincial governments perceived craft as a viable economic support to depressed areas. Unlike the centralized Works Progress Administration in the United States, Canada's craft programmes were never united into a central organization. While the Guild supported the view of the governments in providing economic support through the crafts, it felt threatened by the concept of a national craft programme and the potential loss of the Guild's artistic ideals.<sup>70</sup>

Like Aileen Osborn Webb and Eleanor Roosevelt, Alice Peck and May Phillips were comfortable relating to the small-scale economy of rural craftspeople. Their positions in the field of cultural production were powerful relative to the rural craftspeople, while their economic and cultural capital permitted them to convince the middle and upper class markets of the value of these craft objects; a value that was created due to symbolic recognition. If all women were limited in terms of their gender roles within certain aspects of the economic power relations of the early twentieth century, they were nonetheless able to act as individual agents producing consumers who recognized crafts as valuable. Bourdieu identifies the men and women in these privileged positions as the "most favoured agents in cultural production...sufficiently secure to be able...to take on the risks of an occupation which is not a job."<sup>71</sup>

In Canada, "noblesse oblige" philanthropy retained links to the British nobility and arts and crafts ideals, whereas in the United States, cultural philanthropy stemmed from a more republican emphasis on the power and wealth of the individual to make a difference in society.<sup>72</sup> Ellen Easton McLeod identifies Peck and Phillips with the Arts

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 266. See also Chalmers, "Sales of Canadian Handicraft Products in the United States."

<sup>71</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 43.

<sup>72</sup> For an excellent analysis of the links between the noblesse oblige and arts and crafts ideals, see McLeod, *In Good Hands*, 11-50.

and Crafts movement in Canada in the late 1890s. Both British and American Arts and Crafts pioneers, philosophies and styles, had influenced Canada. The 1876 Philadelphia Centennial exhibition and the 1893 Chicago World's Fair afforded women the opportunity to view objects first-hand, and speaking tours on the decorative arts included a number of notables from the United Kingdom, Oscar Wilde (1882), Walter Crane (1891-92), Charles Ashbee (1896), and May Morris (1909).<sup>73</sup> In the United States, Candace Wheeler established the New York Society for Decorative Art in 1877, Rookwood pottery opened in 1880, Adelaide Alsop Robineau started the New York Society of Keramic Art in 1892, and Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr opened Hull House in 1889.<sup>74</sup> In Canada, Lady Ishbel Aberdeen, the wife of Canada's Governor General played an imperious and symbolic role in many Arts and Crafts based organizations.

Canadian women were familiar with these American figures. Many Canadian women had visited or read the official guide to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago where Wheeler designed rooms highlighting the work of the Rookwood Pottery. Canadian women had access to the British journal *The Studio*, and the American journal *The Craftsmen*. McLeod argues "Many Canadians were cognizant of the...crafts movement in the United States," citing Jean Grant's column "Studio and Gallery" in *Saturday Night* featuring Candace Wheeler's Associated Artists and the exhibitions of American women's enterprises at the 1900 Paris Exposition. As well, after Mildred Robertson and her mother accompanied the exhibition of the Montreal branch of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild to the 1904 World Exposition in St. Louis they gave

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<sup>73</sup> McLeod, *In Good Hands*, 56.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 56-57.

substantial reports to the Guild on American activities. American activities were also disseminated through Canada's art institutions. Alice Egan Hagen, a china painter and professor at Halifax's Victoria School of Art and Design, spent 1896 studying with Adelaide Robineau in New York. The painter George Reid who taught at the Ontario College of Art, and his wife Mary Heister Reid, spent the 1890s attending summer artists' colonies in the Catskill Mountains of New York established by Candace Wheeler. There they designed and decorated Arts and Crafts style homes.<sup>75</sup>

The American profit-based approach to crafts conflicted with that of the Canadian Guild of Handicrafts, which was continuing to stress the preservation of traditional craft styles. The Guild goal to "awaken pride in the old skills" was founded directly on the arts and crafts movement, "The Canadian Guild of Handicrafts drew inspiration from the craft revival in Great Britain started by William Morris and his associates."<sup>76</sup> Many of the instructors who were responsible for training Canadians in the crafts were either followers of Ruskin and Morris or had been educated in the United Kingdom at schools promoting their views. These included George Reid, the principal of the Ontario School of Art in Toronto from 1909 to 1929, Babs Haworth, Head of Ceramics at the Central Technical School, Toronto, and Alexander Musgrave, Principal of the Winnipeg School of Art.<sup>77</sup> Canadians were generally influenced in the early twentieth century by their connections to the imperialism of Britain, which contributed to several of the differences that were obvious in terms of the ethics of craft production in the 1950s. By that point, however, the symbolic capital of Mrs. Webb and her American Craft Council in terms of

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 58-116.

<sup>76</sup> Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3-CK7, Alice MS Lighthall, *The Canadian Handicrafts Guild, A History*, May 1966, 3.

<sup>77</sup> Flood, *Canadian Craft and Museum Practice*, 236-243.

the advancement of craft was obvious, and Canadians began to look much more closely at the example of the United States.

In *Mythologizing Canada*, Northrop Frye compares the growth of the railways to explain the cultural and political differences between Canada and the United States. Canada, he claims grew in one dimension, founded on small communities separated from each other by large spaces. Unity, therefore, was conceptual and was only maintained by political will. On the other hand, the United States grew in accordance to the philosophy of the “Western Frontier,” a solid wall that moved steadily across the nation.<sup>78</sup> Frye’s analogy is helpful in identifying Canada’s confusion between the traditional links with Britain and its cautious colonialism within Canada, and the infectious energy of American individualism embodied in the pioneering spirit. The influence of the American craft scene began to gain serious ground in Canada in 1955, the year Aileen Osborn Webb brought the exhibition *American Designer-Craftsmen* to Toronto’s Royal Ontario Museum.

A decade after Donald Buchanan’s outrage over the poor quality of Canadian crafts displayed in the *Design in Industry* exhibition, Gerard Bretl, Director of the Royal Ontario Museum reported on the possibility of holding a Canadian Modern Design exhibition. In his notes, Bretl came to the conclusion that the standards of Canadian design and craft remained disappointing:

It is my opinion that genuinely Canadian design – as opposed to the much more common Canadian-made copies of U.S. designs – is not now at a stage where this museum could hold a large special exhibition devoted entirely to it without great loss of face: Nor, I feel, is it likely to reach

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<sup>78</sup> Northrop Frye, *Mythologizing Canada: Essays on the Canadian Literary Imagination*, ed. Branko Gorjup (Toronto: Legas, 1997), 17-18.

that stage for some years. Canadian progress in handicrafts is also very patchy.<sup>79</sup>

In a 1954 letter to Robert Fennell, Chairman of the Museum Board, Bretl expressed the museum's interest in *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.* Stating that a similar show of Canadian objects "seems to be a long way off," Bretl proposed using the American exhibition to promote the possibility of a future show of Canadian craft with the same high standards.<sup>80</sup>

*Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.* opened in Toronto in May, 1955. Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb's attendance at the opening was the subject of much discussion in the society columns of Toronto's newspapers. (Figure 8) Webb was the featured guest at luncheons hosted by the Toronto Ladies' Club and the Royal Ontario Museum, as well as at a dinner held at the exclusive Granite Club, where Toronto's cultural and social elites took advantage of the opportunity to meet the guest-of-honour.<sup>81</sup> Executives of the T.Eaton Co. and the British American Oil Company were involved in the exhibition, attending the opening as well as participating in a number of special events that took place during the exhibition. Mr. W.B. Tucker, Manager of the Contract Sales Department of the T.Eaton Co. Ltd, presented a special lecture "Furnishings and You," while Mr. Thor Hansen, Art Director of the British American Oil Company gave an illustrated talk on "Designer-Craftsmen."<sup>82</sup> The strong presence of marketing representatives provided a contrast to the craftspeople offering weekly demonstrations of craft techniques, ranging from Latvian weaving to leather tooling. Handcrafted goods continued to be big business in many of Canada's department stores, and the investment in *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.*

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<sup>79</sup> Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Designer Craftsmen, 22 May – 22 June 1955, RG107, No. 14, Box 1. Gerard Bretl, *Notes on a Possible Canadian Modern Design Exhibition*, February 1955, 1.

<sup>80</sup> Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Designer Craftsmen, Gerard Bretl, letter, December 22, 1954.

<sup>81</sup> Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Designer Craftsmen, "Handicraft Expert Guest at Luncheons," *Globe and Mail*, 16 May 1955.

<sup>82</sup> Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Designer Craftsmen, "Special Events" flyer.

would be worthwhile if it inspired a consistently high standard of craft production in Canada.

Reporters covering the exhibition were split in their reactions to the show. Pearl McCarthy of the *Globe and Mail* wrote two reviews, casting a critical eye on the invasion of American craft sensibilities. In her March 26 article, McCarthy attacked the imperialism of the American Craft Councils' desire to properly educate viewers, and revealed her pro-British sentiments, "We firmly align ourselves with the British attitude of making the arts available to observers and then letting those observers make up their own minds, rather than by trying to force acceptance of anything by a campaign labeled 'education.'"<sup>83</sup> In her second piece, McCarthy warned of the artistic nature of the crafts contained in the exhibition, claiming that the artistic craftspeople featured in the show were not practical like modern British or Scandinavian craftspeople. While she admired the work of ceramist Peter Voulkos, she admonished the other exhibitors to "take some care to make the mouths of decanters big enough that they do not have to be filled with an eye dropper, and the mouths of the silver jugs small enough that handles and human hands can take the strain."<sup>84</sup>

Margaret Cragg, a reporter for the women's section of the *Globe and Mail*, displayed her reverence for the cultural, economic and symbolic capital of Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb in her article on the exhibition, where she spoke with glowing praise about Webb's knowledge of home furnishings. Although Cragg makes clear that the

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<sup>83</sup> Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Designer Craftsmen, Pearl McCarthy, "Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A. Coming with Honest Appraisal its Motive," *Globe and Mail*, 26 March 1955.

<sup>84</sup> Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Designer Craftsmen, Pearl McCarthy, "Designer-Craftsmen Coming With a Display of Exploratory Ideas," *Globe and Mail*, 15 May 1955.

prices of the objects in the exhibition are beyond most housewives, the improvement in taste offered by the objects is priceless:

Mrs. Webb thinks, too, that anyone can profit by studying beautifully designed objects and an exhibition like this makes one look at line and colour and texture with a new intentness. Perhaps we can't afford to pay for the time and talent the great craftsmen have put into their products but we may look at the things we can afford with a more discerning eye... Even one or two beautiful objects in the house...not only give a lot of pleasure but bring out standard of taste to a higher level."<sup>85</sup>

Arguing the importance of "keeping up with the Joneses" by owning uniquely handcrafted objects, both Cragg and Webb used the *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.* exhibition to promote the purchase of crafts by consumers, particularly women. Hugh Thomson of the *Toronto Daily Star* also expressed admiration for Webb, describing her as "the guiding genius behind the whole enterprise" of contemporary craft.<sup>86</sup> Despite McCarthy's skepticism about the exhibition, Canadian craftspeople, curators, and administrators were impressed by the professional display and high quality of the craft objects on display. After the disappointment of the *Design in Industry* exhibition, Donald Buchanan was once again ready to try institutionalizing Canadian craft into the cultural field.

Buchanan undertook the organization of the first national juried crafts show, *Canadian Fine Crafts*, in 1957. In order to ensure that the exhibition complied with his strict standards Buchanan implemented a rigorous jurying process that included the approval of an American "expert." The first step Buchanan took in obtaining possible entries for the exhibition was to write asking specific craftspeople to submit to the jury.

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<sup>85</sup> Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Designer Craftsmen, Margaret Cragg, "About the House: Homemakers will enjoy Craft Show at Museum," *Globe and Mail*, 19 May 1955.

<sup>86</sup> Hugh Thomson, "Stress Fine Simplicity in United States Craftsmen Show," *Toronto Daily Star*, 18 May 1955: 4.



He decided upon the craftspeople to be invited by gathering recommendations from craft leaders in the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, various Canadian universities and art schools, and local arts councils. Ceramics were selected from the second national Canadian Guild of Potters exhibition, which was held in 1957, while First Nations and Inuit crafts were chosen by Mr. James Houston, the northern “expert” who had been hired by the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in the 1940s to research and promote Inuit crafts, which became enormously popular through the Guild shops. The Canadian Handicrafts Guild prepared their list of craftspeople from those who won prizes at the Guild’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary exhibition in 1956. After Buchanan had accepted entries from the suggested craftspeople he turned over the final selection to the jury which consisted of himself, Julien Hébert, Professor of Sculpture, École des Beaux Arts and Vice-President of the Canadian Arts Council, and John Van Koert, an industrial designer from New York who had served as a juror for the 1953 *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.* exhibition.<sup>87</sup> The jury made their final selection of objects based on “both good design and good technique, but with emphasis on quality of design,” echoing Buchanan’s view on the importance of improved standards of design in the crafts.<sup>88</sup>

There was an ulterior motive behind Buchanan’s drive to form a national exhibition of crafts. The “winners” from *Canadian Fine Crafts* were to go on to exhibit in the Fine Craft section in the Canadian Pavilion at the 1958 Universal and International Exhibition in Brussels, and Buchanan was determined not to be embarrassed by Canada’s

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<sup>87</sup> The memos regarding the selection of John Van Koert as the American representative on the jury contained two different spellings of his name – Van Koert and Van Hoert. The American Crafts Council referred to him as Van Koert.

<sup>88</sup> National Gallery of Canada Archives, Exhibitions in Gallery, 5.5C Canadian Fine Crafts 1957, Box 1, File 2.

display. The Advisory Committee on Fine Crafts for the Brussels Exhibition agreed with Buchanan's approach to the selection of objects. The Committee was comprised of leading players in Canada's craft scene, including Ruth M. Hone, author of *Ceramics for the Potter*, and ceramics instructor at the Ontario College of Art, Galt Durnford, an architect and president of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Montreal, James A. Houston, director of the Arts and Crafts Branch, Arctic Division, Department of Northern Affairs, and Louis Archimbault, sculptor and ceramist and instructor at L'Ecole des Beaux Arts and École du Meuble, Montreal. The Committee was also in agreement that it was necessary to have a representative from the United States on the jury and they were unanimous in their selection of John Van Koert who provided an important link to the *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.* exhibition.<sup>89</sup>

*Canadian Fine Crafts* was an elegant exhibition, with careful labeling, proper lighting and a formal catalogue. The participating craftspeople expressed pride in the new status afforded them by the exhibition. Toronto ceramist Evelyn Charles wrote to Buchanan, "I think that you have set it up in a most appropriate manner – quite distinguished we thought. I was quite pleased to see my two dishes there – quite an event in my life." British Columbia's Bill Reid told Buchanan that he considered it "an honour to have been asked to participate."<sup>90</sup> Buchanan used his essay in the catalogue to

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<sup>89</sup> National Gallery of Canada archives, Exhibitions in Gallery, 5.5C Canadian Fine Crafts 1957, Box 1, File 1, Memo from Donald W. Buchanan, June 29, 1956.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, Evelyn M. Charles, letter, June 26, 1957, William Reid, letter, May 21, 1957. The craftspeople whose work was selected to be shown in the Canadian pavilion at the Universal and International exhibition in Brussels, 1958, were Olea Davis, Vancouver, Tess Kidick, Jordon, Ontario, Bailey Leslie, Toronto, Hilda Ross, B.C., Louis Archambault, Montreal, Kjeld and Erica Diechman, New Brunswick, William Reid, B.C., Harold B. Burnham, Ontario, Micheline Beauchemin, Montreal, Denyse Beauchemin, Quebec, Foster and Eleanor Beveridge, Halifax, Claude Vermette, Quebec, Helga Palko, Saskatchewan, Arthur Price, Ontario.

continue the theme of the crafts as legitimate fine art production, arguing that crafts must be subjected to the same standards of aesthetic judgment as the other fine arts:

The time has come to take an adult view of the crafts in Canada...Purely technical perfection, smoothness and facility of execution are necessary, but they cannot stand alone. Freedom of expression, skill in choice and handling of materials and a harmonious relationship of form and colour must be present in equal measure.<sup>91</sup>

These sentiments paralleled the thoughts of Dorothy Giles, who in her catalogue essay for *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.*, had advocated originality in design, and uniqueness of form in addition to technical skill. Many of the craftspeople and the jurors involved in *Canadian Fine Craft* were aware of the American Craft Council and their exhibition *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.*: the National Gallery and the Brussels' Fine Craft exhibitions provided perfect opportunities to push for quality Canadian crafts on the international stage. Despite his acknowledgment of improvements in the design capabilities of Canadian craftspeople, Buchanan finished his catalogue essay with the admission that not all the pieces in the show were perfect, but he was optimistic that "what the leaders have achieved, the others have the competence to attain."<sup>92</sup> Pearl McCarthy reviewed the exhibition for the *Globe and Mail*; while critical of the lack of truly original designs in the exhibition, she praised the fast developments in many of the crafts, making the prophetic statement that the show left Canada "with a chance of coming forth with much inventive genius in a decade, with somewhere to go."<sup>93</sup>

Just as Aileen Webb lent symbolic capital to the *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.*

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<sup>91</sup> National Gallery of Canada Archives, Exhibitions in Gallery, 5.5C, Canadian Fine Crafts 1957, Box 2, Donald W. Buchanan, *Canadian Fine Crafts Catalogue*, 1.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>93</sup> Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5780, Box 35, FN-FU, Pearl McCarthy, "Two-Way Surprises at Fine Craft Show," *Globe and Mail*, 8 June 1957: 24.

exhibition showing at the Royal Ontario Museum, John Van Koert was perceived as possessing superior taste and knowledge in craft standards. No Canadian craftspeople objected to being juried by an American representative, and all members of the Advisory Committee on Fine Crafts complied with Buchanan, Hébert and Van Koerts' assertion that design and innovation in form were now taking precedence over traditional skills and techniques.

The border crossings experienced through the *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.* and *Canadian Fine Crafts* exhibitions introduced many Canadian craftspeople, administrators and educators to the important new ideas emerging from the American Craft Council. By the 1964 meeting of the First World Congress of Craftsmen at Columbia University in New York, the Canadian delegates were eager to participate in an international celebration of crafts spearheaded by a woman they believed possessed the skill to push the crafts up the hierarchy of the fine arts.

The First World Congress of Craftsmen was held 8 – 19 June 1964 at Columbia University. Aileen Osborn Webb opened the event, expressing in her welcome great excitement at the cultural diversity of the representatives. The conference attracted 942 conferees from 47 countries. Some undoubtedly took advantage of Aileen Osborn Webb's offer to find free board and lodging for the two-week period, but the cost of travel still meant that the Congress was dominated by Americans: 692 were in attendance. The second largest delegation, comprised of thirty people, was from Canada.<sup>94</sup> Seven represented the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, three were from the

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<sup>94</sup> The third largest delegation was Italy with 28, the fourth largest was Mexico with 22, followed by India with 14. New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Bolivia, Liberia, Ethiopia, Ghana and Tanganyika all had

Canadian Guild of Potters, one attended on behalf of Les métiers d'art de Québec, and the remainder were from various arts groups and galleries across the country, including Norah McCullough, the representative from the National Gallery of Canada.<sup>95</sup> Most regions of Canada were touched upon, although with the exception of Ellis Roulston of Halifax, the absence of anyone from the Atlantic Provinces was striking.

The booklet "A Short Guide to World Crafts" was distributed to delegates, and contained revealing statistics and surveys of the crafts of each country represented. The American section provided extensive listings of craft organizations, universities and art schools offering professional training for craftspeople, and a list of successful artists who worked in various craft media. "It is of interest to note here," wrote the education department of the American Craft Council "that the approach to craftsmanship in America is that of the individual artist, working most often alone as both designer and producer, and creating one-of-a-kind prestige pieces."<sup>96</sup>

This contrasted greatly to the approach to crafts stressed in the other write-ups, including the section on Canada. While the Canadian entry noted a revival of interest in the crafts, the anonymous author of the Canadian section confessed to the lack of schools

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representatives at the conference. Czechoslovakia and Hungary were the only countries from "behind the iron curtain." "First World Congress of Craftsmen," *Craft Horizons*, 24/5, (Sept/Oct 1964): 8.

<sup>95</sup> American Craft Council Archives, *Short Guide to World Crafts* June 1964. WCC Box 2. The Canadian participants in the First World Congress of Craftsmen were:

Francoise Braise, Montreal, Secretary of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Harold B. Brunham, Toronto, President of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Merton Chambers, Toronto, Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Helen Copeland, Toronto, Olea Davis, Vancouver, Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Canadian Guild of Potters, Professor and Mrs. Eric Dodd, Calgary, Aleksandra Dzervitis, Toronto, Ruthann Gardner, Thornhill, Ontario, Mrs. McGregor Hone, Regina, Tess Kidick, Jordan, Ontario, Mr. and Mrs. Michel Lacombe, Vachères, Quebec, Bailey Leslie, Toronto, Canadian Guild of Potters, Norah McCullough, Regina, National Gallery of Canada, Ludwig Nickel, Winnipeg, John Pocock, Toronto, Eileen Reid, Montreal, H. Baroness Riedl-Ursin, Montreal, Ellis Roulston, Halifax, Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Catherine Ross, Toronto, Mildred Ryerson, Toronto, Tutzi Haspel Seguin, Toronto, Mr. and Mrs. N.G. Shaw, Regina, Laurant Simard, Les Métiers d'Art de Québec, Montreal, Sheila R. Stiven, Toronto, J.R. Woolgar, Yellowknife, Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Jack Young, Saskatoon.

<sup>96</sup> American Craft Council Archives, *Short Guide to World Crafts* June 1964, 101. WCC Box 2.

or institutions in Canada offering full instruction in crafts, and the hobbyist focus of provincial craft programs, leading to “the major drawback that confronts all craftsmen...little of the work done is recognized as art.”<sup>97</sup> The advancing position of American craft within the recognized hierarchy of the arts was thus contrasted to the struggles of Canadian crafts to occupy the same professional space. Lois Moran, current editor of *American Craft*, believes that “Canadians could see what was happening in the United States and wanted to fill that gap in their own country.”<sup>98</sup> As this chapter has already established, this was a gap many had perceived to have existed for some time.

In addition to the economic capital Webb invested in hosting the first world conference on crafts, her cultural and symbolic capital came into play in terms of the presenters who agreed to participate in the numerous conference panels and workshops held over twelve days. Among them were two extremely influential Americans, René d’Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, who earlier had been one of the keynote speakers at the 1945 Royal Ontario Museum *Design in Industry* exhibition, and the critic Harold Rosenberg. Rosenberg had achieved critical fame through his essay on the Abstract Expressionist movement, “American Action Painters” (1952), as well as his books, *The Tradition of the New* (1962) and *The Anxious Object: Art Today and Its Audiences* (1964). Unlike his contemporary Clement Greenberg, who focused on the avant-garde at the expense of craft concerns, Rosenberg was careful to note the links between art and craft. In *The Tradition of the New*, Rosenberg argued for the self-reflexivity that was developing in the American craft scene:

A form of work establishes itself as a profession not only through the complication of its technique – many of the ancient crafts involved

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>98</sup> Lois Moran, Personal Interview, 9 December 1999.

more complex recipes than their counterparts today – but through self-consciousness with regard to this technique.<sup>99</sup>

Acting as the opening speaker for the “Vistas in the Arts” panel of the First World Congress of Craftsmen, Rosenberg reiterated the important connections existing between the crafts and the fine arts, arguing “the fine artist and the inventive craftsman are indistinguishable from each other. It is regrettable that an inherited hierarchy of terms makes it more desirable to be called an artist than an artisan.”<sup>100</sup> In his paper in the panel “The Contemporary Scene,” Museum of Modern Art director Rene d’Harnoncourt agreed with Rosenberg on the validity of crafts as fine art, but approached the question of identity from a different angle, contending instead that the desire of craftspeople to be given the same prestige as sculpture was disturbing. “It seemed to me then, as it seems to me now,” he stated “that the crafts have a dignity and distinction of their own and need not try to borrow status from anything else.”<sup>101</sup>

With over six hundred representatives from the United States present at the conference, the dominance of American concerns over the status of craft as a valid art form was not surprising. The “global craft community” referred to frequently during the conference was a misnomer, as non-western representatives had to possess the economic capital to afford to travel to the United States, the cultural capital to have met Margaret Patch in her travels, and the symbolic capital to represent the craft interests of their country. While exclusiveness of membership was debated during panels, with the final decision that a body of only artist-craftspeople would defeat the purpose of international

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<sup>99</sup> Harold Rosenberg, *The Tradition of the New* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1962), 63.

<sup>100</sup> American Craft Council Archives, First World Congress of Craftsmen, Box 2, Jacqueline Rice Ed. *The First World Congress of Craftsmen, June 8 – 19, 1964* (New York: American Craft Council, 1965), 146.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, 84.

communication and development, the emphasis of the conference on the need for art content in the work of craftsmen was in opposition to the traditional craft production found in non-western countries.<sup>102</sup> The lack of argument over the fine craft focus of the conference coupled with the American-based summaries of the conference proceedings indicated that although Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb was successful in bringing together “both the village artisan and the urbanized designer-craftsman,” the voices of the village artisans were difficult to hear.

Many of the Canadian representatives attending the conference were influenced by the fine art focus of the panels, and by the end of the Congress a serious rift had developed between the conferees. Those attending on behalf of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild headed to New York assuming that their president Harold B. Burnham, would act as the primary Canadian representative to any future body which arose from the Congress. A March 1964 Canadian Handicrafts Guild bulletin clearly stated the case: “Our president, Mr. Harold B. Burnham, who is also president of the national guild, is to be the official Canadian delegate.”<sup>103</sup> It therefore came as a shock to many when Norah McCullough of the National Gallery of Canada was elected to be the Canadian representative on the executive of the newly formed World Crafts Council, winning a surprise victory over Harold Burnham. The younger members of the Canadian

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<sup>102</sup> National Archive of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen’s Association, MG28I222, Volume 1, *Newsletter to the Craftsmen of Canada from Miss Norah McCullough*, Regina, September 16, 1964. In the first *World Crafts Council Newsletter* published in August 1964, Aileen Webb listed the key problems of the global craft community as standards, design, marketing and pricing, stating that “the orientation towards the art concept in craftsmanship is a result of the belief that as world technology increases there must be an outlet for the creativity of man through which the continuing culture of a nation may flow.” This statement did not acknowledge the enormous gulf in technologies available to craftspeople in certain non-western countries. National Archives of Canada, World Crafts Council, MG28I274 AC 1986/00S9 Volume 67, dd2, World Crafts Council Newsletters.

<sup>103</sup> Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5750, Box 5, BU-BW, *Canadian Handicrafts Guild Bulletin*, No. 53, March 1964.



delegation had broken rank by appointing McCullough, a full-time professional craft administrator who was quick to seize on the opportunity to make dramatic changes within the institutional structures for the crafts in Canada. Many of these changes would echo what had been evolving in the United States for years, and would often be “supervised” by members of the American Craft Council, including Aileen Osborn Webb.

## CHAPTER TWO: RESPONDING TO THE EXEMPLAR: THE FORMATION OF THE CANADIAN CRAFTSMEN'S ASSOCIATION

The election at the First World Congress of Craftsmen of Norah McCullough as the official Canadian representative to the World Crafts Council caused considerable upheaval in the Canadian craft community. The Canadian Handicrafts Guild had dominated craft in Anglophone Canada since the beginning of the century. Now, and very suddenly, its achievements seemed to have been cast aside. In the months that followed, such an impression was strengthened as McCullough and a number of key figures proposed and successfully organized a new national craft organization, first called the Canadian Council for the Environmental Arts but quickly renamed the Canadian Craftsmen's Association. While the Guild continued to exist, it would be the new Association that the Canadian government turned when it sought, throughout the Centennial celebrations of 1967, to project Canadian craft onto the international stage.

A careful exploration of the conflicts and tensions between the Canadian Handicrafts Guild and the Canadian Craftmen's Association, as well as the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec, during these years leading up to Canada's Centennial makes it possible to trace the crystallization of the concept of "professional" in Canadian craft ideology. It was a process in which the influence of Aileen Osborn Webb and the American Craft Council was of a substantial order, but not without some serious questioning. Webb's involvement in the 1963 Guild exhibition, *The Arts and Crafts of Canada*, as well as the 1965 Lake Couchiching conference that established the Ontario Craft Foundation, is to be juxtaposed with the exclusion of the American Craft Council

and its President at the foundation meeting of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association at the University of Manitoba, February 1965. Nevertheless, the reputation of Webb and her organization would survive, even as the appearance in Canada of such important craft administrators as Norah McCullough, Anita Aarons and Mary Eileen Muff was taken to represent a healthy turning away from the "old-fashioned" philanthropic activities of women like May Phillips and Alice Peck.

In 1969, Gordon Barnes, a National Board member of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, wrote about the chaos created by the election of McCullough. A Minnesota native, Barnes had received an MFA in Ceramic Design at Alfred University, New York before becoming a pottery instructor at the Central Technical School in Toronto in 1962, one of a large number of Americans brought into Canada to help in the process of "professionalizing" Canadian craft. He described the division in the Canadian craft community at the New York conference as:

...the traditional youthful rebellion against the "establishment." This rebellion surfaced on the occasion of the founding meeting of the World Crafts Council, hosted by Mrs. A.O. Webb...Initial contact and pre-conference correspondence was with the Guild as it was the only Canadian crafts organization. A group of those attending the meeting from Canada, led by the youthful members, caucused and selected Miss Nora McCullah [sic], the Western representative of the National Gallery of Canada to be the Canadian Representative to the World Crafts Council, in preference to the National President of the Guild.<sup>1</sup>

McCullough may have represented a shift toward the new and the professional, but she was neither particularly young, nor unaware of certain components of the

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon Barnes, unpublished paper, *History of Canadian Crafts*, 2. National Archives of Canada, MG28I274, Volume 34, World Crafts Council.

“establishment” Canadian cultural scene. Born in Ontario in 1903, Norah McCullough was the daughter of Dr. John W.S. McCullough, appointed in 1912 as the Provincial Officer of Health for Ontario, and Chief Medical Officer. In 1925 she graduated from the Ontario College of Art with an honours degree in painting, and three years later was in the employ of the Art Gallery of Ontario, where she assisted Arthur Lismer in teaching children’s art classes. Like Lismer, McCullough benefited from Carnegie Foundation money: “To broaden my view, I was sent in 1934 to the Courtauld Institute, London, and enabled through a number of other Carnegie grants to survey educational programmes at the Cleveland Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum, and the Boston Museum of Fine Art.”<sup>2</sup> While attending the Courtauld Institute she took courses in embroidery, textiles, English furniture, pottery and porcelain, glass, the history of gold and silversmithing, and the Art of William Morris.<sup>3</sup>

In 1938 Lismer selected McCullough to head to Pretoria, South Africa to help organize an art school, a venture again funded by the Carnegie Foundation. McCullough spent nearly a decade in South Africa, and was celebrated by Pearl McCarthy in the *Globe and Mail* for bringing honour to Toronto by being selected for the task.<sup>4</sup> McCullough’s independence and fearlessness were featured in a 1946 *Star Weekly* article titled “A Girl Against the Veldt.” There, her ability to adapt to the cultural and natural “exoticism” of South Africa was highlighted through stories of accidentally mistaking crocodiles for logs while swimming in the Zambesi River, and stumbling across a native initiation

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<sup>2</sup> *Ontario College of Art Alumni Association Alumnus*, Spring 1983. National Archives of Canada, MG30D317 Volume 8, McCullough, Norah and Family.

<sup>3</sup> Norah McCullough, *Biographical Notes*, National Archives of Canada, MG30D317, Volume 6, McCullough, Norah and Family.

ceremony.<sup>5</sup> The Canadian press was writing McCullough as an independent woman, able to lead in the public sphere, yet contained within the domestic expectations for women in the arts through her involvement with art education and the study of crafts.

By 1936, when McCullough was starting her work as a professional in the arts and crafts, May Phillips and Alice Peck, the founders of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild were exiting the national craft scene. Ellen McLeod relates the difficulties faced by the Guild as men increasingly became the public authorities on craft, building on the work originally done by the women of the Guild. This shift was related to the growing awareness of a needed increase in standards for the crafts, and the desire to integrate crafts into fine arts, fuelled by the writings of men like Marius Barbeau.<sup>6</sup> The earlier female leaders of Canadian craft were thought of as amateurs as the emergence of the image of professional artist-craftspeople re-introduced certain gender biases. May Phillips and Alice Peck, like Aileen Osborn Webb, believed that economic privilege entailed social responsibility through the crafts. Due to the growing socially enfranchised position of North American women, McCullough represented a new generation, able to pursue her interest in the crafts as part of an economically independent career. McCullough's economic capital had been preconditioned by her position within the middle-class professional world of anglophone "Central Canada," which might have prevented her from being sympathetic toward women producing crafts who remained

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<sup>4</sup> Pearl McCarthy, "Art and Artists," *The Globe and Mail*, 4 January 1938: 46. National Archives of Canada, MG30D317, Volume 7, McCullough, Norah and Family.

<sup>5</sup> "The old native whispered to her to retreat quickly to her car and as she ran the native women commenced throwing stones at her," described H.J. Lawless, in "A Girl Against the Veldt," *The Star Weekly, Toronto*, 5 January 1946: 6. National Archives of Canada, MG30D317, Volume 7, McCullough, Norah and Family.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen Easton McLeod, *In Good Hands: The Women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild*, (Montreal, Kingston, London and Ithaca: Carleton University by McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 263-269.

voiceless; however, her consistent desire for inclusion in the crafts indicates that she remained aware of social class positions outside her own. In later letters, she reflects on her election to the position of Canadian representative to the World Crafts Council as being unrelated to ability and more to the “problem [of] who could *afford* to go” to the international meetings.<sup>7</sup> Her links to Arthur Lismer and the Carnegie Foundation enabled McCullough to possess adequate artistic assets to be perceived as an expert on art education and craft history.

Upon her return to Canada, McCullough worked for the extension services department of the National Gallery of Canada, leaving Ottawa for Regina, Saskatchewan in 1947 to work as the only paid employee of the Saskatchewan Arts Board.<sup>8</sup> During her time in Regina, from 1947 to 1958, she retained links to the National Gallery, and was able to bring her knowledge and connections to Central Canada. One of McCullough’s first projects in Saskatchewan was to organize a “home industries” programme after she had “seen this succeed in Quebec and had consulted Marius Barbeau.”<sup>9</sup>

Barbeau was an ethnologist at the Museum of Man who was trying to preserve Quebec’s handicraft tradition, based on an exclusive lineage relating back to the noblest of the first settlers.<sup>10</sup> His ideas contributed to the strong provincial funding of craft

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<sup>7</sup> Norah McCullough, letter to Mrs. H. Reidl-Ursin, February 9, 1966. National Archives of Canada, MG28I274, Volume 34, World Crafts Council.

<sup>8</sup> An amazing entity, said by some to be the second arts board to have been formed in the world. Sandra Flood is currently researching the history of the Saskatchewan Art Board.

<sup>9</sup> Norah McCullough, *Looking Back to my Early Days in Regina*, National Archives of Canada, MG30D317, Volume 6, McCullough, Norah and Family.

<sup>10</sup> Marius Barbeau was heavily influenced by Franz Boas, a well-known anthropologist and ethnographer who had been active in the United States during the late nineteenth century. As Chief Assistant, Boas was instrumental in importing Native groups for display at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. See Curtis M. Hinsley, “The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893,” Ivan Karp and Steven D. Levine Eds. *Exhibiting Cultures: The*

projects in Quebec, where Canada's first schools dedicated to craft and design training were established, in particular L'École du Meuble in 1930. Sandra Flood argues that Barbeau's craft ideals followed a rigid hierarchy, which included educated professional studio craftspeople working in specific media, and excluded "peasant", rural, part-time, poor and female craftspeople. Despite his exclusions, Barbeau embraced the rural romanticism promoted by the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, whose board he served on during the 1930s.<sup>11</sup> These ideas influenced a "relatively small, predominantly anglophone circle centred in Montreal who with Marius Barbeau in Ottawa dominated the field."<sup>12</sup> Arthur Lismer and A.Y. Jackson accompanied Barbeau on his first trips in 1925 to Île d'Orléans and Île aux Coudres to collect examples of authentic Quebec crafts, and it is probable that McCullough met Barbeau through Lismer.

It is likely that Barbeau strongly influenced McCullough's attitude toward the importance of professional crafts. In her first project specifically focusing on the crafts in Saskatchewan, McCullough established a centre at Fort Qu'Appelle where craftspeople lived and produced pottery on a full-time, professional basis. In her description of the project, which was intended to be a heritage site as well as a craft centre, she was sure to delineate the type of craft objects being produced, which were "carefully vetted to underline originality of hand work rather than handywork."<sup>13</sup> Despite her emphasis on

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*Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, (Washington, London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 345, 349, 362.

<sup>11</sup> Sandra Flood, *Canadian Craft and Museum Practice 1900 – 1950*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, Department of Art and Archaeology (Art Gallery and Museum Studies, 1998) 51.

<sup>12</sup> Flood, *Canadian Craft and Museum Practice 1900 - 1950*, 78, 49.

<sup>13</sup> McCullough, Early Days, National Archives of Canada, MG30D317, Volume 6, McCullough, Norah and Family.

professional crafts, McCullough was nevertheless dedicated to the preservation and promotion of many types of craft activity. In her 1950 presentation to the Massey Commission on behalf of the Saskatchewan Arts Board, she makes her position clear:

This province has in addition to its indigenous groups many cultural heritages which would be a great loss to the pattern of Canadian culture... [I would suggest] a survey undertaken by the National Museum to investigate closely what exists in the way of handmade arts by indigenous and ethnic groups in Canada and to gather up fine and typical examples in the various traditions for a permanent collection...in this way, the traditional crafts would receive the care and appreciation they warrant, the craftsman would be encouraged and the public would receive constant inspiration.<sup>14</sup>

McCullough's interest in craft expanded when she received the Canadian Government Overseas Awards Fellowship in 1956 to study "home industries" in Europe. She set out to investigate the relationship of artists to craftsmen, citing in her proposal the example of Picasso and the potteries, and hoped to use the insight gained for her development of a provincial handicraft programme. From 1956 to 1958 McCullough traveled in Europe, studying the regional variations in craft, the different materials in craft production and methods of marketing. In her letters to friends and family, McCullough detailed her observations about European craft, in particular her respect for Scandinavian crafts which had begun to develop when in 1955 she had hired Swedish-trained David Ross as the potter for her Fort Qu'Appelle project.<sup>15</sup> The example of Denmark, she argued, could suggest new approaches to Canadian craft:

The handicraft associations have become so involved in sales promotion that taste and quality have been sacrificed. Dr. Marius Barbeau, the recognized authority on French-Canadian handicraft, once said that over-commercialism had damaged the unique qualities of Quebec crafts.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 353.

<sup>15</sup> Norah McCullough, letter to Molly and Bruno Bobak, February 21, 1957, Aix-en-Provence, National Archives of Canada, MG30D317, Volume 7, McCullough, Norah and Family.



In comparison to Denmark...although not such a closely-knit national group, we have our rich and varied ethnic mixtures to call upon our leisure and affluence. It seems apparent that good taste and skills develop well where large numbers of people engage in the practice of handicraft under the direction of imaginative people. Therefore, it seems timely to suggest that a national handicraft council be established in Canada.<sup>16</sup>

McCullough's observations on taste and quality reflected her preference for professional, educated craft production; however, her continued emphasis on inclusion and the use of crafts to unite the many-cultures of Canada remained a focus throughout her career. Her exposure to the professional craftspeople of Europe had a lasting impact, and upon her return to Canada she set about introducing Canadians to the work of these artists by staging small-scale traveling craft exhibitions through the National Gallery of Canada where she served as the liaison officer for Western Canada from 1958 to 1968. (Figure 9)

McCullough's comment on the sacrificing of taste and quality for sales promotion was an indirect reference to the Canadian Handicraft Guild, an organization then under scrutiny from Canadian craftspeople and administrators who were better educated and increasingly professional in their approach to the crafts. The retail outlets established by the Guild in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Yellowknife had been an important source of income for all levels of craftspeople, and were recognized by many Canadians as the key source for crafts. Mary Walpole's "Around the Town" column in the *Globe and Mail* frequently featured items at the Guild shop, and like Aileen Osborn Webb's earlier

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<sup>16</sup> Norah McCullough, *Handicraft in Denmark Suggests a Fresh Approach to Canadian Crafts*, National Archives of Canada, MG30D317, Volume 7, McCullough, Norah and Family. Scandinavian crafts had been increasingly popular in Canada during the 1950s. The Royal Ontario Museum hosted a Scandinavian craft exhibition from October 19 to November 21, 1954 and the T. Eaton Company had been importing Scandinavian furniture and design examples for sale at its flagship stores. See Margaret Hodges, *Sigrun Bulow-Hube: Scandinavian Modernism in Canada*, M.A. thesis, Concordia University, 1996.

promotion of crafts to women during the 1955 *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.* exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum, Walpole appealed to the middle-class female consumer:

Your look might start with an attractive but classic suit in spring navy and then have it suddenly come to life with a pure silk Batik scarf...with a pin of hand hammered silver in the pocket...We saw this happen with a decided dash at The Guild Shop recently and discovered that the accessories were from our top Canadian craftsmen.<sup>17</sup>

By 1963 the situation of the Guild was problematic enough to capture the attention of the magazine *Canadian Art*, which published design writer Sandra Gwyn's article "Guild at The Crossroads." (Figure 10) In her piece, Gwyn honoured the long history of the Guild, but also pointed out the division within its supporters between the senior members' desire for tradition and the younger members' need for change and new directions. Like McCullough, Gwyn's respect for the increasing number of educated, professional craftspeople took precedence over a need to adhere to the past:

But in 1963, when the home arts are all but moribund, when the *habitant* woodcarver, the Maritime hooker of rugs, the country cabinet-maker have all given way to the sophisticated, art-school trained fine craftsman, and, less fortunately, to the "do-it-yourselfer" with his cut-price craft kit, the Guild's confused organization and outdated structure put it at an almost hopeless disadvantage.<sup>18</sup>

Gwyn praised the Quebec chapter of the Guild as leading the way for a modernization of the organization with its spring 1963 exhibition, *The Arts and Crafts of Canada*. This national show was the first to be rigorously juried and restricted to fine crafts, defined by Gwyn as the sophisticated products of art-school trained fine craftspeople.

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<sup>17</sup> Mary Walpole, "Around the Town," *Globe and Mail*, 1 April 1965, W8.

<sup>18</sup> Sandra Gwyn, "Guild at the Crossroads," *Canadian Art*, 20/5, (September/October 1963): 277.

Norah McCullough served as the only woman on the three-person jury, where she was able to apply her aesthetic preference for fine crafts.<sup>19</sup> In an effort to embrace the Guild's policy of inclusiveness, the jury did not restrict the exhibition to the works of artist-craftspeople only. Instead, they based their judgments on the quality of the pieces not the conceptual content; as Gwyn noted, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild maintained its dedication to the traditional crafts of Canada's indigenous peoples:

And the show was by no means confined to the works of the avant garde big-city craftsmen. Included as well were pieces like delicate, embroidered Indian slippers, an exquisite sampler from Yellowknife, and a porcupine quill box, made by Teresa Thomas who lives on a Micmac reservation in Nova Scotia.<sup>20</sup>

The presence of McCullough on the jury for the Guild was important in terms of her cultural capital. It signified her role in the Canadian craft world as an expert, a woman who possessed legitimate authority in terms of judging what qualified as tasteful, high-quality craft while validating the exhibition. In the 1963 spring exhibition McCullough's standards were put forward as a national starting point for future shows. The new selectivity of the Guild show frightened some of the regular craftspeople away, a point Gwyn counters by arguing that some of the best Canadian craftspeople were persuaded to enter for the first time. The final entries clearly indicated an art focus that excluded the untrained amateur. This approach was not new to Quebec, where since its

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<sup>19</sup> The jury was composed of Norah McCullough, Gordon Webber, and Paul Arthur. Gordon Webber was a professor at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and Paul Arthur was the Managing Editor of *Canadian Art* magazine.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 279.

inception in 1949 the Association professionnelle des artisans du Québec had limited membership to professional craftspeople selected by a jury of peers.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the careful selection of pieces for the show, the display itself was considered to have been poor. Gwyn complained of haphazard exhibits, battered showcases, and poor labeling, echoing Donald Buchanan's earlier observations that craft exhibitions were perceived as less professional due to their hasty organization. As Ellen McLeod observes, by 1963 the Guild was suffering from financial restraints, necessitating a programme focused mainly on retail sales. The undertaking of large-scale exhibitions was beyond their scope in terms of physical display, shipping, publicity and curatorial staff.

Although the display was imperfect, the Quebec chapter of the Guild was able to hire a public relations consultant who emphasized the high standard of craft objects to the Montreal press, which sent art critics from both the English and French language newspapers to cover the exhibition. While the expertise of Norah McCullough was established through her involvement as a juror in the exhibition, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild turned to the United States for its symbolic capital in the form of Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb. Her visit to Montreal to open the spring exhibition of the Guild was part of a larger plan to form an active liaison between the Guild and the American Craftsmen's Council. As the national president of the Guild, Harold Burnham had been communicating with Webb regarding North American craft cooperation, in order to persuade the American Craft Council to sponsor joint workshops and the publication of

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<sup>21</sup> Brochure, Association professionnelle des artisans du Québec, 1965. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU 5752, Box 7, BW8 - CB2.

articles on Canadian craft in their magazine *Craft Horizons*. During her Montreal visit Webb met with Guild representatives to discuss the liaison, but as Gwyn reported in her article, the confused organization, lack of funding, and ineffectual maintenance of standards by the Guild were providing major barriers to forming a strong partnership with the American Craft Council. Considering the enthusiasm following Aileen Osborn Webb's involvement with the Guild in 1963, the lack of confidence shown by the Canadian craftspeople who elected Norah McCullough over Harold Burnham at the 1964 First World Crafts Conference must have been a double blow for the Canadian Guild of Handicrafts. This was followed by further setbacks faced at the Canadian Conference of the Arts "Seminar 65" in January 1965. The purpose of the conference was to outline funding opportunities for cultural organizations. Different groups presented briefs to support their requests for monetary support. The Canadian Handicrafts Guild found themselves questioned as to their validity as the exclusive national craft organization.<sup>22</sup>

Following her return to Regina from New York, McCullough was sought out by the Guild, whose members debated the advantages of including her in their organization. Wilson Mellen, President of the Quebec chapter of the Guild, brought up the possibility of appointing McCullough as the new National President of the Guild, replacing Burnham, but believed like many others that she would be too busy as liaison officer at

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<sup>22</sup> *Canadian Handicrafts Guild Presentation to Seminar 65*, January 1965. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3-CK7. Alan Jarvis of the Canadian Conference of the Arts wrote to Adelaide Marriott, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild representative that discussions regarding the funding of Canadian crafts would be continued at the Winnipeg meeting convened by Norah McCullough. Alan Jarvis, letter, February 4, 1965, to Adelaide Marriott, Canadian Handicrafts Guild. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archive of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3-CK7.

the National Gallery of Canada.<sup>23</sup> The interest in McCullough increased when she proved to be quick to use her new position to begin instituting major changes in the structure of Canadian crafts; changes that challenged the very existence of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild.

McCullough was aware that the position of Aileen Osborn Webb as the president of the World Crafts Council and the body's push for regional development, indicated that Americans had decided to take on the leadership of North American crafts. Canada was in a weak position due to the lack of a unified craft council. McCullough decided to rectify this situation. Her first step was to collect a list of the names of all Canadian craftspeople, thereby creating what was purported to be a national mailing list. Unlike the Guild, which had separate provincial branches, some stronger than others, this list had no geographical limitations. While McCullough sought an inclusive list, the names were submitted to her by the other Canadian representatives present in New York, and were therefore limited to those craftspeople recognized by this largely professional core group. A newsletter written by McCullough from the Saskatchewan Arts Board was sent out on June 26, 1964, encouraging Canadian craftspeople to respect the urgent need for a national organization to work with the World Crafts Council. No mention of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild serving as this organization was made. After McCullough had received over 700 names and addresses of craftspeople, a detailed "Newsletter to the Craftsmen of Canada from Miss Norah McCullough" was mailed on 16 September 1964.

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<sup>23</sup> Wilson Mellen, letter to Adelaide Marriott, January 25, 1965, Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5752, Box 7, BW8 - CB2.

McCullough presented suggestions for a new national organization centred on two key questions: structure and membership.

Basing her argument on the importance of unity of purpose and inter-communication, McCullough asked craftspeople if a new organization was necessary, or if the existing associations formed “an exceedingly valuable framework and it would seem desirable that a CRAFTS COUNCIL should embrace, not compete with them.” More important to McCullough than the structure of a new organization was the issue of membership. Recalling debates over exclusivity and membership at the New York congress where delegates agreed on the importance of international communication and development and the limitations of restricted membership, she urged her fellow Canadians to consider keeping the organization open. One of her chief concerns regarding membership was the need to include non-practicing individuals such as Aileen Osborn Webb, who “could be exceedingly helpful, Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb herself being a notable example.”<sup>24</sup> Members of an ideal national craft organization would be composed of artist-designers, rural and folk-designers, amateurs as well as enthusiastic laymen. McCullough’s next step was to use her suggestions to form the basis of her biggest project yet, the first national meeting of Canadian craftsmen.

Having received an almost one-hundred percent response to her newsletter, with the majority in favour of the formation of a new organization, a conference was planned to take place at the Department of Architecture and Interior Design, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, 5 –7 February 1965. Over forty government officials, university

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<sup>24</sup> McCullough cited Webb as the most desirable type of member.

professors, individual craftspeople and representatives of major craft organizations attended the meeting, bringing with them a diversity of backgrounds and approaches to the crafts.<sup>25</sup> The North American studio craft movement's emphasis on individual artist-craftsmen had been increasing in popularity, following a shift from group crafting activities such as the Works Progress Administration in the United States, or the Searle Grain Company project in Canada.<sup>26</sup> Despite this, McCullough received an overwhelmingly positive response to her call for the formation of a united group because Canadian craftspeople were aware of the increasing opportunities for funding available through organizations involved in planning the events of the Centennial year.

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<sup>25</sup> The conferees were: *Mrs. J.B. Ashworth*, Ottawa Valley Guild of Weavers, Quebec, *Mrs. Foster Beveridge*, Potter, Nova Scotia, *Mlle. Françoise Brais*, Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Quebec, *Mr. Merton Chambers*, Potter, Toronto, *M. Bernard Chaudron*, Secrétaire-Tresorier, Association Professionnelle des Artisans du Québec, *Mr. Stan Clarke*, Jeweler, British Columbia, *Mrs. Helen Copeland*, President, Canadian Guild of Potters, Toronto, *Mr. Ivan Crowell*, Handicrafts Branch, Government of the Province of New Brunswick, *Mrs. Robert Dalby*, teacher, Lac La Ronge, Saskatchewan, *Mr. Walter Dexter*, Potter, British Columbia, *Mr. Walter Drohan*, Potter, Alberta College of Art, *M. Jacques Garnier*, ceramist, Quebec, *Mr. Leslie Graff*, Supervisor of Arts and Crafts Division, Recreation and Cultural Development Branch, Government of Province of Alberta, *Prof. Joan Harland*, Department of Architecture, University of Manitoba, *Mrs. Beth Hone*, Potter, School of Art, University of Saskatchewan, *Mrs. Louis Johnson*, Canadian Handicraft Guild, Quebec, *Mr. Glen Lewis*, Pottery Division, Department of Education, University of British Columbia, *Mr. G. Cumming*, Assistant Director, Edmonton Art Gallery, Alberta, *Miss Norah McCullough*, *M. Jean-Paul Morisset*, Government of Canada Observer to Fine Arts Advisory Commission, Canadian Pavilion, Expo 67, *Mr. Douglas Motter*, Weaver, Calgary, *Miss M.E. Muff*, Department of Education, Community Recreation Branch, Queen's Park, Ontario, *Mr. Ludwig Nickel*, Enamellist, Manitoba, *Mr. J. Nykoluk*, Secretary, Manitoba Design Institute, *Mrs. Helga Palko*, Enamellist-Jeweler, Ontario, *Mrs. M. Platek*, National Design Council, Department of Industry, Government of Canada, Ontario, *Mr. Arthur Price*, Sculptor, Ontario, *Mr. E.N. Roulston*, Handicrafts Section, Department of Education, Government of Nova Scotia, *Prof. John Russell*, Department of Architecture, University of Manitoba, *Mrs. Clara Schoenfeld*, London District Weavers, Ontario, *Mr. Charles Scott*, School of Art, University of Manitoba, *Mr. George Shaw*, Executive Director, Saskatchewan Arts Board, *Mr. Arthur Soloman*, Indian Council, Ontario, *Mrs. Sheila Stiven*, Department of Northern Affairs, Ontario, *Mr. Jack Sures*, Potter, Manitoba, *Mr. Gerald D. Tillapaugh*, Handicrafts Branch, Department of Industry and Development, New Brunswick, *Prof. R. Williams*, School of Art, Winnipeg, Manitoba, *Mr. Moncrieff Williamson*, Director, Confederation Art Gallery, Prince Edward Island, *Mr. Noel Wutuner*, Provincial Handicrafts Promotion Officer, Manitoba, *Mr. Jack Young*, Saskatchewan Arts Board, *Mrs. M. Pentland*, Vancouver Weavers, British Columbia, *Arnold Rockman*, Editor, Canadian Art Magazine. National Archives of Canada, MG28I222 Volume 1, Canadian Craftsmen's Association.

<sup>26</sup> The Searle Grain Company had sponsored a training programme in weaving for prairie girls during the 1930s. Oscar Beriau organized and administered the project.



Government officials took advantage of the Winnipeg conference to announce new funding initiatives which would benefit Canadian craft and design. The Department of Industry along with the National Design Council unveiled Canadian Design '67, a programme intended to promote good design for manufacture, and the Minister of Public Works announced a commitment to set aside one percentage of the cost of new federal government buildings for works of art.<sup>27</sup> This was positive news for the craftspeople attending, for it indicated the federal government's financial support for art and design, particularly in the rush to prepare Canada for the celebrations of 1967. Craftspeople found their work being considered under both art and design categorizations. The fear of being excluded from these opportunities, whether through geographic exclusions, exclusions through standards, or lack of symbolic or cultural capital, provided the incentive to engage in collective action.

Absent from the Winnipeg conference were Aileen Osborn Webb and members of the American Craft Council. Invitations had not been extended as McCullough and the other main organizers are said to have believed that the development of a truly Canadian craft organization would have to be nurtured independent of the United States.<sup>28</sup> In the final report on the Conference of Canadian Craftsmen, item eleven stated that "although the American Craftsmen's Council was an exemplary institution, we should create our own Canadian pattern."<sup>29</sup> Even if Webb and the American Craft Council were not

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<sup>27</sup> "Stress Excellence of Design," *Windsor Daily*, 8 April 1965. National Gallery of Canada Archives, Exhibits in Canada 12-4-296, Volume 3.

<sup>28</sup> Arthur Price, personal correspondence, 23 February 2000.

<sup>29</sup> "Report 4 March 1965, The Formation of a National Association of Craftsmen." National Archives of Canada, MG28I222, Volume 1, Canadian Craftsmen's Association.

present, there was an awareness of their role in the instigation of the meeting, and the need for strong Canadian representation in the North American section of the World Crafts Council. Since the 1964 meeting in New York Canadians had been praising Webb and her Council. A few months after the Winnipeg conference the perceived strengths of this organization continued to highlight the deficiencies in the Canadian craft groups:

Handcraft in the USA is big business. This is due to the indefatigable devotion of a dynamic entrepreneur, Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb and her organization, the American Craftsmen's Council. With her vision and untiring effort (plus the use of personal fortune) she and her craftsmen supporters have elevated the handcrafts of America well above the sentimental preservation of cottage craft, or the promotion of the indigenous native artifacts as perpetual souvenirs. A well organized body of contemporary trained craftsmen is producing highly original, well crafted products in any media. They expect, and do, earn a good professional income disposing of their products to all branches of society, independent of the tourist industry.<sup>30</sup>

Eight panels were featured at the Winnipeg conference, sessions which examined structure, membership, education, legal, marketing, liaison, and affiliation with the World Crafts Council, but the official name, the issues of structure, membership and standards proved to be of greatest concern. The Quebec Handicrafts Guild sent Mrs. Louis E. Johnson and Mlle. Françoise Brais, and the Ontario Canadian Handicrafts Guild sent Harold Burnham, Mary Eileen Muff and Merton Chambers to Winnipeg as their official representatives. The Guild was aware of their increasingly negative image, especially in Western Canada. Following the embarrassment of New York, Burnham had been busy discussing new directions for the Guild, and he arrived in Winnipeg as even the name of

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<sup>30</sup> Anita Aarons, "Canadian Handcrafts and the Architect," *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal*, 476, 42/5, (May 1965) 16.

his organization was being reconsidered.<sup>31</sup> In late 1964 the Guild had initiated a questionnaire to craftsmen in an effort to identify their potential membership base. Questions were aimed at professional, amateur, semi-professional, and student craftspeople and focused on concerns over standards, exhibitions, craft supplies and marketing. Following the questionnaire, Adelaide Marriott, a long-time Canadian Handicrafts Guild member and former manager of the Toronto Guild's retail sales, suggested to Burnham a motion be put forward that:

a newly reorganized and expanded Canadian Handicrafts Guild - under a new name with a full-time organizing director and suitable staff - be made the recognized official organization for Canadian craftsmen - to implement the constitution and work in co-operation with the World Crafts Council.<sup>32</sup>

The question was not settled in time for the Winnipeg conference.

The Women's Committee of the Ontario chapter of the Guild urged the selection of a professional craftsperson to represent the interests of the organization, and funded the trip to Winnipeg for professional potter Merton Chambers. Toronto-based Chambers worked mainly in ceramics but also created batik and block-printed fabrics. He was one of the only Canadian potters specializing in architectural ceramics, and was praised for

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<sup>31</sup> Memorandum, Interview with Mr. Archie F. Key, Canadian Museums Association, 23 January 1965. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5750, Box 5, BU - BW2. Archie Key was approached to join the Handicrafts Guild as Executive Secretary, a position which he did not accept. It was reported that Key was "extremely interested in our desire to change the name which he said had become an anathema in the west to craftsmen."

<sup>32</sup> *Canadian Handicrafts Guild Questionnaire to Craftsmen* 1964, Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3 - CK7. Adelaide Marriott was born in Ontario in 1883 and was a graduate in piano at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. In 1930 she and her husband Francis Marriott, a chemical engineer, moved to Toronto from Montreal where she managed the Guild retail store at the T. Eaton Company in Toronto from 1932 to 1944. From 1944 to 1955 Marriott was the assistant dean of women at the University of Toronto. In 1973 Marriott received an honorary degree from York University for her work in Canadian craft. It was the first formal recognition for work in the crafts in Canada.

having versatile work of a very high standard.<sup>33</sup> (Figure 11) The Committee was convinced that Chambers would give the Guild a modern, professional voice at the Winnipeg conference.<sup>34</sup> Burnham believed, like many members of the Guild, that the establishment of a new Canadian crafts council would permanently harm the Guild.<sup>35</sup> However, it had become apparent to members that it was necessary for the Guild to approach the possibility of a new organization on friendly terms, prepared for full cooperation, for “if we do not, we shall be superseded in every activity and remain a benevolent, kindly, rather old-fashioned organization.”<sup>36</sup> At the start of the conference Burnham made the position of the Guild clear:

I had the opportunity to state that the representatives of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, who were attending the meeting, had come in the fullest spirit of cooperation...and that it was prepared to expand its services, if desired, to act as the Canadian branch of the recently formed World Crafts Council.<sup>37</sup>

Burnham had been carefully developing his view on the Guild's relationship with crafts. In a 1965 article in the Guild publication *The Craftsman/L'Artisan*, he attributed the difficulties facing the Guild to the problem of definition. Reducing craft production

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<sup>33</sup> Judith Tinkl, *Craft Directory 1965*, Ontario Department of Education. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Crafts, MU5770, Box 25, DZ - EH. Tinkl noted that Chambers was involved in many crafts guilds and organizations, and was helping to organize a professional society of craftspeople.

<sup>34</sup> It was ironic that the Woman's Committee believed that a man could best represent them at the conference.

<sup>35</sup> Murray Wilson, President, Quebec branch, Canadian Handicrafts Council, letter to Mrs. Louis E. Johnson, October 22, 1964. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5750, Box 5, BU - BW. Wilson writes, “I believe it would do irreparable damage if such a council were organised whether successful or not.”

<sup>36</sup> *Report of the Meeting of the Pro-Tem Committee to Establish a Council of Craftsmen in Canada*, February 5-7, Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5750, Box 5, BU - BW2.

<sup>37</sup> Harold Burnham, *Report of the Winnipeg Conference*, Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5750, Box 5, BU - BW2.

to “craft as art” versus craft as “manual skill,” Burnham argued that while this “clash of meanings” led to the need for a name change within the Guild, it had no impact upon the status of craftspeople. Burnham dismissed the issue of naming, about to be foregrounded at the Winnipeg conference, as irrelevant:

Several attempts have been made in recent years to give added stature to the craftsmen in our community by referring to fine crafts, designer-craftsmen, and artist-craftsmen. Like most compound terms in English, all these are clumsy. “Fine crafts,” like “fine arts,” carries the seeds of ambiguity and could lead to a segregation of work on a bold scale. Designer-Craftsman is a misnomer: the person who designs objects for the skilled artisan, or handicraftsman, remains a designer. Artist-craftsman is a redundancy. Let us accept the fact that the craftsman who produces original work is an artist, good or bad.<sup>38</sup>

In Merton Chambers, the Women’s Committee of the Guild had elected to send to Winnipeg a very different representative than Burnham. Whereas Burnham desired equal status for craftspeople irrespective of name, Chambers was convinced that titles were central to the public’s perception of professional crafts.

Chambers perceived Canadian craft as consisting of three major elements: 1) native handcrafts based on tribal imagery; 2) pioneer craft skills preserved by talented amateurs; 3) products produced and distributed by contemporary craftsmen. Chambers subdivided the third category into adult amateurs collecting part-time skills and professionally trained artist craftsmen, products of art schools able to work in the various fields of art, architecture and design for industry. Chamber’s focus was on the final category of professional craftspeople, which he further classified as:

[1.] artisan - craftsman, one who executes traditional designs or the designs of others.

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<sup>38</sup> Harold Burnham, “Crafts and Craftsmen,” *The Craftsman/L’Artisan*, 1965. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5791, Box 46, HZ - 1H2.

[2.] artist-craftsman or designer-craftsmen, one who is capable of originating and executing his own designs and who exhibits and sells under his own name.

[3.] designer in the craft field, one who knows the techniques in a given media but prefers to design work for others rather than execute it himself.<sup>39</sup>

The opposing views of Burnham and Chambers came into the open during the Winnipeg conference. Chambers was nominated to chair the session on “structure” and asked Burnham to be a member of the committee. This was the key issue at the conference for members of the Canadian Guild of Crafts, for it would determine whether the Guild was maintained as the only national craft organization, or if there would be a new craft council developed. As the committee discussions developed, Chambers did not put forward the Women’s Committee recommendation to continue using the Guild as a revamped umbrella organization. Instead, George Shaw, who worked with Norah McCullough at the Saskatchewan Arts Board, moved that a new organization be formed. A vote was held, with nine in favour, four against, and one abstention. A new crafts council was born. This incensed Burnham, who perceived the reign of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild as having come to an end, in part through the betrayal of the session chair. Chambers, in contrast, believed that a new organization would be able to present a unified front to the World Crafts Council; “Provincial disunity and dissatisfaction as previously displayed in the First World Congress of Craftsmen, would have been intolerable at this juncture to present to a wider sphere.”<sup>40</sup> For many of those attending

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<sup>39</sup> Merton Chambers, “Formation of a National Crafts Council,” *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal*, , 477, 42/ 6, (June 1965) 26 - 28.

<sup>40</sup> Merton Chambers, letter to Harold Burnham, February 13, 1965. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5750, Box 5, BU - BW.

the Winnipeg meeting a new organization indicated a new image and a perception of Canadian craft as modern and professional.

What had begun as a conference focusing on crafts ended up creating, as McCullough undoubtedly had intended, a new organization dedicated to “all those forms designed for use in man’s environment, either hand-made or designed for large-scale industrial production.”<sup>41</sup> Delegates to the Winnipeg meeting had agreed that there would be room for “jewelry, pottery, weaving, enameling, sculpture and murals or, for other artifacts that can be industrially produced from well-designed prototypes such as printed textiles, ceramic garden planters or furniture.”<sup>42</sup> Arnold Rockman, the editor of *Canadian Art*, and contributing art critic for a variety of Canadian newspapers, suggested the name Canadian Council for the Environmental Arts/Conseil Canadien pour les arts de l’espace, which was accepted by the delegates. Rockman argued that this name embraced far more than craft and would benefit craftspeople far into the future. Francophone representatives approved of the name, which was easily translatable into French.<sup>43</sup> For Burnham and the other members of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, the name indicated a problematic shift away from craft concerns toward a broader concern with craft, design, architecture and art. Mary Eileen Muff, a special delegate for the Ontario Guild, reported her negative vote for the new name, observing that:

The ideas expressed by many of those present indicated that they

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<sup>41</sup> *Report of the Meeting of Canadian Craftsmen “Pro Tem Committee”* Winnipeg 5 - 7 February 1965. National Archives of Canada, MG28I222, Volume 1, Canadian Craftsmen’s Association. This would have pleased Donald Buchanan, who before his death in 1962 had pushed for a wider view of craft and improved design standards through his work at the National Gallery of Canada.

<sup>42</sup> *Meeting of Canadian Craftsmen “Pro-Tem Committee,”* Winnipeg 5 - 7 February, 1965. National Archives of Canada, MG28I222, Volume 1, Canadian Craftsmen’s Association.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*

considered that they worked in a field which could not be called a craft. Some of these were typographers, industrial and interior designers, architects, potters and jewelry makers. Therefore they did not want the word "craft" in the name. As the vote indicated sympathy towards this group, it would seem that this new organization cannot hope to assist the craftsmen for quite some time due to the course it now seems bound to follow, that of establishing a highly professional group, embracing all that is visual.<sup>44</sup>

This surprise focus of the Canadian Council for the Environmental Arts left an opening for the Guild to continue as the only true representative of the crafts in Canada, Muff argued. She recommended they keep the name Canadian Handicrafts Guild and concentrate on raising the standard of their image. Meanwhile Rockman was elated at the shift in focus during the Winnipeg meeting. In his editorial for *Canadian Art*, he took a swipe at the Guild and praised the new organization:

In the opinion of many of those present at the conference, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild had become a stagnant organization which did little to raise the standards of handmade craft objects and was to all intents and purposes merely a retail selling organization...Perhaps this latest development within the hitherto narrow world of Canadian crafts suggests that our craftsmen are now ready to abandon their stubborn adherence to the ideology of the handmade object.<sup>45</sup>

Chambers echoed Rockman's sentiments in his article on the Canadian Council for the Environmental Arts published in the *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal*, concerning himself with the issue of standards. Chambers took the opportunity to highlight the deficiencies of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, stating that Canadian craftspeople were aware of the "unsatisfactory and ambiguous nature of the handicrafts

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<sup>44</sup> Mary Eileen Muff, *Report from the Meeting of Canadian Craftsmen*, Winnipeg, February 5 - 7, 1965. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5750, Box 5, BU - BW2.

<sup>45</sup> Arnold Rockman, "Editorial," *Canadian Art*, 22/97, (May/June 1965) 7. I have found no evidence of resistance from craftspeople regarding Rockman's insistence on abandoning "the ideology of the handmade object," an idea which contradicted the growing interest in studio-based, one-off craft pieces.



organizations” which were not always operating in the best interest of the contemporary artist-craftsperson. Chambers very pointedly acknowledged the role and the current preeminence of the Americans:

The American Craftsmen’s Council gave the lead to form the World Crafts Council, and to use the methods and experience gained by them plus proper consideration of local geographic conditions. Despite their leadership role, no plans as yet exist to form a professional society of the standing of the American Craftsmen’s Council. It is hoped in time this will follow.<sup>46</sup>

Chambers expressed excitement over the ability of the new organization to raise the standards of Canadian craft, calling the Canadian Council for the Environmental Arts primarily a “standard setter.” The conference agenda, he reported, had been dominated by discussions surrounding, “the raising and maintaining of high standards,” and the expected “standards in education and promotion.”<sup>47</sup>

The standards set by the new organization reflected the habitus, or lifestyle, of its constituents. Those who were present in Winnipeg represented administrators and craftspeople who possessed the cultural and economic capital to make large-scale changes to the definition of craft, as well as the certainty that they were qualified to make such reforms. The name, suggested by Rockman, a leading force in disseminating ideas regarding what was acceptable art in *Canadian Art*, shifted away from the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, as well as from amateurs and consequently the women, rural poor and immigrant populations who were creating craft without formal education. While crafts had traditionally been the domain of women, by the early 1960s male producers and

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<sup>46</sup> Chambers, “Formation of a National Crafts Council,” 26, 28.

<sup>47</sup> *Winnipeg 5-7 February 1965 Meeting of Canadian Craftsmen “ProTem Committee” Agenda*, National Archives of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen’s Association, MG28I222, Volume 1.

administrators formed a growing part of the audience for craft. Those wishing to dictate good taste and proper standards in craft were hoping to perpetuate value systems and ideological constructions they held as important. The craft objects designated as precious and selected by specialists could operate as agents for the transmission of an effective dominant culture.

The government officials present at the Winnipeg conference recognized the power of the new organization to operate as a standard-setting body. While the Expo 67 Corporation officially demanded evidence from the Council that it could speak as a national organization for the majority of Canadian craftspeople and designers, Jean-Claude Delorme, the Secretary-General of Expo who had attended the Winnipeg meetings, had already decided that the new Council held a set of standards high enough for the Canadian Government.<sup>48</sup> The new organization and its leaders had been officially sanctioned as the gatekeepers of Canada's craft culture. The Francophone representatives supported the new Council with its focus on high standards, as their provincial organizations had been setting such stringent standards since 1949.

Yvan Gauthier, the current Executive Director of the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec, argues that Quebec had always made the distinction between professional and amateur craftspeople, unlike English Canada, which retained ideological links to the Arts and Crafts movement's philosophy of joy for everyone in craft labour. While the other provinces had been romanticizing the amateur, the Quebec government had recognized the ability of its professional craftspeople to affect cultural and language developments,

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<sup>48</sup> Jean-Claude Delorme, letter to George Shaw, Acting Chairman, Canadian Council for the Environmental Arts, March 10, 1966. National Archives of Canada, MG28I222, Volume 1, Canadian Craftsmen's Association/

and had been generous in granting money to Quebec's craft organizations. Quebec had been looking toward the United States for leadership, rather than the Canadian Guild of Handicrafts. Gauthier stresses the importance of the United States on the development of Quebec's craft council, which adopted the emphasis on crafts as business and the importance of university education in craft. Quebec started the first large-scale professional craft fair in Canada, the Salon des métiers d'art, in 1955, which was strictly juried, well-publicized and hired a number of permanent employees.<sup>49</sup>

Earlier connections with the American Craft Council had been successful as well. In the 1942 first edition of the journal *Craft Horizons*, Quebec's Director of Handicrafts, Oscar Beriau, published an article on the "Craft Revival in Quebec," where he discussed the involvement of American instructors at the School of Handicrafts he helped to found in 1930.<sup>50</sup> Beriau became friends with Aileen Osborn Webb, and he met with her on his trips to New York to study the organization of the Council.<sup>51</sup> In turn, Beriau influenced American craft organizations through the exhibitions of Quebec craft work he sent to the New England states.<sup>52</sup> The government of Ontario was impressed with Beriau's professional approach to craft development, and in 1946 formally requested his assistance in establishing a craft organization in Ontario, a project which Beriau accepted but was unable to complete due to his death in 1948. Ellen McLeod argues in *In Good Hands* that

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<sup>49</sup> Yvan Gauthier, Personal Interview, 21 January 2000.

<sup>50</sup> Oscar A. Beriau, "Craft Revival in Quebec," *Craft Horizons*, 1/ 1, (May 1942) 25.

<sup>51</sup> Oscar Beriau, letter to Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb, January 10, 1947. Archives of Ontario, Department of Education, Crafts Section 1946-1949, RG 2-76, No. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Oscar Beriau, letter to Mrs. E.W. Brownell, Executive Secretary, Department of Planning and Development, Ontario, May 30, 1946. Archives of Ontario, Department of Education, Crafts Section 1946-1949, RG 2-76, No. 1. Beriau relates his meeting with Senator Coburn of Vermont at the Clinton County Historical Society meeting in Plattsburg, New York, where Coburn "said that a handicraft service was

the appointment of men like Beriau to professionalize Quebec crafts was inherently sexist, as they replicated many of the activities of the women in the Canadian Handicrafts Guild but were perceived as authorities in comparison to Phillips, Peck and their supporters.<sup>53</sup> Be that as it may, Quebec had been leading the way in terms of professional crafts, and their delegates in Winnipeg were enthusiastic about a national project that pursued the same aims by introducing strict standards.

As we have seen, Chambers' position in Canada as a professional potter allowed him to vocalize concerns over the issue of poor standards in craft production. His voice was amplified by his life partner Anita Aarons, who arrived in Canada from Australia in 1964, and proceeded to shake up the Canadian craft scene. Aarons was a jeweler, sculptor and critic who had worked as head lecturer in sculpture at Caulfield College in Melbourne. She had helped to found the Society of Sculptors and Associates in Australia, an organization which provided a liaison between sculptors, designers and architects. In 1963, Aarons worked as a demonstrator and teacher under the influential British art critic Sir Herbert Read at the "International Education Through Art" seminar in England.<sup>54</sup> Read began his career in the Department of Ceramics at the Victoria and Albert Museum where he developed the view that while sculpture was imitative, pottery

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inaugurated in his state and the necessary appropriations voted by the legislature as a result of my sending a collection of Quebec exhibits in 1940."

<sup>53</sup> McLeod, *In Good Hands*, 264. McLeod writes that Quebec's Agriculture Minister J.L. Perron used the 1929 Canadian Handicrafts Guild annual exhibition to announce that the Quebec government would be assuming public authority in the field of crafts, "A *man* will be placed in charge of this department, and *he* will go about the province and note its handicrafts productions. *He* will form a plan whereby they will be increased in both quality and production."

<sup>54</sup> Lotta Dempsey, "Is past ruining present?" *Toronto Star*, 19 July 1966. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MUS772, Box 27, EK - EL3.

was “plastic art in the most abstract form.”<sup>55</sup> His vision of modernism included ceramics, which he felt embraced the abstraction that was crucial to the avant garde. By 1965 the American Craft Council’s Museum of Contemporary Art was also a follower of this view, staging exhibitions of the work of California ceramist Peter Voulkos who was famed for his non-utilitarian clay forms. The Canadian Council for the Environmental Arts believed it could make a difference by demonstrating that the crafts were indeed a professional practice unrestrained by the confines of utility, an outlook promoted by Anita Aarons.

By the time she arrived in Canada, Aarons was convinced of the importance of good education and professional standards as well as affiliations with architecture and fine arts, in developing Canadian craft, a view she strongly expressed in her “Allied Arts” column in the *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal* (later *Canadian Architecture*). Not present at the Winnipeg conference, she supported the new group throughout the 1960s with positive reviews in her column. Like Rockman and Chambers, Aarons publicly applauded the professional focus on improving standards, applying the possibilities to architecture:

Hitherto the craft field, so called, has been the province of the adult educator or the leisure time dilettante and preserve of archaic custom. This orientation made it of little use to the architect. However, the new group, while not excluding these other activities, has forced attention on the changing nature and growing body of artist-designers who defy categorization and means by education and professional practice to elevate their status to one of economic reality and social responsibility.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Tanya Harrod, “Herbert Read,” *Crafts*, (July/August 1993): 14.

<sup>56</sup> Anita Aarons, “An Absent Minded Attitude,” *Architecture Canada*, 505, 44/10, (October 1967) 22.

Aarons was an outspoken critic of what she perceived to be the poor quality of Canadian craft. Her international experience and confidence garnered the attention of Canadian craftspeople, and her strongly expressed opinions appeared in many different publications. A year after the Winnipeg conference she used the journal of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild to issue a contentious challenge to craftspeople, openly mocking the Guild and praising the American Craft Council. Central to the development of a successful Canadian craft scene were sound education and good business practice, Aarons contended, goals she felt were lacking in the Guild due to the involvement of amateur members. Although she praised the enthusiasm of amateurs for their role in developing the contemporary craft movement in Canada, she was convinced “the amateur has become a dead albatross tied around the neck of the practicing craftsman.” The Canadian National Exhibition show, used by the Guild since 1932 to display examples of Canadian craft, was critiqued by Aarons as “hysterically funny with the numerous prizes, even for tea cosies.” Aarons suggested Canadians follow the example of the American Craft Council, with their elevation of the crafts to “professional and businesslike status without loss of creative energy,” chiding Canadians for their negativity and fear of becoming well-organized and aggressive in the promotion of their craft work.<sup>57</sup>

Along with Rockman and Chambers, Aarons believed she knew what standards were necessary for improving craft. This confidence betrayed their social and personal backgrounds, which gave them accredited tools for aesthetic selection, and more important to the classification of professional craft, aesthetic elimination. McCullough’s

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<sup>57</sup> Anita Aarons, “To the Professional - A Challenge!” *The Craftsman/L'Artisan*, June 1966. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5782, Box 37, GA - GC2.

early strategy of inclusion was lost in the push for improved standards, which necessitated that the craft field become dominated by members who possessed the cultural and economic capital believed to belong to the “proper” type of craft. The new organization, name and members were credited with the potential to overcome the traditional in deference to the intellectual connections available in the material activity of craft production by, as Pierre Bourdieu states, “abandoning the popular aesthetic, the affirmation of continuity between art and life, which implies the subordination of form to function.”<sup>58</sup> Norah McCullough was a friend of Merton Chambers and Anita Aarons, who were strong supporters of her belief in the advantages of a new Canadian craft organization, free from the “dead albatross” of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild.<sup>59</sup>

While Rockman, Chambers and Aarons condemned the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, long-time Guild members opposed their views by writing a number of Guild histories which highlighted the important role the Guild had played in Canadian craft. Adelaide Marriott wrote a history of the Canadian Guild of Handicrafts, published in the Guild’s journal, stressing the importance of retail sales to the survival of the Guild as well as many craftspeople. The contributions of the T. Eaton Company in providing retail space, the involvement of Floyd Chambers and Mr. Cole, the Canadian trade commissioner, in arranging the participation of the Guild in a 1939 international exhibition at Madison Square Gardens, New York, and the role of the American Craft Council’s America House in promoting Canadian crafts through exhibitions were

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<sup>58</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Richard Nice Trans. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984, 32.

<sup>59</sup> Aarons, “To the Professional,” Archives of Ontario, MU5782, Box 37, GA-GC2.

outlined by Marriott. She argued that while all of these initiatives were related to the goal of increasing sales, they also played a vigorous role in elevating the status of Canadian craft.<sup>60</sup> Both sides, it seems, could use the American Craft Council for validation.

Alice Lighthall's history, published for the Guild, was careful to mention the Guild's inspiration from the craft revival in Great Britain, and she noted the many disadvantaged groups, which had been assisted by the Guild's efforts. Beginning with Mary Phillips and Alice Pecks' initial desire to prevent the disappearance of "the country arts," Lighthall went on to praise the Indian and Eskimo Committee which intended to preserve what was left of the Indian arts "for the good of the People." Further, the Guild's series of "New Canadians Exhibitions" were started following World War Two in an effort to help "displaced persons who sought our shelter with only the skill of their hands as capital."<sup>61</sup>

The attempts by Marriott and Lighthall to inspire faith in the Guild by referring to its illustrious history were not completely successful. There remained difficulties in reconciling the founding and organization of the Guild by women perceived as "dilettantes" with the desire for professional membership. This was an issue of gender as much as class and education. Aileen Osborn Webb had overcome this potential problem by remaining the economic life-force of the American Craft Council, while allowing younger members to play an active role in the selection and promotion of crafts.

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<sup>60</sup> Adelaide Marriott, *History: the Canadian Guild of Crafts*. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3 – CK7. Marriott also noted the Guild's involvement in other international exhibitions, such as the 1937 international exhibition of Arts, Crafts and Sciences in Paris, where the Guild worked on the display in cooperation with Dr. Marius Barbeau.

<sup>61</sup> Alice Lighthall, *The Canadian Handicrafts Guild: A History*, May 1966. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3 - CK7.



Although there was reverence for Marriott and Lighthall, long-time administrators and supporters of the Guild, they were not considered to be key players in the emerging debates over professionalism. The new women who were occupying leadership roles in the Canadian craft scene, such as McCullough and Aarons, were promoting themselves as career women, therefore lifting the crafts out of the domestic realm and forcing the education of craftspeople into the public sphere. Oscar Beriau's romantic vision of women teaching their children the domestic arts of spinning and weaving by the hearth was simply no longer applicable.

The attacks on the Guild by the "rebellious" and "youthful" members of the Canadian Council for the Environmental Arts were considered to be attacks on the disadvantaged and amateur craftspeople who had been most benefited by the Guild's programme. Indeed, craft practices perceived as outside the classification of fine art were not part of the new council's agenda. Rockman's name and the general agreement to widen the parameters of craft led directly back into the hierarchy of traditional art, a categorization dependent upon the tastes of many non-practicing art administrators. However, the mandate of the Council reflected a concern with exclusion, despite the strong push for professionalization. Item six stated that it was "necessary to clear up the existing confusion between the professional designer and the hobbyist" while item nine reminded members that "attention and assistance be directed towards the ethnic minorities, including new comers to Canada, to improve production and prevent the debasing of skills and exploitation."<sup>62</sup> Prior to the Winnipeg meeting the Guild had made

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<sup>62</sup> Report 4 March 1965, *The Formation of a National Association of Craftsmen*. National Archives of Canada, MG28I222, Volume 1.

an effort to distill its history while indicating their readiness for modernization and change. An article published in the *Junior League Magazine* reached North American audiences with the message that:

The Canadian Handicrafts Guild...is in a reorganizing period. Its function and operation are being re-translated in the light of today's opportunities and needs. There is tremendous ferment in the field of crafts today, which must be directed, particularly in the matter of standards.<sup>63</sup>

As the election of Norah McCullough in New York and the agreement to form a new craft organization in Winnipeg demonstrated, the Guild's message had come too late, at least for the immediate future.

Following the Winnipeg meeting, the new organization undertook the momentous task of uniting Canada's craftspeople, designers, and architects. The executive committee consisted of Norah McCullough as chair, Françoise Brais as vice-chair, and George Shaw as secretary-treasurer. In Burnham's official report on the conference he offered his sympathy to this group, stating that "the problems faced by this executive council are of the greatest magnitude."<sup>64</sup> Based in Regina, considered to be outside the dominant Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal power base of Central Canada, the group held greater appeal in the west than the Guild, but soon the official address was moved to Ottawa in the hopes of securing government funding. By the summer of 1965 it was becoming obvious to the executive that they could not retain the name Canadian Council for the Environmental Arts and receive funding from the Department of the Secretary of State, which felt that

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<sup>63</sup> Mrs. Cheeseborogh, "Canadian Handicrafts Guild - Past, Present and Future," *Junior League Magazine*, 1964. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3 - CK7.

<sup>64</sup> Harold B. Burnham, Report of the Winnipeg Conference, Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5750, Box 5, BU - BW2.

there were too many organizations with the terms “Canadian Council” in their title.<sup>65</sup> The executive committee began searching for a new name, aware that their choice had to embrace the goals set for the group at the Winnipeg conference:

The problem is that the word design does not translate into French. There has been some strong feeling about including words like “professional,” and excluding words like Guild, and we did not want to call it by a name too closely emulating the American one, the American Craftsmen’s Council.<sup>66</sup>

After a great deal of discussion among McCullough and the Association’s executive and lawyers, the group was re-named the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association, identifying the organization specifically with crafts, and thus abandoning Rockman’s desire to encompass a wider variety of arts. A further blow to the organization occurred when Norah McCullough resigned from the position of chair in order to curate a large exhibition of Canadian crafts she was starting to organize for the National Gallery of Canada during Centennial year.

George Shaw, the new chair of the Association, began to seek the approval of the Expo 67 Corporation to have his organization set the standards for crafts sold and exhibited at the World’s Fair. It was helpful that Sheila Stiven, a member of the new Association, was also on the Centennial Commission. Even more helpful was the Canadian Government’s eagerness to establish strong, unified cultural groups across the country in time for 1967. The Canadian Conference of the Arts had been established in

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<sup>65</sup> Norah McCullough, letter to Glen Lewis, University of British Columbia, August 26, 1965. National Archives of Canada, MG28I222, Volume 1, Canadian Craftsmen’s Association. McCullough writes “We would never get our charter through the Secretary of State office because it seems there are already too many organizations with “Canadian Council” linked in their terminology.”

<sup>66</sup> Norah McCullough, letter, to Alan E. Blakeney, lawyer, July 6, 1965. National Archives of Canada, MG28I222, Volume 1, Canadian Craftsmen’s Association.

January 1965 by the Secretary of State to generate ideas among the leading artists, directors and administrators for impressing international visitors. Funds were available through the Secretary of State, the Centennial Commission and the Canada Council to initiate cultural events, and the Canadian Craftsmen's Association had determined to professionalize the image of Canadian crafts and improve standards just in time for the international spotlight which would focus on Canada in 1967.<sup>67</sup>

Aileen Osborn Webb was busy with World Crafts Council commitments throughout 1965, including a world-wide tour with Margaret Patch during which they visited all Council representatives. Although not invited to the Winnipeg meeting in February, Webb returned to Canada in April as the keynote speaker at another major conference on the crafts, this time for the craftspeople of Ontario. Webb had been corresponding with several of the Canadian delegates to the First World Congress of Craftsmen, as well as Canadian craftspeople who had written to the American Craft Council and Webb for advice and guidance on issues they felt were important. Letters in the Canadian and American craft archives show that Webb was careful to send out many personalized replies to Canadian letters, many of which were concerned with the lack of formal educational opportunities in craft in Canada.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Hugo McPherson, "Culture Planning, Canadian Style," *Canadian Art*, 99/22, (September/October 1965) 42. McPherson asks "How well is Canadian art developing? Not well enough or fast enough to satisfy the Secretary of State, the Centennial Commission, or the Canada Council, all of whom hope that in 1967 Canada will impress international visitors as a vital, articulate, and forward-looking society."

<sup>68</sup> Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb, letter to Sherman Burbank, Victoria, February 7, 1966. National Archives of Canada, MG28I274, Volume 34, World Crafts Council. In reply to Burbank's question regarding the paucity of formal training in crafts in Canada Webb wrote, "This is because the crafts, themselves, are not understood by twentieth century people - their value or their cultural implications and any form of mass education is bound to be slow and costly."

Canadian craft administrators were also being approached regarding the problem of education, an issue that had been highlighted at the January 1965 meeting of the Canadian Conference of the Arts where the delegates unanimously agreed that new schools were needed, as well as funds to employ teachers who were leaders in their fields. Galt Durnfurd of the Quebec Branch of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild received a letter from Mary E. Black of Nova Scotia which read, "Of late I have been greatly concerned over the lack of a school in Canada for the training of our Canadian craftsmen, English speaking that is, as I understand there are handcraft schools for the French speaking student."<sup>69</sup> Taking up the banner, Anita Aarons condemned the education of Canadian craftspeople:

Miss Aarons feels the manner in which art is taught to teachers is the source of much of the problem...Miss Aarons points out that there are good schools in some parts of the United States, such as Rochester Craft School, Pratt, Cranbrook. "You are so close it should be simple to send teachers over there to experience new thinking."<sup>70</sup>

Aarons undertook to correct the lack of liaison between architects and craftspeople by designing a full colour *Allied Arts Catalogue*, which listed Canadian craftspeople capable of working on architectural projects, citing their backgrounds and qualifications and showing examples of their work. She received a \$9000 grant from the Canada Council for the project, which she promoted through the journal *Architecture Canada*. She made no apologies for the varying skills presented in the work of the artists

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<sup>69</sup> Mary E. Black, letter to Galt Durnfurd, Quebec branch, Canadian Handicrafts Guild, August 3, 1964. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3 - CK7.

<sup>70</sup> Lotta Dempsey, "Is past ruining present?" *Toronto Star*, 19 July 1966. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5772, Box 27, EK - EL3.

featured, stating “If it’s not good enough, all I can say is it’s the best Canada’s got.”<sup>71</sup>

Critics condemned the catalogue, including Robert Fulford who claimed that it was “...appalling. Again and again, on page after page, Mrs. [sic] Aarons presents us with art that is stillborn...you cannot examine it without winching.”<sup>72</sup> By fueling, through a succession of texts, the debate erupting from the quality of standards displayed by the work in the catalogue, Aarons had succeeded in highlighting the need for better education for Canadian craftspeople.

Mary Eileen (Muff) Hogg, a craft advisor at the Department of Education, Community Recreation Branch, Ontario, approached the problem of lack of education by organizing another craft conference less than three months after McCullough’s Winnipeg meeting. Muff Hogg had been with the Department of Education since 1949, when she was hired as a Home Weaving Service instructor and consultant, after she had completed a general crafts course at MacDonald College, McGill, taken a six-month apprenticeship at Karen Bulow’s weaving studio in Montreal, and practiced weaving at the Gaelic Foundation in Cape Breton. Muff Hogg had been instrumental in organizing weaving guilds throughout Ontario, helping to found the Ontario Handweavers and Spinners Guild in 1955, and the Ontario Rug Hookers Guild in 1960. She also was a member of the Ontario branch of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild.<sup>73</sup> Utilizing her connections to the

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<sup>71</sup> Lotta Dempsey, “The non-collaboration of artists and architects,” *Toronto Star*, 8 August 1966. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5772, Box 27, EK - EL3.

<sup>72</sup> Robert Fulford, “Some hard truths about public art,” *Toronto Star*, 7 February 1967. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5771, Box 26, EH2 - EJ.

<sup>73</sup> Flood, *Canadian Craft*, 278.

Department of Education and to William Davis, Minister of Education, Muff Hogg set about organizing the first Ontario Crafts Conference.

Ontario government officials were aware of the increasing popularity of crafts in Canada. The 1964 Province of Ontario Conference on the Arts attributed the rapid growth of interest and activity in the crafts to increased leisure time, the rising cost of consumer products, the press, new Canadians and a search for an understanding of Canada's past.<sup>74</sup> The debate over standards emerging within the Canadian Handicrafts Guild and the new Canadian Craftsmen's Association and the new interest in craft indicated to administrators and craftspeople the need for guidance in terms of good taste. The Ontario Crafts Conference took place at Geneva Park, Lake Couchiching from April 23 to April 25, 1965. The conference featured international speakers and an attendance of over one hundred delegates. The issues addressed were similar to those raised in Winnipeg; increasing standards and professionalizing craft within the province of Ontario. Press releases surrounding the conference focused on successful examples of craft promotion, primarily in Quebec:

In the province of Quebec, crafts today are a thriving industry. Twenty-two full-time salesmen travel extensively in Europe and Asia as well as North America, promoting crafts manufactured in Quebec...Quebec handicrafts have achieved first-rate status, highlighted by numerous exhibitions in Canada and abroad.<sup>75</sup>

Ontario's attempts in the 1940s to learn from such Quebec's craft leaders as Oscar Beriau were revisited at the Lake Couchiching conference, where Jacques Garnier, Gaetin

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<sup>74</sup> Report prepared for the Province of Ontario Conference on the Arts Meeting with Community Programmes Branch, Department of Education, March 20, 1964, Toronto. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5770, Box 25, DZ - EH.

<sup>75</sup> Province of Ontario Council for the Arts Press Release, April 10, 1965. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5770, Box 25, DZ - EH.

Beaudin and Bernard Chaudron, President of the Association professionnelle des artisans du Québec, were brought in as distinguished guests. William G. Davis, Minister of Education for Ontario, opened the conference by pledging provincial support for the crafts in his province. Alluding to the 1964 World Crafts Council meeting, Davis predicted that the conference could revive craftsmanship within Ontario, placing the province in the forefront of the international craft movement. Cyril Wood, the Director of the Craft Council of Great Britain, newly formed in 1964, was one of the two keynote speakers. Wood praised the government of Ontario for its interest in funding a craft organization, stating that “My government...gives nothing to the crafts. The word ‘craft’ has fallen into disrepute in my country. The situation here in Canada is happily much brighter and the arts and crafts are put together.”<sup>76</sup>

Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb’s visit to the conference had been well publicized, and in her keynote speech she, like Cyril Wood, praised the efforts of the Ontario government. In contrast to Wood, she offered to assist the Canadian delegates in establishing new craft programmes, and spoke of a day when national boundaries would be entirely permeable:

I want you to know how happy I am to have been asked to come to this conference. If there is anything that I or the American Craftsmen’s Council can do to help I hope that you will call on us. I think that Americans and Canadians should be able to come very much closer together from the point of view of the crafts than they are...I hope that some day we will all be brothers in the crafts and sisters in the crafts, rather than Canadians and Americans.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> *First Craft Conference Lake Couchiching* April 23 - 25, 1965. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5776, Box 31, EX2 - FA.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid



Following the lead of the Canadian Council for the Environmental Arts, the Lake Couchiching conference resulted in the formation of the Ontario Crafts Foundation. By November 1965 Davis had approved funds to begin investigating the formation of a specialized craft training centre, the central project of the Ontario Crafts Foundation.<sup>78</sup>

Webb and members of the American Craft Council had met informally with Canadian craftspeople and administrators prior to the conference to discuss strategies regarding improving public taste for crafts and better education for craftspeople.<sup>79</sup> A central issue in those talks, raised again by Webb in her keynote address, was the difficulty of customs duties, which she felt indicated the lack of support from both Federal governments. Webb's concerns over the difficulty of craft exchanges between Canada and the United States were addressed by the Canadian Craftsmen's Association. In November 1965 George Shaw prepared a brief to the federal government to request relief for artists from the federal sales and excise tax, requesting that the Department of National Revenue de-classify artists as small manufacturers, thereby relieving them of an eleven percent excise tax.<sup>80</sup>

McCullough's initial desire for wide membership within the Canadian Council for Environmental Arts had been replaced by an emphasis on professionalism and the raising of standards. Craft standards were important not for economic but for qualitative reasons,

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<sup>78</sup> The result of this project was the establishment of Sheridan College, specializing in craft education. See chapter four for a discussion of the College.

<sup>79</sup> Lois Moran, Personal Interview, 9 December 1999.

<sup>80</sup> George Shaw, *A Brief to Request Relief to Artists of Federal Sales and Excise Tax*, Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5782, Box 37, GA - GC2.

measured by international perceptions of excellence. The American Craft Council and now the Canadian Craftsmen's Association were in position to create a cultural hegemony of crafts recognized as part of high culture. This approach would also influence the hegemonic structures surrounding international craft production and consumption. Entry into this canon was dependent upon the producing structures in place, structures which were stratified along class, gender and race lines. McCullough's desire to unify all Canadian craftspeople whether professional or amateur, was in the spirit of the World Crafts Council; however, just as World Crafts Council members required the proper cultural, economic and symbolic capital to join, so too did members of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association.

A profound shift in Canadian craft ideology was signaled by the emphasis on professionalism which emerged during the formation of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association. The adoption of this professional approach by the Canadian Guild of Crafts, a group suffering from accusations of being "an organization made up of old fogey Sunday dilettante do-gooders," reinforced the importance of these new sensibilities.<sup>81</sup> With the assistance and approval of American "experts," the Centennial celebrations of 1967 provided the opportunity to translate these national ideals onto the international stage.

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<sup>81</sup> Jack Sures, Chair, Canadian Craftsmen's Association, letter to Herman Voaden, Chair, Canadian Guild of Crafts, January 7, 1969, York University Library, Herman Voaden Fonds, 1982-019/013, File 8.

### CHAPTER THREE: 1967: A CENTENNIAL YEAR OF CRAFT (S) IN CANADA

Expo 67 provided a prestigious international stage upon which to introduce the professional Canadian craft artist, as well as an opportunity for the Canadian Craftsmen's Association to implement the standards it had so recently set. It was also the "jewel in the crown" for a year of craft activities. Key players in Canada's craft scene took charge of the exhibitions and conferences funded for the Centennial year, with American craft "experts" often relied upon to guide and judge Canadian crafts. This chapter will discuss how a relatively small group of administrators and craftspeople, heavily influenced by American ideologies, were able to present their tastes and standards in Canadian crafts to the world. Several events of 1967 will provide the boundaries for the chapter, all demonstrating the hope that an identifiable national culture would emerge through Canadian craft. These events include the *Canadian Fine Crafts* exhibition in the Canadian Pavilion at Expo 67, the Kingston Conference held by the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, the Canadian Guild of Crafts exhibition *Crafts Canada*, 21 June to 24 August 1967, and the National Gallery of Canada's *Canadian Fine Crafts*.

Important to this discussion will be the position occupied by Aboriginal craftspeople, who elected to exhibit their work in a separate venue at Expo 67. They had seldom been included in national craft exhibitions, although historical and anonymous examples of traditional crafts were often utilized to represent all Native craft production, and this exclusionary practice continued in 1967. An examination of the emergence of Native craft organizations, administrators and professional artists will be undertaken in

order to further explore the framework in which the professionalization of Euro-Canadian craftspeople developed during the period.

Critics, curators and craftspeople recognized the opportunities for funding and international exposure available for crafts during Canada's centennial year. The new professionalized status of Canadian craft, along with the ability of craftspeople to provide objects equal to those of the other fine arts, was promoted in articles published in both popular and specialized craft and art journals. It was believed that these crafts could properly represent a mature, visually progressive Canada. Dorothy Todd Hénaut's article "1967 - The Moment of Truth for Canadian Crafts" offered praise for the excellence of crafts, the "unknown arts of Canada" which had in her opinion evolved "in the last five to ten years, but particularly in the last two or three" from "hobby puttering" to fine works of art.<sup>1</sup> Hénaut questioned why distinctions between the commercial artist, the Sunday painter and the serious artist were established in the fine arts and not in the world of crafts, and urged craftspeople to take advantage of Centennial exhibitions to distinguish their professional work from that of the hobbyist. She criticized the "inadequate Canadian education in the crafts" and encouraged craftspeople to continue expanding their boundaries and awareness of international craft achievements by traveling and studying abroad. Hénaut's article was published in the journal *Arts/Canada* and reached a wide audience. Through this exposure, craftspeople hoped that the professional crafts would come to be accepted as equal partners within the Canadian fine arts community.

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<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Todd Hénaut, "1967 - The Moment of Truth for Canadian Crafts," *Arts/Canada*, 24/104 (January 1967): 20 - 22.

Other journals for the fine arts also encouraged coverage of the crafts. *Canadian Art* began a short-lived special section named after the Expo 67 and National Gallery exhibitions *Canadian Fine Crafts*, the purpose of which was to “encourage true excellence, and...improved standards.”<sup>2</sup> Art critics, including Yves Robillard of *La Presse*, began covering the 1967 craft exhibitions as fine art events, and international magazines like *Time* published reviews of national craft shows. Government funded exhibitions including *Perspective 67*, July to September 1967, and the visual arts displays in the Canada Pavilion at Expo 67 began including the crafts as one category of the diverse fine arts. Anita Aarons, the Allied Arts critic for *Architecture Canada* wrote columns focusing on the international crafts of Expo 67 in order to encourage Canadians to learn from their example. Craftspeople and supporters were excited by this new exposure. “Across Canada, the star for crafts is in the ascendant,” wrote Moncrieff Williamson,<sup>3</sup> curator of the Expo 67 craft exhibition.<sup>3</sup> What all of the reviews, articles and craft advocates agreed upon, however, was the importance of maintaining the push for high standards and a professional image that had been the focus of Canada’s new craft organizations and the legacy of the American Craft Council.

During a May 1966 panel discussion titled “Canadian Souvenirs and Giftware - how can we improve design and quality?” Merton Chambers criticized the poor taste of Canadiana souvenirs being created and sold for the mass-market. The seminar was part of the increased interest in ensuring Canadian crafts of sufficient quality were ready for

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<sup>2</sup> “Canadian Fine Crafts 1967,” *Canadian Art*. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5769, Box 24, DQ 3 - D4.

<sup>3</sup> Moncrieff Williamson, “Escalation in Canadian Crafts,” *The Craftsman/L'Artisan*, June 1966. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5782, Box 37, GA - GC2.

marketing in Canada's centennial year. The discussion, held at the Design Centre in Toronto, quickly broke down into debates concerning the issues of education and taste which had dominated the formation of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association. Worried about the production and importation of bad designs, Chambers and Anita Aarons called for the improvement of public taste. Canadian consumers, the panel argued, were adversely affected by the influx of public and broadcast programs from the United States which militated against the formation of an independent, national craft identity. Aarons further blamed the inability of Canadian designers to create identifiable and elegant craft souvenirs on the confusion created by having to seek financial support from either the Canada Council or private American investors. Formal education, Chambers and Aarons argued, was the only solution. Harold Patton, Retail Sales Manager for Simpson-Sears disagreed with the Canadian Craftsmen's Association members, warning that the loss of the apprenticeship system and the authority granted by a degree would result in a small group of craftspeople locked into an "ivory tower," unaware of the importance of industrial orientation and the need for a solid grounding in basic market realities.<sup>4</sup>

In an effort to boost the image of Canadian craft from souvenir to art, the Expo 67 craft exhibition *Canadian Fine Crafts* was juried by a single individual, Moncrieff Williamson. Williamson was a major figure in the Canadian cultural field, having been a curator at the Art Gallery of Victoria, and Director of the Glenbow in Calgary, before taking up the position in 1964 of Director of the new Confederation Centre Art Gallery in

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<sup>4</sup> Panel Discussion at Design Centre May 11, 1966, *Canadian Souvenirs and Giftware - how can we improve design and quality?* Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10 - CL6.

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. He had attended the founding meeting of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association in Winnipeg, where he was introduced to Jean-Claude Delorme, Secretary-General of Expo 67. In a March 1966 letter to George Shaw, Acting Chairman of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, Delorme named Moncrieff Williamson the Crafts Selection Commissioner General to the Canadian Government Pavilion, charging him with sole responsibility for creating the fine craft exhibition. This appointment gave Williamson tremendous authority and increased symbolic capital in the field of craft. He was involved in several of the Centennial exhibitions, acting as a curator for the Quebec branch of the Canadian Guild of Crafts exhibition *Canada Crafts* and was the official who opened the National Gallery of Canada's *Canadian Fine Craft* exhibition.

Born in Scotland in 1915 to an aristocratic family, Williamson's cultural capital had been well established prior to the Centennial year. He received his education from the Edinburgh College of Art and during World War Two undertook secret Foreign Office assignments in Europe. His travels and war experiences made him popular among elite circles, where his economic, cultural and symbolic capitals combined to make him of great interest. He was part of the post-war London art world, where he met and married "a rich Pennsylvanian beauty," and together they returned to the United States.<sup>5</sup> After the marriage ended, Williamson moved to Canada where he began his work in Canadian art institutions.<sup>6</sup> He was credited by Mavor Moore as being an art gallery revolutionary after

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<sup>5</sup> Mavor Moore, "Lives Lived: Moncrieff Williamson," *Globe and Mail*, 2 September 1996. National Gallery of Canada Archives, DOC/CLWT Williamson, Moncrieff 1915 - 1996.

<sup>6</sup> During Williamson's directorship at the Confederation Centre in Charlottetown he became known for his work on the painter Robert Harris and his painting "Fathers of Confederation."

his presentation, "The New Museums and Art Galleries: 1967 and after," at the 1965 Canadian Conference of the Arts in Ste. Adele, Quebec. Another of Williamson's interests was the craft of the Maritime region, which he wished to see professionalized, commenting in 1972 that he was "delighted to see the great improvement of serious, as opposed to gimmicky crafts, even at the hobby level."<sup>7</sup> Williamson became involved with Norah McCullough, Sheila Stiven and other members of the newly formed Canadian Craftsmen's Association, whose aims of fine craft he supported. It was Williamson's wish to set up a gallery for Canadian crafts at the Confederation Centre, and he undertook to collect work for *Canadian Fine Crafts* to be used as the foundation of this new gallery. By August 1967, he had succeeded in purchasing \$10,000 of crafts from the Canadian Pavilion at Expo for the Confederation Art Gallery.<sup>8</sup>

*Canadian Fine Crafts* was conceived of as an independent show, held in a shared gallery space in the Canadian Government Pavilion, along with exhibitions of paintings, graphics, sculpture, photography and architecture. While some critics expressed surprise at the inclusion of crafts in the art gallery setting at Expo 67, the exhibition was praised for containing crafts of "sufficiently high quality to rank as art."<sup>9</sup> *Canadian Fine Crafts* was not the only 1967 exhibition to feature crafts alongside other fine arts. The Art Gallery of Ontario's *Perspective '67* which ran from July to September 1967, exhibited the fine crafts, painting, sculpture and graphic arts of Canadians between the ages of

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<sup>7</sup> "Vast Change Noted in Island Handcrafts," *Charlottetown Guardian*, 16 May 1972. National Gallery of Canada Archives, DOC/CLWT Williamson, Moncrieff 1915 - 1996.

<sup>8</sup> Norah McCullough, "Report to Craftsmen," *Memo for World Crafts Council Newsletter*, August 31, 1967. National Archives of Canada MG28I274, Volume 33, World Crafts Council.

<sup>9</sup> "Expo a Storehouse of World's Treasure," *The Montreal Star*, 28 April 1967: 66. Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library Archive, folio 909.82607E88, Expo 67.



eighteen and thirty-five. Hénaut credited the inclusion of fine crafts with fine art as indicating “the rapid evolution in attitude towards crafts.”<sup>10</sup> Williamson was also the juror for the fine crafts at the exhibition *Perspective '67*, held at the Art Gallery of Ontario from 7 July – 7 August 1967 and sponsored by the Centennial Commission which provided \$32,000 in awards, with \$8000 split between the four classes of work.<sup>11</sup> Williamson’s choices for inclusion in the exhibition, as well as the winners of the top prizes were a direct reflection of his selections for Expo ‘67’s *Canadian Fine Crafts*, and reiterated Williamson’s attitude toward contemporary Canadian crafts.

An illustrated catalogue featuring a long essay by Williamson was published for the Expo 67 *Canadian Fine Crafts* exhibition. Williamson highlighted the debates that faced Canadian craft. Pleasing the advocates for traditional as well as conceptual craft, he critiqued the dangers of the variability of taste found in mass production. Although many craftspeople still embraced the “time-proven concept of form dictated by function,” he argued that the ease of industrial production necessitated the development of an audience appreciative of the conceptual in craft:

If to a great extent function and form are more associated in our minds with industrial design, function and form still dominate the philosophy of craftsmanship. If the purpose is to please and serve no useful purpose beyond the enjoyment of contemplation, then works within this category are equally valid and we must find in them excellence in workmanship and originality of imagination.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Hénaut, “The Moment of Truth,” 22.

<sup>11</sup> The recipients of the Fine Crafts awards were Ed Drahanuk, Calgary \$1000 (Ceramics), Charlotte Lindgren, Halifax \$3000 (Tapestry), Anne Pare, Quebec \$1000 (Tapestry), Walter Schlupe, Montreal \$3000 (Metal). Charlotte Lindgren and Anne Pare were the only women who received awards in the “Perspective ‘67” exhibition. Barrie Hale, “Perspective ‘67 opens at AGO,” *The Telegram*, 8 July 1967. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5773, Box 28, EL4 - EO.

<sup>12</sup> Moncrieff Williamson, *Canadian Fine Crafts*, (Ottawa: Queen’s Printers, 1967), 4. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, T-1015 Collection of Miscellaneous Material on Expo 67.

Paralleling the arguments made in Williamson's catalogue essay, the exhibition was comprised of works of both traditional and fine crafts. The bright, open spaces of the art gallery, divided by white walls and glass displays, allowed the pieces to be exhibited following the conventions of fine art displays. Williamson praised particular craftspeople for their ability to shift away from function, including Nova Scotia's Charlotte Lindgren whose weavings were installed as sculpture, and Alberta's Ed Drahanchuck whose pottery forms operated as free standing sculpture. Williamson was philosophical about the ability to isolate a Canadian "style" in craft, concluding that "the universality of international style of many objects merely stresses the Canadian craftsmen's awareness of what is best in international crafts design."<sup>13</sup> What was the difference, wondered Williamson, between Canadian identity and "just plain North American?" He acknowledged Canada's acceptance of the universality of American forms and styles, noting that the close analogy between craft development in Canada and the United States made "such a question...almost unanswerable."<sup>14</sup> Whether true or false, Williamson's opinions seemed grounded in reality: both American and Canadian craft councils demonstrated tremendous interest toward the *Canadian Fine Crafts* exhibition. Contemporary crafts were not included in the United States pavilion at Expo 67, and Aileen Osborn Webb relied upon Norah McCullough, Canada's representative to the World Crafts Council, to inform her of the role fine crafts of Canada were to play in the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 6.

Canadian pavilion, requesting information on Moncrieff Williamson, as well as a list of the craftspeople showing at Expo.<sup>15</sup>

The craftspeople selected by Williamson typified a particular cross-section of practitioners. While the exhibition presented both traditional and contemporary approaches to craft, the biographical background of the artists and consultants indicates that it was a group of like-minded professionals who contributed to the show, something Williamson recognized in his essay. Merton Chambers, George Shaw, Sheila Stiven and Norah McCullough were acknowledged for their “professional advice,” while Canadian Craftsmen’s Association members Anita Aarons, Merton Chambers, and Jack Sures were exhibitors. Over seventy-five percent of the 120 exhibitors had received professional training, with many of the craftspeople complementing their Canadian education with art school or apprenticeship in the United States and Europe.<sup>16</sup> Williamson was careful to make his essay inclusive, acknowledging the influence of France on the advanced contemporary standards of Quebec’s craft training as well as the “mosaic of imported European styles” so important throughout Canada. In an effort to avoid creating a binary between the urban and rural participants, he noted the role of rural craftspeople as equal to the professionals operating in the urban centres. The exhibition provided fair geographic representation for artists across Canada although there were a remarkably low

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<sup>15</sup> Aileen Osborn Webb, letter to Norah McCullough, December 20, 1966. National Archives of Canada, MG28I274, Volume 33, World Crafts Council. The United States pavilion at Expo 67 featured abstract American painting and traditional folk arts.

<sup>16</sup> Williamson, *Canadian Fine Crafts*. The catalogue contained biographical information on the artists, including their place of birth and locations of formal training. Of the 120 exhibitors, 95 (79%) had received professional craft education. Of those with professional training, 79% had received their education in Canada, with 27% of those educated in Canada receiving their training in Quebec. A further 32% had attended school or apprenticed overseas (mainly Europe), while 19% had attended a craft school in the United States.

number of craftspeople from the Maritimes. Williamson's later views that the Maritimes were slowly emerging from a history of hobby craft production may have influenced his selection. Neither Williamson nor the exhibition acknowledged the counterculture craft being produced in Canada's West, where self-reflexive craft production was opening the paradigms of Williamson's classification of craft as it was being developed. Artists like Evelyn Roth, who installed a crocheted videotape canopy over the Vancouver Art Gallery and Glenn Lewis, who exhibited porcelain penises, were introducing a new set of conceptual standards for craft.<sup>17</sup>

Craft objects and occasionally craftspeople demonstrating their skills were popular in certain pavilions at Expo 67, where the theme of "Man and His World" required the universality of craft to provide cultural links. The emphasis on technology and the machine during Expo 67 contrasted with much of the craft production that was exhibited and sold. Williamson's catalogue essay romanticized the craftspeople's independence from the machine, falsely referring to William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement as "alien" to the machine, stating that resistance to machines was an essential component in craft production: "His resistance is inherent through the very individuality of crafts production."<sup>18</sup> In contrast to the anti-machine ethics of Morris, Williamson alluded to Quebec's industrial design interests. Quebec craftspeople were well represented in the Quebec pavilion where their large-scale architectural crafts embodied the professional image that Anita Aarons had been advocating. Traditional

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<sup>17</sup> Paula Gustafson, "Mapping the Terrain," *Made By Hand* (Vancouver: Crafts Association of British Columbia, 1998), 18.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

Quebec crafts were sold at the Artisanat du Québec outlet located in Expo's "Le Village" area where a host of Quebec-based craft, food and entertainment were featured. (Figure 12) The professionalism of Quebec's craftspeople was apparent as well in the *Canadian Fine Crafts* show that showcased Maurice Savoie's large ceramic mural and a tapestry by Mariette Vermette. Vermette had achieved fame in the craft world when she was commissioned to create a curtain for the Metropolitan Opera House in New York as a gift from the Canadian government.<sup>19</sup>

The architectural use of crafts had been increasing during the Centennial year, due to the 1965 commitment of the federal government to spend one percent of public building fees on art, and influenced by a campaign by *Canadian Architecture's* Allied Arts editor, Anita Aarons. In addition to Savoie and Vermette, Merton Chambers was producing large ceramic murals and planters, Jordi Bonet had been granted a \$50,000 commission to create a fifty-two by sixteen foot fibre mural for Olympia Square, Toronto, and Grace S. Varr had received \$14,500 for a woven tapestry. The review of these large-scale craft pieces in *SW Magazine* concluded that the "price difference between the hackneyed souvenir and gift products" and these urban-based pieces signified an "exciting breakthrough for Canada's artist-designers."<sup>20</sup> The issues of class and ethnicity in the "coming of age" of Canadian crafts were secondary to the excitement generated by the ability of professional craftspeople to be considered key elements in architectural and fine arts projects.

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<sup>19</sup> Michael Ballantyne, *Expo 67 Art*, Montreal: Tundra Books, 1967, 51.

<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Kimball, "The Company of Young Craftsmen," *SW Magazine*, July 1, 1967. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5771, Box 26, EH2 - EJ.

Aarons' March 1967 exhibition *Crafts for Architecture* paid tribute to the potential relationships between architects and craftspeople. Sponsored by the University of Toronto's School of Architecture, the Ontario Crafts Foundation and *Architecture Canada*, *Crafts for Architecture* was a showcase for Aaron's ideology of professionalism. The concepts of professionalism and potential relationships between craft and architecture were demonstrated by a collection of hangings, tapestries, stained glass, batiks, metal and experimental ceramics designed for use by architects and Merton Chamber's "psychological walls" that encouraged interactive viewing for visitors. In her review of the exhibition, Aarons claimed that the craft objects she had selected and the craftspeople who were highlighted met the challenge of adapting craft materials for contemporary architecture by "shak[ing] off sentimental ties of "lost traditions" and [becoming] true innovators of contemporary imagery with new materials."<sup>21</sup> Aarons' exhibition was successful, attracting over four hundred visitors a day, with two hundred and fifty architects and craftspeople meeting for the opening. Students from the Ontario College of Art were brought in for the exhibition which encouraged a conceptual approach to craft or "architectural clothing" as Aarons called the pieces.<sup>22</sup>

While Aarons' exhibition was relatively small in comparison to the national craft shows held during Centennial year, her strong opinions on the need for craftspeople to create work that was suitable for architectural use garnered attention. She advocated the

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<sup>21</sup> Anita Aarons, "Three Reviews," *Architecture Canada* 498, 44/3 (March 1967) 24.

<sup>22</sup> Suzanne Morrison, "These handicrafts are designed," *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1967. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5771, Box 26, EH2 - EJ.

use of suitable materials, a contemporary aesthetic and a professional, business-like approach to commissions and deadlines through her regular column in *Architecture Canada* and her role in organizing, along with Merton Chambers and Sheila Stiven, the first national craft conference which was held in Kingston, Ontario in August 1967. Anita Aarons took advantage of the international audience to embarrass Canadian craft administrators over the lack of proper education for craftspeople in Canada. In a panel session on “Twentieth Century Education for a Twentieth Century Environment,” she called for a complete revision of craft education in Canada in an effort to guarantee originality and an environment conducive to professional, not amateur work, claiming that “the current state of instruction in the arts produces only copyists and is to be deplored.”<sup>23</sup>

The Canadian Craftsmen’s Association undertook to unite Canadians with international craftspeople and speakers in Kingston, Ontario from 6 – 11 August 1967. The conference, known as “The Kingston Conference,” was timed to correspond with Expo 67 and following the event visitors were bused to Montreal to view the World’s Fair. Canadian Craftsmen’s Association publications indicate that the conference was undertaken in an effort to solidify the professional identity and image of the Association. The conference invitation made clear the goal of the event and the association:

The Canadian Craftsmen’s Association/Association des artisans du Canada will become, in its first national conference, a symbol of the ultimate level of maturity - organized professionalism. A perceptive few are taking steps alongside international craftsmen to oblige recognition

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<sup>23</sup> Report on the Kingston Craftsmen’s Conference, Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5782, Box 37, GA - GC2.

of their professional products.<sup>24</sup>

The keynote speaker for this carefully organized, internationally focused conference was an old friend, Aileen Osborn Webb. Her presence in Kingston was celebrated in the promotional literature for the gathering and in the press reports which ensued. "The presence of the international craft leader Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb," wrote the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, "is sure to create considerable interest in the conference."<sup>25</sup> Speaking from a position of authority she had already garnered in Canada from her earlier interventions, she encouraged the further development of art content in the crafts. Webb claimed that professional craftspeople were no different from artists: "the best work of the best craftsman is very definitely the work of highly developed artists."<sup>26</sup>

The Association received funding from a wide range of sources, including the Canada Council, the Ontario Council for the Arts and the Saskatchewan Arts Board, to bring in a roster of international craftspeople and speakers.<sup>27</sup> One hundred and twenty-eight delegates from across Canada as well as the United States and England attended. In an effort to make the conference truly national, Canadians living outside of Ontario were encouraged to attend by partial reimbursements of travel expenses provided by the

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<sup>24</sup> Canadian Craftsmen's Association, *The Kingston Conference August 6 - 11, 1967* pamphlet. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5750, Box 5, BU - BW.

<sup>25</sup> *Canadian Craftsmen's Association Newsletter*, May 1967. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU 5782, Box 37, GA-GC2.

<sup>26</sup> Press Release, Canadian Craftsmen's Association, August 27, 1967. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5770, Box 25, EZ-EH.

<sup>27</sup> These included: Jacques Anquetil, Director of La Maison des métiers d'art Français, Paris; Arthur Hald, President of the Swedish Society for Arts and Crafts; Anton Nilsen, Representative for Per Tannum PLUS craft cooperative of Denmark; Wendell Castle, a woodworker and instructor from Rochester, New York; Peter Collingwood, a production studio weaver from Colchester, England; Willem Heisen, a glass blower from the Netherlands; Freda Koblick from London's Royal College of Art; Anthony Laws, Director of



Canada Council. It was an effective strategy, with over fifty percent of delegates arriving from outside Ontario. International visitors were met and escorted to Kingston by members of the Association professionnelle des artisans du Québec who supported the conference.

The strong presence of professional craftspeople from the United States in the media sessions of the conference, and the symbolic presence of Aileen Osborn Webb, indicated to the conferees the importance of American ideologies in the craft world. The increasingly self-reflexive approach of the American craft demonstrators who advocated self-expression in addition to technical virtuosity was greeted positively by the Canadian delegates and organizers. This perspective was also embraced by the news coverage provided by the World News Agency which sent brief daily bulletins to newspapers in participating countries. The image of professionalism attained by such international coverage and the attendance of craftspeople from the United States, England, Sweden, and France, reinforced the Canadian Craftsmen's Association's position as the official organization for Canadian craftspeople. Their role as the purveyor of craft standards and good taste in craft which had begun with their involvement in craft selection for Expo '67, increased in the view of the federal and provincial government representatives who were associated with the Kingston conference. Attending the conference was Norah McCullough who had resigned from her position as the chair of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association in order to organize the largest of all the Centennial craft exhibitions, the National Gallery of Canada's *Canadian Fine Crafts*.

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Silver Workshops, Limited, London, England; John Prip a studio and industrial metal designer from Providence, Rhode Island; and Paul Soldner, a studio potter from Aspen, Colorado.

Norah McCullough was the National Gallery's Western Liaison officer, and in 1965 began curating a national craft exhibition intended to coincide with Canada's centennial year, although it actually opened in December 1966. McCullough admired Donald Buchanan's approach to the crafts which he had brought to such National Gallery of Art exhibitions as *Canadian Designs for Everyday Living* (1948) and *Canadian Fine Crafts* (1957). McCullough praised Buchanan's understanding of the "desirability of good design in the things used in everyday life: from pots and pans to furniture, fabrics, lighting fixtures and so on."<sup>28</sup> Buchanan had provided the mandate for the exhibition of crafts in the National Gallery of Canada, and McCullough's *Canadian Fine Crafts*, which, like the Expo 67 exhibition, employed Buchanan's title, intended to further the role of crafts within a fine art institution.

The professional approach taken by McCullough to *Canadian Fine Crafts* marked an important first for craft exhibitions. As it had failed to do for previous shows, the National Gallery of Canada provided McCullough with the funding and time to create a national showcase for Canadian craft. Buchanan had been critical of the lack of care taken with the craft exhibitions of the 1940s and 1950s which he believed reflected a lack of concern with the important place craftspeople occupied in Canadian culture.

McCullough was sure to provide the detail and care expected in a fine art exhibition, and she received praise from members of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association for these efforts. (Figure 13) Merton Chambers and Anita Aarons thanked McCullough on behalf of "our professional group," expressing the hope that *Canadian Fine Craft* would serve to

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<sup>28</sup> Norah McCullough, letter to Joan Slebbin, Southern Alberta Gallery, Lethbridge, September 31, 1980. National Gallery of Canada Archives. Buchanan, Donald William, DOC/CLWT.

elevate the status of Canadian craft by ensuring that it embraced the “proper” audience, those with the cultural and economic capital to become the patrons for Canadian craft: “By directing it to higher ups and others we also hope to eliminate the attitudes that crafts are minor, abundant and not worthy of sufficient planning ahead of time. Your efforts here and frustrations are well appreciated.”<sup>29</sup> These same members were critical of Moncrieff Williamson’s less rigorous approach to the Expo ‘67 *Canadian Fine Crafts* exhibition which was running late and “engendering some nasty comments from many sources.”

After its initial opening at the National Gallery of Canada in December 1966, *Canadian Fine Crafts* was designed to travel the country, transported in specially commissioned display stands doubling as travel cases designed by John MacGillivray.<sup>30</sup> Norah McCullough wanted to ensure that the exhibit would travel in order to give the craftspeople from across Canada, as well as people living outside Ontario, the opportunity to see their pieces in the exhibition. In her role as Western Liaison for the National Gallery of Canada McCullough was aware of the importance of integrating rural audiences and artists into the Canadian cultural scene. Her interest in bridging the gap between Central Canada and the Maritimes, the Prairies and the West began with her work for the Saskatchewan Arts Board. During her time in Regina she organized the professional art pottery at Fort Qu’Appelle, Saskatchewan where today David Ross continues to bring international recognition to a small community. Her work with the

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<sup>29</sup> Anita Aarons and Merton Chambers, letter to Norah McCullough, January 13, 1966. National Gallery of Canada Archives, 12-4-296, Volume 3, Canadian Fine Crafts.

<sup>30</sup> Norah McCullough, *Biographical Notes*, 1967 Exhibition. National Archives of Canada, MG30D317, McCullough, Norah and Family. MacGillivray was the Director of the Edmonton Art Gallery who had coordinated the 1964 traveling exhibition *American Ceramics*.

World Crafts Council convinced her of the ability of crafts to unite diverse populations, an ideology she brought to bear upon the Canadian Craftsmen's Council.

In preparation for the exhibition *Canadian Fine Crafts*, McCullough continued her hands-on approach to Canadian crafts, traveling across Canada to visit a diverse range of craftspeople; her voyage was described by *Time* magazine as “scour[ing] the country by plane, train and Volkswagen...logg[ing] 4000 miles [and] turning up 1000 items.”<sup>31</sup> Although McCullough was careful to stress the need for wide inclusion in the craft field and used the exhibition to introduce emerging craft artists, the majority of craftspeople she visited were professional, studio-based artists. Their work, with its strong aesthetic qualities and links to use, embodied the founding philosophy of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, which under its original name, the Canadian Council for the Environmental Arts, had promoted crafts related to all the various human environments. McCullough hoped that these craft objects, covering a broad range of approaches and environments from domestic use and decoration to architectural installation work and body decoration, would inspire viewers to begin pursuing an interest in craft: “In other words, this should not be simply a cold display of beautiful objects but one that is essentially didactic.”<sup>32</sup> Critics credited the exhibition with achieving its educational goals while proving that crafts formed an integral part of the fine arts. The *Ottawa Citizen* review gushed that “the showing should teach and challenge the thousands of individuals who have been pursuing one of the many crafts represented,” while *Time* magazine

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<sup>31</sup> “The Arts: Beauty by Design,” *Time*, (December 23, 1966). National Gallery of Canada Archives, McCullough, Norah, DOC/CLWT

<sup>32</sup> *Memo regarding the Exhibition of Canadian Fine Crafts*, National Gallery of Canada Archives, 12-4-296 Canadian Fine Crafts, Volume 10.

argued that “fine crafts have something artistic to say.”<sup>33</sup> (Figure 14) The diversity of craft objects on display was praised for providing the viewer with differing approaches to the idea of craft:

The 360 exhibits include sculpture-like pottery, enameled platters more suited for walls than for tables, rugs too fine to walk on, ashtrays in which only a boor would be so brash as to stub out a cigarette. Scarcely less striking because they are also useful, there are switched-on stoneware spice jars and tea bowls, applewood eggcups, an ornate silk bookmark -- even a pair of Eskimo snow goggles carved from bone, and a graceful Indian lacrosse stick.<sup>34</sup>

After McCullough’s initial selection of one thousand items had been completed, the National Gallery brought in a craft expert to help McCullough jury the final selection. Unlike Williamson who had been given complete authority over both the selection and curating, McCullough was required to work with a male judge, selected by the National Gallery, who possessed the proper symbolic capital. Daniel Rhodes, ceramist and professor of ceramics at Alfred University, agreed to serve as the juror for the exhibition.<sup>35</sup> The Gallery and the press promoted his involvement, believing that it would ensure a professional approach to the crafts. Rhodes was well known in North American

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<sup>33</sup> “Canadian crafts in panorama,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 December 1966, “The Arts: Beauty By Design,” *Time*, (December 23, 1966). National Gallery of Canada Archives, McCullough, Norah, DOC/CLWT.

<sup>34</sup> “Beauty By Design,” *Time*.

<sup>35</sup> Daniel Rhodes was heavily involved in the American Craftsmen’s Educational Council, the precursor of the American Craft Council, which established the School for American Craftsmen at Alfred University. Rhodes completed his MFA degree at the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred in 1943, and became a ceramics instructor at Alfred in 1947, where he taught until 1973. The American Craftsmen’s Educational Council ran the School for American Craftsmen at Alfred from 1946 to 1950, and although they were affiliated with Alfred University and not the New York State College of Ceramics, Rhodes was nonetheless involved in both organizations. From 1962-1963 Rhodes studied in Japan on a Fulbright Scholarship. *Daniel Rhodes 1911-1989*, Scholes Library, New York State College of Ceramics, Alfred, New York, prepared by Elizabeth Gulacsy, Art Librarian and Archivist, Melvin Herbert Bernstein, *Art and Design at Alfred: A Chronicle of a Ceramics College*, (Philadelphia: Art Alliance Press, 1986).

for his books on ceramics which espoused the view that artistic individuality and technical skill could be achieved simultaneously.<sup>36</sup>

Written material on the exhibition always acknowledged McCullough's key role in the show, in particular in texts by Hénaut who called McCullough a champion for the crafts in Canada. Nevertheless, Rhodes soon stole the spotlight as a leading authority on Canadian crafts. Jean Sutherland Boggs, the Director of the National Gallery of Canada, thanked Rhodes in her foreword to the *Canadian Fine Crafts* catalogue for his "wise guidance." McCullough herself wrote to Rhodes thanking him for his "sound guidance in selecting the crafts," while stating her gratitude for "clarifying my own judgment,"<sup>37</sup> but masked her resentment over the credit Rhodes had been granted for performing as a single juror. These feelings surfaced in an October 1966 memo to Jean-Paul Morrisset where she clarified that "As for the jurying please note that our notices state that Rhodes assisted in the jurying for I actually was his co-juror. In fact, he left almost all the weaving to me." The perceived need for Rhodes' symbolic capital in determining the objects for exhibition was echoed in the National Gallery of Canada's invitation to Moncrieff Williamson to open McCullough's exhibition in December 1966. While Williamson had an entire exhibition and catalogue in which to espouse his views on Canadian craft, Norah McCullough was rendered mute despite the central role she had taken in organizing the largest exhibition of Canadian crafts Canada had ever witnessed. Daniel Rhodes provided the assessment of the exhibition in his catalogue essay for the

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<sup>36</sup> Daniel Rhodes, *Clay and glazes for the potter* (New York: Greenberg, 1957), *Stoneware and porcelain: the art of high-fired pottery* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book, 1959).

<sup>37</sup> Jean Sutherland Boggs, "Foreword," *Canadian Fine Crafts*, 2, Norah McCullough, letter to Professor Daniel Rhodes, Alfred, New York, February 25, 1966, National Gallery of Canada Archives, 12-4-296, Volume 3, Canadian Fine Crafts.

National Gallery of Canada's *Canadian Fine Craft*, while McCullough remained silent. The woman who had been involved in the Canadian craft scene for over a decade, organizing Canada's first truly professional craft organization and serving as Canada's delegate to the World Crafts Council, was given no formal space in which to record her views on Canadian craft. While Aileen Osborn Webb possessed the economic capital to influence the American Craft Council's approach to crafts, Norah McCullough found that she did not possess adequate symbolic capital to influence the final decisions for her own exhibition, nor the cultural capital to be given the opportunity to write the catalogue entry for the show she had fought to create.

Rhodes' selection as the essayist for the *Canadian Fine Crafts* catalogue suggests his role was that of an American expert gazing upon the weaker Canadian craft scene. Just as Paul Smith of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York had been asked to curate an exhibition of Canadian crafts at the Royal Ontario Museum in the 1950s, and Paul Soldner and Wendell Castle had been invited from the United States to the Kingston conference to lead Canadian craftspeople in media sessions, Daniel Rhodes was expected to indicate what direction Canadian craftspeople should take to ensure that their craft production was able to match that of the United States. Instead, Rhodes provided a thoughtful essay on the state of craft in North America as a whole, an approach that delighted Canadian craftspeople who saw themselves as finally achieving a certain parity with their American peers. *Time* magazine reported Rhodes opinion that:

“Five years ago, the state of the art in Canada was relatively crude,” says Rhodes, who was appalled at the proliferation of clumsily whittled maple leaves and Leatherette wallets labeled SOUVENIR OF CANADA. “But the

difference between then and now is astounding.”<sup>38</sup>

In his essay Rhodes acknowledged the importance of craftspeople from various ethnic groups who continued traditions of design that were influencing contemporary craftspeople. He argued that more traditional examples of Indigenous craft had been selected over contemporary items due to the sureness of design found in the older work, “The Indians and Eskimos are generally on sure ground with respect to workmanship and function, but they are experiencing a diminishing conviction and clarity in their relationship to traditional design.”<sup>39</sup> While Rhodes did not judge this as a necessarily negative shift, he believed that the lack of continuation between contemporary pieces and traditional crafts resulted in work that did not possess a synthesis of method, material, function and meaning. Rhodes extended this critique of weak work that had difficulty transitioning from traditional craft to fine art to Euro-North American craftspeople. The Canadian examples he felt were the most successful were more modest and functional than the “unique, one-of-a-kind expressions, not much different in intent than the work of painters and sculptors.” Like Anita Aarons and other members of the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association he gave credit to the expanding and improving educational opportunities for craftspeople for the increase in sophisticated crafts. However, he seemed unaware of the discrepancies that existed between the educational institutions for craftspeople in the United States and Canada. Rhodes concluded his essay with a generalized statement about crafts in North America; he hoped they would enter into a

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<sup>38</sup> “Beauty by Design,” *Time*.

<sup>39</sup> Daniel Rhodes, “Introduction,” *Canadian Fine Crafts*, 4. National Gallery of Canada Archives, 12-4-296, Volume 3, Canadian Fine Crafts.



period where “technical sophistication can be made to sustain esthetic and social ends with more effectiveness.”

Although Rhodes was an American craftsman and academic, there is no record of objection to his role in jurying the National Gallery of Canada craft exhibition. Norah McCullough promoted Rhodes’ involvement to Bernard Chaudron, the president of the Association professionnelle des artisans du Québec, claiming that Rhodes’ experience and understanding of good design would benefit Canadian craft which needed the *Canadian Fine Craft* exhibition to raise the quality and diversity of production throughout Canada. Her letter to Chaudron was in response to his concern that the National Gallery of Canada was unwilling to purchase the work in the exhibition. Chaudron argued that by not purchasing the pieces in the show, the National Gallery was asking craftspeople to lose potential income on items that would be out of commission for several months.<sup>40</sup> This reflected the professional and businesslike approach embraced by many Quebec craftspeople who expected to earn a living from their production.

In this argument lay another separation between craftspeople and fine artists. Production craftspeople as opposed to artist craftspeople were particularly affected by the expectation that galleries need not compensate them for the loss of income an exhibition creates. This dichotomy continues today, with the result that many professional craftspeople are not exhibiting in major galleries and where curators are unsympathetic to the commercial requirements of objects they consider to fall under the mantle of fine art, isolated from business in the white cube of the gallery. These separations were evident

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<sup>40</sup> Bernard Chaudron, letter to Norah McCullough, National Gallery of Canada, January 20, 1966, Norah McCullough, letter to Bernard Chaudron, president, Association professionnelle des artisans du Québec, January 21, 1966. National Gallery of Canada Archives, 12-4-296, Volume 3, Canadian Fine Crafts.

earlier in the Royal Ontario Museum's 1945 *Design in Industry* exhibition where curators complained of the inclusion of prices in the labels of the exhibition. Moncreiff Williamson's Expo '67 craft exhibition did not include pricing as Williamson purchased the works for Charlottetown's Confederation Centre. Chaudron's letter led McCullough to follow Williamson's lead in securing a purchaser for the *Canadian Fine Craft* exhibition as a whole. By the summer of 1966 the Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of External Affairs had agreed to purchase one hundred and sixty items from ninety-three artists for \$6885.90.

Following their traveling exhibition across Canada, these craft pieces were to be exhibited in France at the opening of Journées Canadiennes in Annecy in September 1967, and later would be displayed in Canadian embassies around the world.<sup>41</sup> This agreement with the Department of External Affairs disproved Moncreiff Williamson's earlier declaration that his Expo '67 *Canadian Fine Craft* exhibition would be more international in scope than McCullough's efforts.<sup>42</sup> Just as she had been watching Williamson's Expo '67 show, Aileen Osborn Webb was keenly interested in the outcome of McCullough's exhibition. McCullough kept Webb informed of the development of *Canadian Fine Craft*, agreeing to meet with Webb, World Crafts Council chairman James Plaut and World Crafts Council secretary Margaret Patch in New York in September 1967 to provide a synopsis of the events of 1967 and the development of

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<sup>41</sup> Cultural Affairs Division, Department of External Affairs to Norah McCullough, National Gallery of Canada, August 17, 1966. National Gallery of Canada Archives, 12-4-296, Volume 7, Canadian Fine Crafts.

<sup>42</sup> Moncreiff Williamson, "Escalation in Canadian Crafts," *The Craftsman/L'Artisan*, June 1966, Canadian Handicrafts Guild. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5782, Box 37, GA - GC2.

Canadian craft.<sup>43</sup> Despite setting record attendance numbers, drawing purely positive reviews, and catching the attention of American craft administrators, *Canadian Fine Craft* was the last exhibition of Canadian craft sponsored by the National Gallery of Canada. McCullough retired from the Gallery in 1968 having been promised that a continuing series of “Norah McCullough” lectures devoted to craft topics would be held in her honour. Following a shift in administration in the early 1970s the lecture series was cancelled and has not been reinstated.

The reviews of *Canadian Fine Crafts* at the National Gallery of Canada consistently noted the sudden growth in the popularity of crafts in Canada and the increasing market for craft. The expectation that there would be a steady upsurge in leisure time available for craft activity and the focus on youth culture and the “back-to-the-land” possibilities of self-sufficient craft production may have contributed to the increasing attention craft received during Centennial year. Experts shared the opinion that technological innovations guaranteed more leisure time in the future, proclaiming “the two day work week, an annual wage of \$13,000 a year for the average family...all just around the corner, in the year 2000.”<sup>44</sup> Suddenly craft was “hip” for youth, a political tool for Aboriginal people, and an international source of creative recognition for Canada. The Canadian Guild of Crafts was aware of the importance of participating in the craft

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<sup>43</sup> Norah McCullough, letter to Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb, American Craftsmen’s Council, December 6, 1966, Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb, letter to Norah McCullough, National Gallery of Canada, September 7, 1967. National Archives of Canada, MG28I274, Volume 33, World Crafts Council. Aileen Osborn Webb sent McCullough a personal letter of congratulations following the opening of *Canadian Fine Crafts* crediting her with a “truly excellent” catalogue of the exhibition.

<sup>44</sup> “\$13,000 a year...for two days work,” *Globe and Mail*, 7 October 1966: i6. The article was reporting the results of a meeting of the Community Planning Association of Canada, where the efficiency of “automation, computers and atomic power” was credited with the ability to dramatically change life for North Americans.

fever of 1967, and the Quebec branch undertook its most ambitious exhibition ever, *Canada Crafts 1967*.

Staged at the Galerie des Artisans from June 21 to August 24, 1967, *Canada Crafts 1967* was designed to highlight the progressive nature of the Canadian Guild of Crafts. The exhibition grew out of the biennial national competitions traditionally held by the Guild. The 1967 show promised to “establish stringent standards of excellence” by offering generous cash prizes and a rigorous jurying process.<sup>45</sup> Some of the long-time Guild members complained that the presence of the jury prevented them from entering the show, while organizers argued that the increase in standards convinced professional craftspeople to participate in an exhibition they had previously considered to be dedicated to the hobbyist. In the end the Guild received 750 entries from across Canada. Of these, over two-hundred were selected for display, and twenty-seven prizes of “substantial value” were awarded, to a total of \$6000. The jury consisted of Moncrieff Williamson, Jacques de Tonnancour and Paul Smith.<sup>46</sup> Although *Canada Crafts 1967* operated to push the Guild into the arena of professional crafts in Canada, the aging organization had been unwilling to support the efforts of the Quebec branch, which overextended itself financially for the exhibition. The selection of the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association as the official Expo ‘67 craft organization led some to believe that the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association had usurped the Guild for Federal assistance for craft projects, and as a result the validity of the Guild as a national organization was questioned. The question “Should

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<sup>45</sup> Hénaut, “The Moment of Truth,” 22.

<sup>46</sup> Wilson Mellen, president, Canadian Guild of Crafts, Quebec branch, “Members Letter,” January 1968. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3 - CK7.

the Guild continue as a national organization?" was debated at the December 1967 National Committee Meeting, where members agreed that the various branches were no longer willing to contribute to national projects.<sup>47</sup> This marked a turning point within the Guild's national strategy which allowed the Ontario provincial branch to begin its ascendancy into national prominence.<sup>48</sup>

Williamson continued to increase his capital within the craft field by occupying the role of juror for *Canada Crafts 1967*, while Jacques de Tonnancour of the École des Beaux Arts provided a Quebec fine arts perspective on the jurying process. The Guild rounded out its jury with Paul Smith, the curator of the Museum for Contemporary Crafts in New York City. The Museum was a project of the American Craft Council, and Webb credited Smith with being a leader in identifying trends in contemporary crafts. Smith had previously refused an invitation from the Royal Ontario Museum to curate an exhibition on Canadian craft in 1955, but by Centennial year he agreed to participate in such a show. The Guild had selected three jurors who represented major elements within North American crafts. Along with Williamson who had become the "expert" for professional crafts, de Tonnancour provided ideas about craft that reflected Quebec's interest in industrial production and Continental European influences, while Smith

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<sup>47</sup> *Canadian Guild of Crafts National Committee Meeting Report*, December 5, 1967, 2. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Crafts, MU5750, Box 5, BU - BW.

<sup>48</sup> The Guild's shift toward contemporary fine crafts and professional craftspeople left some of its amateur members feeling marginalized. The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada celebrated the efforts of all Canadian craftspeople during Centennial year when they undertook to write the definitive book on Canadian craft. *A Heritage of Canadian Handicrafts* (Toronto, Montreal: McClelland and Stewart Ltd, 1967) examined the traditional crafts of Canada province by province, including objects made by Aboriginal craftspeople. Each chapter had been written by Institute members and betrayed their particular social position by relying on nostalgic references to the glories of traditional crafts which most often occupied an important role in rural Canada. Although the book did not analyze Canadian crafts, it did provide a good index of immigrant craft traditions.

brought to bear upon craft his modernist ideologies that had been cultivated through his involvement in the New York art scene.

The symbolic capital of American craftspeople and administrators played a key role during Canada's Centennial craft events, from Daniel Rhodes and Paul Smith to Aileen Osborn Webb's presence at the Kingston Conference. These were not the only Americans who were involved in Canadian craft exhibitions during the year. J.T. Tripetti, the Director of the New Hampshire League of the Arts and Crafts, juried the Canadian Guild of Crafts Ontario branch exhibition for the Canadian National Exhibition. The larger craft shows had depleted the entries available for the annual show, and Tripetti was scathing in his comments on the items that had been received, writing, "Most important, though, are the ingredients I found absent - vitality, inquisitiveness, adventure."<sup>49</sup> These were the same traits that Aarons had argued were lacking in Canadian crafts due to poor educational opportunities. Despite the successes of crafts in the exhibitions of Centennial year, and the favorable comments on the progress made in professionalizing Canadian crafts, the majority of Canadian craftspeople and administrators agreed that it was essential for Canada to improve the education of its fine craftspeople. As a result, and aided by increased spending generated by the Centennial year, the years following Expo '67 were to provide Canadians with new schools, departments and programs dedicated to craft.

Though Native people in Canada had been involved in professional craft

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<sup>49</sup> Annual Report of the Exhibition Committee, April 29, 1968, Canadian National Exhibition show, 1967. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5750, Box 5, BU - BW.

production for over one hundred years, their involvement in the Centennial year craft exhibitions was severely restricted and shaped by their position as colonized subjects of the nation. The few Native and Inuit items on display were generally treated as anonymous ethnological references, consistent with the Canadian Handicrafts Guild's traditional system of exhibition. McCullough's *Canadian Fine Crafts* did not exhibit contemporary examples, but instead relied upon a colonial approach to Aboriginal craft. With the exception of beaded moccasins by Mrs. John Morris of Trout Lake, Ontario, the nineteen Native and Inuit crafts were anonymous, historical/traditional examples that contrasted greatly with the carefully labeled, individual fine crafts from Euro-Canadian craftspeople. (Figure 15) While no mention was made of the resulting distinction between the ethnographic "curiosities" of the Indigenous crafts and the studio crafts of the other exhibitors, this very silence was indicative of the discourses surrounding Native production. That McCullough had overlooked this binarism, considering the care she had taken in representing a cultural cross-section of Canadian crafts, confirms the entrenchment of attitudes that regarded Indigenous crafts as somehow separate from the concerns of professional and contemporary craft.<sup>50</sup> Moncrieff Williamson's *Canadian Fine Crafts* avoided the dilemma of proper selection and representation of Indigenous crafts by including only three examples in the exhibition. The contemporary designs of

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<sup>50</sup> The majority of the Aboriginal craftspeople in this particular exhibition were from the North West Territories, Ontario and British Columbia. The Euro-Canadian exhibitors represented every province and territory except Prince Edward Island and the Yukon, with the following percentage breakdown: Ontario 28%, British Columbia 27%, Quebec 18%, Alberta 9%, Manitoba 5%, Nova Scotia 5%, Saskatchewan 3%, New Brunswick 2%, Newfoundland 2%, Northwest Territories 1%.

Bill Reid's gold box and Elda Smith's Iroquois pottery contrasted with the presence of an anonymous Inuit basket from the Great Whale River.<sup>51</sup>

In essence, while the concerns of Euro-Canadian craftspeople were being pushed into the professional sphere through a number of national exhibitions, Native craft appeared to remain within the narrower, more traditional realm which had been created by the Canadian Handicrafts Guild. This ran counter to reality: Aboriginal craftspeople were experiencing their own move toward professionalization. The main focus of the members of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association and the American Craft Council was on shifting attitudes about craft away from romanticized, nostalgic stereotypes to one of professionally educated craft artists producing objects for a distinguished public who possessed good taste. Aboriginal craftspeople were also interested in effecting these changes, but in addition to the struggles faced by Euro-Canadian craftspeople, they were required to address the construction of "Indianness" that surrounded their craft objects and the Western imperialist concern with authenticity.<sup>52</sup> Non-native craftspeople were encouraged to explore new combinations of craft material in collaboration with fine arts schools and institutions, but objects produced by Native craftspeople were supposed to be symbolically identifiable as "Indian" by the mainstream, while utilizing local raw materials and traditional forms.

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<sup>51</sup> Williamson's catalogue did not specify which of Bill Reid's gold boxes was shown in *Canadian Fine Craft*; however, according to Doris Shadbolt's book *Bill Reid*, production of the boxes most likely began with "Bear Design and three dimensional cast Eagle on Lid" in 1967. Bill Reid had many discussions with Bill Holm, author of the 1965 publication *Northwest Coast Indian Art*, in which Reid outlined his study of the "deep carving" technique and rules leading up to the production of his gold boxes post-1965. Doris Shadbolt, *Bill Reid* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1986), 96.

<sup>52</sup> The issue of authenticity has become a major concern in the contemporary period as historians have acknowledged the way in which modern Aboriginal art production has been dismissed because it did not easily fit into the parameters of the "imaginary Indian." See Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian; The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*, (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992).



Indigenous craft production has been critically analyzed by art historians during the past decade, revealing that the production and consumption of Native crafts both inscribed stereotypical images of authentic “Indianness” and allowed First Nations artists to make interventions into the hegemony of European power. Gerald McMaster has identified the impact of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild on Native craftspeople during the Reservation period (1870s to 1950s), when historical relationships with the resources of the land and sea were replaced by a European-style economic base which resulted in new associations with traders and the government. In an effort to assimilate Indigenous peoples, the 1884 Indian Act forbade cultural expression and traditional education.<sup>53</sup> As a result, the “civilization” of Natives led to the production of craft objects deemed acceptable by the Department of Indian Affairs which supervised the Indian exhibits at industrial and agricultural exhibitions. McMaster defines the roles played by ethnologists and western connoisseurs in further reshaping traditional craft objects through their personal taste for “artistically” formed works, versus the Canadian Handicrafts Guild,

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<sup>53</sup> The Indian Act of Canada was established in 1876 to deal with three areas: land, membership and local government. At issue in the Indian Acts was reducing the number of Native people who could “legally” lay claim to the land and its resources. Fewer Natives recognized in law meant fewer people who had to be negotiated with over the land. It was amended in 1884 to outlaw cultural and religious ceremonies such as the potlatch and the Tamanawas Dance. The potlatch was a ceremony to mark special events, confirm social status, and was sometimes used for political purposes. The Tamanawas Dance involved the invocation of supernatural forces and initiation rites. Christian missionaries found these activities offensive and supported the new laws of 1884 which threatened jail terms of two to six months for engaging in these cultural events. The rationale behind outlawing such activities was to integrate the Native population by denying specific cultural traits. This approach was not perceived as being problematic for most Euro-Canadians. Duncan Campbell Scott, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, stated in 1920 that “Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question and no Indian department.” Aboriginal leaders objected to these laws in the nineteenth-century. Chief Maquinna defended potlatches in an April 1, 1896 article in the Victoria, British Columbia newspaper *The Daily Colonist*. “A whiteman told me one day that the white people have also sometimes masquerade balls and white women have feathers on their bonnets and the white chiefs give prizes for those who imitate best, birds or animals. And this is all good when white men do it but very bad when Indians do the same thing.”  
<http://www.ualberta.ca/~esimpson/claims/indianact.htm>, <http://www.bloorstreet.com/indact.htm>,  
<http://www.indigenous.bc.ca/v1/Vo11Ch9s9tos9.14.asp>.

which had been concerned with preserving all of Canada's craft traditions, including those of the Indigenous population:

The [Guild]...hopes to prevent the rapidly-declining Indian arts from disappearing altogether - a loss the importance of which is as yet scarcely realized...[traditional crafts] showed a great superiority in both design and colour over the work done nearer to civilisation, where natural taste has been influenced by the demand for cheap imitations.<sup>54</sup>

In 1912, the Guild sent Amelia M. Paget to Saskatchewan to "revive and conserve" Indian crafts, and by the 1930s was worried enough about the loss of Native craft skills that it successfully sought to convince the Department of Indian Affairs to establish a system of collecting and marketing Indian art and craft. The Guild's educational and technical committee, formed in 1932 to study why Indian crafts were diminishing, came to the conclusion that it was a result of the influence of imported Japanese imitations of Native crafts. This quickly led to the formation of an "Indian Committee," headed by Alice Lighthall, and in 1936 the Department of Indian Affairs appeared to echo some of the Guild's concerns when it created the Welfare and Training Division where arts and crafts were encouraged for reasons of economic self-sufficiency. Careful restrictions were placed upon the objects produced, with a list of acceptable items and set prices defined. These items were marketed through large department stores. McMaster points out that the Guild's activities regarding Native craft work counteracted the Indian act, which prevented the participation of Indigenous peoples in exhibitions, and in doing so, the women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild were important in expanding the role played by Native crafts. The Guild had become politically involved in

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<sup>54</sup> "Reviews - Montreal Branch of the Women's Art Association of Canada Second Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts," *The Studio*, 26 (July 1902) 147. The Women's Art Association turned over their assets to what was going to become the Guild in 1904.

1933, helping to defeat a revision of the Indian Act designed to prevent Natives from wearing their traditional dress.<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately the war interrupted their efforts, and by the 1940s the Guild had shifted their focus toward Inuit crafts as interest in these arts grew.<sup>56</sup>

In 1949, the Guild sent James Houston to Port Harrison as their arctic representative. Houston had studied at the Art Gallery of Toronto with Arthur Lismer in the 1930s, and collected a stone carving on a painting trip to the Arctic in 1948. Upon his return Houston showed the piece to the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, and the organization gave him \$1000 to return to the Arctic and purchase more. The thousand carvings he brought back sold out within three days. After the enormous success of the Guild's first Inuit carvings exhibition and sale, the Canadian Government and the Hudson's Bay Company lent their support by providing a grant for Houston to purchase Inuit carvings for the Canadian Handicrafts Guild.<sup>57</sup>

Houston introduced Inuit artists to modernist aesthetics and techniques while encouraging them to depict traditional scenes. He did not want the items produced for the Guild to look like "contemporary" art, instead he sought work that adapted modernist conventions to historical depictions of significant Inuit activities. This combination proved to be highly successful. Newspaper reports celebrated him as developing Inuit

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<sup>55</sup> Peter Weinrich, "A Very Short History of Craft," Canadian Museum of Civilization Ed. *Masters of the Crafts: Recipients of the Saidye Bronfman Award for Excellence in the Crafts, 1977-1986*, (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1989). Bronfman Collection Site, <http://www.civilization.ca/membrs/arts/bronfman/historye.html>

<sup>56</sup> Gerald McMaster, "Tenuous Lines of Descent: Indian Art and Craft of the Reservation Period," in Canadian Museum of Civilization Ed. *In the Shadow of the Sun*, Canadian Museum of Civilization: Hull, 1993, Canadian Ethnology Service Mercury Series Paper 124, 93 - 113.

<sup>57</sup> Suzanne Morrison, "Eskimo Art is Booming," *Toronto Daily Star*, 23 November 1966. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5750, Box 5, BU - BW.

crafts, praising his good taste and collection standards. Houston's intervention prescribed the choice for Euro-North American consumers who awaited the annual shipment of carvings to the Guild. The *Globe and Mail* described Houston's collecting procedure in a 1966 article: "He had his own method of safeguarding the quality of the pieces he acquired. 'Well you see,' he laughed, 'there was this big crack in the sea ice. Whenever I ran into a piece of poor quality I'd drop it into that crack - at night.'" <sup>58</sup> Houston was perceived as the authority on Inuit craft, becoming the first civil administrator of West Baffin Island from 1953 to 1962, and later writing two children's books on Inuit legends.

For the women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, their concern with Native crafts seemed to be the legitimate continuation of the philanthropic attitude toward the crafts. In *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast 1700 - 1900*, Ruth Phillips demonstrates that the seemingly naturalized relationship between women as "noble" consumers of Indigenous craft and teachers of Christian charity was in fact a result of the "civilizing mission" of imperialism. While the souvenir crafts of Native artists have been disregarded within art history as kitsch, Phillips shows that these objects embodied cultural resistance through the maintenance of traditional artistic concepts while allowing Indigenous people to modernize their economies and lifestyles. <sup>59</sup> Phillips analyzes the significance of the patronage of "ordinary people" as well as the upper classes on Aboriginal craft, which was desired by people of all classes. She notes the exploitive role of colonialism which succeeded in

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<sup>58</sup> "Discoverer sees death of Eskimo Art," *Globe and Mail*, 13 October 1966. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5771, Box 26, EH2 - EJ.

<sup>59</sup> Ruth Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast 1700 - 1900* (Seattle, London, Montreal, Kingston: University of Washington Press and McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 210, 198.

keeping the prices of Native craft low while collectors and ethnologists created a market for expensive “authentic” craft. Like the Canadian Handicraft Guild “Indian Committee” members, many of the collectors of Aboriginal craft felt that they were possibly preventing the disappearance of the Native peoples themselves by purchasing their handcrafts.

Indigenous craft had been collected from the first contact with non-Native peoples. The collecting imperative was founded on the principle of uniqueness; Native crafts were necessarily objects of exoticism to foreigners, expected to symbolically represent particular historical narratives and legends. Non-Natives quickly appropriated these culturally significant objects. As early as 1714 Ursuline nuns in New France both copied and adapted the crafts of Aboriginal women to suit the growing market, producing curios for their patrons in France.<sup>60</sup> For example, in the Woodlands region, as tourist numbers increased in the nineteenth century, so did the popularity of Native crafts which were accepted as proper parlour decorations and home beautifiers. The sale of crafts allowed Native producers to earn income.<sup>61</sup> Phillips argues that in the Woodlands area it was women who turned to the production of art commodities when they were left alone to

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<sup>60</sup> Ruth B. Phillips, “Nuns, Ladies, and the “Queen of the Huron”: Appropriating the Savage in nineteenth century Huron Tourist Art,” in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner Eds. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999) 34 – 48. Phillips discusses the publication of Canadian ethnologist Marius Barbeau’s discovery that the Ursuline nuns had originated the art of bark and moose hair embroidery, arguing that Barbeau’s intervention deauthenticated this category of craft production as “Essentialist discourses hate a hybrid.”

<sup>61</sup> The importance of nuns in promoting Native crafts continued through the 1960s, when Sister Blanche Matte, a gray nun from Rae, North West Territories, was featured in *Chatelaine Magazine* for her organization of the Dogrib band craftspeople. Sister Blanche Matte convinced Emile Gautreau, a forestry technician who had been cared for by her in the local hospital after a plane crash, to obtain orders for the mukluks she had encouraged the Dogrib women to make. By 1965 a \$20,000 annual income had been created by moccasin sales, employing eight full-time sewers and seventy-six coop members. Sister Matte

support themselves and their families, while McMaster believes that the shift to women as craft producers resulted from increasing opportunities for Native men in the factories found in the Great Lakes region.<sup>62</sup> By the 1930s when the Canadian Handicrafts Guild initiated their “Indian Committee,” it was mainly women who were operating as both the patrons and producers of Native crafts.

The value of Native crafts was their ability to mark difference between the consumer culture and “Indian” heritage, contributing to the classification of Indigenous art as nostalgic and symbolically specific. Although this categorization was an effective marketing tool, it restricted the expansion of Aboriginal craftspeople, forcing them to continue producing craft objects expected by their Euro-North American audiences. By the 1950s specific forms and materials were naturalized as Native craft, even as many of the raw materials from reserve lands were being exhausted. Ruth Phillips identifies the nineteenth century Woodlands craft items that were popular, including moccasins, beadwork, quillwork and carving, and that served as the templates for twentieth century production. In its efforts to preserve traditional crafts, the Canadian Handicraft Guild encouraged the learning of these craft techniques.<sup>63</sup>

By the 1960s the appropriation of Native symbolism and images was common to the Canadian experience. From children’s magazines to children’s camps in the Woodlands area, Canadian stories and popular culture items were filled with Native

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turned over the craft project to the women to run themselves in 1967. “Women of Canada: The North,” *Chatelaine*, 41/6 (June 1968) 37.

<sup>62</sup> The development of the tourist trade for Native crafts varied from region to region. The West Coast developed a very early trade based on their need to earn income after the sea otter trade declined in the nineteenth century. In comparison, the trade in tourist crafts in the Woodlands region developed in conjunction with the Indian Act.

<sup>63</sup> Phillips and Steiner, *Unpacking Culture*, 215.

motifs.<sup>64</sup> Although this colonial practice was widely accepted as part of the building of Canadian national identity, the appropriation of Native arts by non-Canadians, namely the Japanese producers of imported souvenirs, was perceived as negative. Although the Canadian Handicrafts Guild had participated in the appropriation of Native art and craft, the growth in Japanese reproductions became a concern for the Guild. Aboriginal craft leaders were involved in fighting the double racism of appropriation that they faced as the popularity of Native symbols and images grew worldwide. In the 1950s Florence Hill of the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario organized the Ohsweken Art Group which later developed into the Six Nations Arts Council. The purpose of the group was to promote Native arts and crafts and improve standards of craftsmanship and public taste through exhibitions.<sup>65</sup> Other groups and individuals, ranging from professional artist craftspeople to retailers, organized to demonstrate the professionalism, good taste, education and proper marketing of their craftwork.

Aboriginal craftspeople had historically traveled to retail their craftwork, a practice which continued into the twentieth century. Gladys Taylor, a quillworker from Curve Lake, Ontario, who was a popular demonstrator at exhibitions sponsored by the Canadian Handicrafts Guild and the Ontario Crafts Foundation, reported that, after 1966, it was no longer necessary for any of the Curve Lake members to travel to retail their wares as an important new store had been established to retail their work from a central

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<sup>64</sup> Gail Guthrie Valaskakis, "Postcards of My Past: The Indian as artefact," Valda Blundell, John Shepherd, and Ian Taylor Eds. *Relocating Cultural Studies: Developments in theory and research*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 155-169.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 110. The Ohsweken Art Group held an exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia during the 1950s.

location.<sup>66</sup> This store, Ojibwacraft, opened in 1966, as a project of Ojibway Chief Dalton Jacobs and Councilor Clifford Whetung, was designed to underwrite the six hundred Ojibway people who lived in Curve Lake. (Figure 16) A \$50,000 building with a large workshop, retail area and storeroom was constructed.<sup>67</sup> Owned by Whetung and his wife, the \$50,000 annual gross of the Ojibwacraft label resulted in \$16,000 in wages for the band members. Chief Jacobs praised the Whetungs for their professional organization, claiming that:

Where poverty was once considered a plague, particularly during the winter months, and welfare payments were the norm, both have virtually become a thing of the past. Since the Indians are now working together for the betterment of the reserve as a whole and themselves individually, there has been a general uplift in morale.<sup>68</sup>

Ashley Taylor created traditional birch bark and porcupine quill boxes decorated with Canada's maple leaf in quillwork, while carved totem poles featured a mix of West Coast, Plains and Great Lakes imagery.

When questioned about the authenticity of the craft products they sold, which included such novelty items as feathered headdresses and carved totem poles as well as moccasins and baskets, Whetung defended the cross-cultural nature of the items, arguing they were what the public demanded: "White people associate totem poles with Indians and seem to expect us to make them, so our people have obliged."<sup>69</sup> The Ontario

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<sup>66</sup> Jo Carson, "Nimble-fingered Indian keeps Crafts alive." Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5772, Box 27, EK-EL3. Gladys Taylor described her trips with her mother to the farmers around Curve Lake to trade their quillworks and splint baskets for food.

<sup>67</sup> Although the business was owned by Clifford Whetung and his wife Eleanor, the band council signed a resolution backing "a substantial loan" for the new building. "Ojibway Progress Marked by new \$50,000 Building – Craft House Built for Booming Business," *The Indian News*, 9/3, (October 1966) 2.

<sup>68</sup> "Ojibway Progress Marked by new \$50,000," 2.

<sup>69</sup> Harvey Currell, "Indian craftsmen are skilled carvers," *Telegram*, 23 November 23: 34.



government was involved in the opening of the new building, sending Arthur Laing, Minister of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources to be the guest speaker at the powwow and the Hon. Lt. Col. John Keiller MacKay, Chairman of the Ontario Council for the Arts to cut the leather “ribbon” to open the crafthouse. Whetung took the opportunity of the opening to make a statement about the political potential of Curve Lake crafts, telling reporters that “However well they adjust to the paleface’s laws, the Curve Lake Indians have found a way to make the White Man pay off.”<sup>70</sup>

Whetung and other Native administrators were careful to ensure that their Native crafts were properly labeled and identifiable to consumers. In addition to appropriating the images of Aboriginal culture, Japanese and other non-Native manufacturers had been designating their mass-produced objects as “handcrafted,” “authentic,” and “original.”<sup>71</sup> As the Canadian Copyright Act was not established until 1988, Native craftspeople had to compete with these misleading reproductions by establishing their own labeling systems. Valda Blundell terms the appropriated mass-produced souvenirs and more expensive hand crafted items “fakelore.”<sup>72</sup> Additionally, non-Native artists had been encouraged to appropriate Indigenous images as part of their own craftwork. *National Asset/Native Design*, published in 1956 by the Pulp and Paper Industry Commission of Canada,

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<sup>70</sup> “Progress, Pride for Curve Lake,” *Telegram*, 14 May 1966. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU 5772, Box 27, EK - EL3.

<sup>71</sup> For a discussion of imported Native “fakes” made in Japan, see Valda Blundell, “Aboriginal Empowerment and Souvenir Trade in Canada,” in Erik Cohen Ed. *Annals of Tourism Research* 20/1 (1993): 64-87, Frank Ettawageshik, “My Father’s Business,” Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner Eds. *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999), 20-29, and “Canadian Souvenirs and Giftware – how can we improve design and quality?” Panel Discussion at the Design Centre, Toronto, May 11, 1966. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10 – CL6.

<sup>72</sup> Valda Blundell, “Aboriginal Empowerment and Souvenir Trade in Canada,” in Erik Cohen Ed. *Tourist Arts, special issue, Annals of Tourism Research*, 20/1 (1993) 64 - 87.

featured Art Price's illustrations of traditional images in the hope that it would "help to widen the adaptation of native arts...to wherever craftsmanship can add distinction and value to the products of Canada."<sup>73</sup> Art Price was a Native artist craftsman and founding member of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association. Clearly, tourists and craft collectors required the proper cultural capital to distinguish Native-made crafts from imitations.

The elevation of public taste required indoctrinating consumers into the sign systems of Native craft labels. *Chatelaine* magazine's consumer column instructed readers on how to distinguish between authentic and fake Indigenous crafts. (Figure 17) Following the nineteenth century tradition of charitable consumption *Chatelaine* warned that "Native artists, who depend on the income received from sales, live so far from the retail markets that other Canadians must protect them from exploitation." Although readers were informed that the authentication of genuine crafts was the responsibility of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, collectors were encouraged to protect themselves by becoming familiar with Native arts by visiting museums, "Authentication of genuine arts and crafts is the responsibility of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa."<sup>74</sup> The use of the colonial term, "authentication," indicated that only the Department of Indian Affairs knew what constituted "real Indian" craft. The contemporary work of artists with partial Native

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<sup>73</sup> Arthur Price and Marius Barbeau, *National Asset/Native Design*, (Montreal: Pulp and Paper Industry Commission of Canada, November 1956), 1.

<sup>74</sup> Una Abrahamson, "Of Consuming Interest: Indian and Eskimo Art: True and False," *Chatelaine*, 41/6 (June 1968) 18. *Chatelaine* featured an article on shopping for Centennial Souvenirs in their 1967 special Souvenir Centennial Issue, which urged consumers to look for labels for authenticity when buying Native and Inuit objects. "Chatelaine Shops for Centennial Souvenirs," *Chatelaine Souvenir Centennial Issue*, 14/7 (July 1967) 66.

backgrounds would not have been classified as “Indian,” fitting the stereotype of the imaginary “Indian” and historical persona expected by the mainstream market. The attitude that Native crafts were stagnant, museum-based arts continued the ethnographic response to Indigenous art as confined to the past. The classification of Native crafts within narrow boundaries responded to the modernist myth of the naive primitive that had been cultivated since the early twentieth-century appropriation of Native arts by art groups including the Surrealists.<sup>75</sup> By the 1960s, Aboriginal craftspeople were ready to expand their production beyond the cultural field they occupied in the hierarchical craft structure.

The federal Department of Forestry commissioned a three-month study on Canadian Indian Crafts in June 1966 in the hope of establishing a program to develop markets for Native crafts. The study identified the major groups of consumers of Aboriginal craft as Canadian and American tourists, the Indigenous population, collectors, and European tourists. They estimated the annual sales of crafts at one to two million dollars and concluded that European marketing system for crafts was foreign to the value system of Native craftspeople.<sup>76</sup> Just as was the case in the Euro-North American craft industry, the study demonstrated that “the larger the craft industry became in an area, the more men became interested.” The study identified Whetung’s Ojibwa Crafts of Curve Lake as the most sophisticated craft operation owned and managed by Natives. The principal conclusion of the study was that the Native population as a whole

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<sup>75</sup> Lis Smidt Stainforth, *Did the Spirit Sing: An Historical Perspective on Canadian Exhibitions of the Other*, M.A. thesis, (Ottawa: Carleton University, 1990), 47-49.

<sup>76</sup> Just as was the case in the Euro-North American craft industry, the study demonstrated that “the larger the craft industry became in an area, the more men became interested.” Women continued to be the primary craft producers, while men became involved in the administration of the industry.

wished to expand and improve their crafts, and that Native craftspeople were aware that the quality and standards of their products suffered from the need to meet the demands of a non-Native market.<sup>77</sup> Earlier, in October 1965, Canadian Arctic Producers was established, operating independently of government control, but subsidized by the Federal government departments formerly responsible for Arctic crafts, including the Department of Northern Affairs. Canadian Arctic Producers established a distinctive logo featuring a stylized igloo that they attached to each of their products.<sup>78</sup> Another group noted for its importance in the study was the Smith's pottery established at Ohsweken on the Six Nations Reserve. The Smiths, who employed eight potters all using their trademark, were unusual in that they were successful in translating traditional designs into contemporary ceramic forms.

Elda Smith's children encouraged her to pursue her interest in ceramics in 1962, after years of sewing buckskin jackets and jockey silks for Ontario racetracks. Smith had Tess Kiddick, a professional potter and member of the Canadian Guild of Potters, come to Ohsweken to teach eleven women to produce ceramics. Elda Smith and her husband Oliver turned their pottery into a professional studio, building a workshop and studio in the back of the house and a showroom in the front. Their pieces, which included a range of souvenir ceramics including teepee ashtrays and cups, were sold mainly through the

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<sup>77</sup> *Canadian Indian Crafts Limited: A proposed program for Developing Indian Art and Craft in Canada*, submitted to Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act, Department of Forestry, Ottawa, June 1966, 1 - 63. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5781, Box 36, FV - FZ. The study which focused only on Ontario and British Columbia listed Whetung Ojibwa Crafts as employing 80 - 100 Native craftspeople. Outsider businesses that organized Native craftspeople included Frank Porter of Victoria, British Columbia who employed 85 Native women to knit Cowichan products, and Jack Newcomb of Takla Lake who sold Native crafts to tourist ships.

<sup>78</sup> Art Solomon, "Some Thoughts on Indian Craft Development in Canada," *Canadian Craftsmen's Association Newsletter* April 1967, 3. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian

Canadian Handicrafts Guild Shop in Toronto. Smith began experimenting with designs she had studied on ancient pieces of Iroquois pottery. The surfaces of her contemporary ceramic forms were ornamented with animal figures representing the clan symbols of the Iroquois, as well as textured decorations made by broken twigs, cord and berries.<sup>79</sup>

Although the Smith's Pottery used local clay deposits and traditional images, Elda Smith was criticized by her elders who complained that her work "didn't look like real Indian pottery."<sup>80</sup>

A former chief warned Smith that her pieces employing motifs from old Iroquois wampum belts could not be sold because of their significance, and could only be given away. Smith refused to abandon her experimental forms, working to capture the smoky look of traditional Iroquois ware. Their experimental works often found markets beyond the Guild shop; Smith used such pieces to promote her pottery by presenting them to Secretary of State Judy La Marsh. In turn, La Marsh had Smith give a pot decorated with symbols of the League of the Iroquois to Queen Elizabeth during her Centennial year visit to Canada, an important event in terms of the government recognition of non-traditional Native craft.<sup>81</sup> Smith was the sister of Jay Silverheels who played Tonto on the television show the "Lone Ranger." This fact was highlighted as frequently as her ceramic abilities among the press and government officials who covered her ceramic work. While

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Craft, MU5782, Box 37, GA - GC2. Art Solomon was the craft co-ordinator for the National Indian Council of Canada.

<sup>79</sup> "People Worth Knowing," *Popular Ceramics*, (April 1965) 88. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5773, Box 28, EL4 - EO.

<sup>80</sup> "The New Indian," *PhotoSheet Magazine*, 1968. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU 5772, Box 27, EK - EL3.

<sup>81</sup> "Gift for the Queen," *Globe and Mail*, 30 June 1967. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5771, Box 26, EH2 - EJ.

descriptions of Elda Smith portrayed her as the stereotypical Hollywood “Indian,” her determination and commercial success with experimental Native ceramics demonstrated that she was operating outside of the traditional discourses surrounding acceptable and authentic Native craft.

Craft “organizers” like the Smiths and Whetungs were part of a larger movement within Native culture of the late 1960s. While political protests and occupations were increasing in number, Aboriginal artists began to question the production of tourist crafts.<sup>82</sup> A critique of souvenir crafts, and the expectation that these were the only products of Aboriginal craftspeople, was building, described by Phillips as a “necessary step in the repositioning of contemporary [Native] art as modernist and postmodernist fine art.”<sup>83</sup> The questioning of categorization was complicated, for on one hand it strengthened the ability of Native artists to break through the hierarchical restrictions placed on their production, while on the other hand Native crafts risked shifting from ethnographic and tourist curiosities to fine art objects operating outside the sphere of craft. Formal debates over modernism’s effects on craft production have only been undertaken recently. However, during this period the American Craft Council and the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association struggled to equalize craft and fine art while preventing craft objects from simply collapsing into fine art.

The United States led the way in recognizing the formal artistic qualities of Native

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<sup>82</sup> See Gail Guthrie Valaskakis “Postcards of My Past: The Indian as Artifact”, Valda Blundell, John Shepherd, Ian Taylor Eds. *Relocating Cultural Studies: Developments in theory and research* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993): 157 - 166.

<sup>83</sup> Ruth Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700 - 1900*, (Seattle, London, Montreal, Kingston: University of Washington Press, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998) 265.

arts and crafts. Throughout the 1930s, Native craftspeople in the United States found encouragement through Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration economic development programs. As early as 1932 a formal art programme was established at the Santa Fe Indian School, known as "The Studio School." The Works Progress Administration used graduates from the Studio School to paint murals. In the United States the Indian Arts and Crafts Board was established in 1935 as part of President F.D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs. The new organization was responsible for the "preservation and expansion of saleable arts and crafts and the implementation of supplemental income to American Indians."<sup>84</sup> Like the Canadian government initiatives, the Indian Arts and Crafts Board was most concerned with effective marketing. Under the direction of manager Rene d'Harnoncourt, 1936 to 1941, products were developed that suited both the collectors market and the buyers of useful craft. These areas were emphasized in order to avoid the loss of craftsmanship and tradition that d'Harnoncourt saw as part of the souvenir market. Born in Vienna, Austria to an aristocratic family, d'Harnoncourt enjoyed friendships with many members of America's government elite. He was perceived as possessing the cultural capital required to institute the tough new standards that the federal government had developed to qualify Native American crafts to receive the official government stamp of approval.<sup>85</sup> During this period the American Craft Council did not have a committee or program devoted to Native crafts, unlike the Canadian Handicrafts Guild; however, Aileen Osborn Webb was familiar with Rene d'Harnoncourt.

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<sup>84</sup> Robert Fay Schrader, *The Indian Arts and Crafts Board: An Aspect of New Deal Indian Policy*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), 79.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 124-146.

In 1941 the Museum of Modern Art staged the exhibition *Indian Art of the U.S.* which arranged pottery, beadwork and silver beside easel paintings and other “fine art” forms.<sup>86</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation funded the Institute of American Indian Arts which was founded in 1962, promoting individual artistic expression, part of what Janet Berlo and Ruth Phillips describe as the “ethos of self-determination.”<sup>87</sup> Although the American Craft Council did not have programs specifically for Native American craftspeople, they included and promoted Indigenous crafts not as anonymous objects like those in the Canadian Handicrafts Guild exhibitions, but as works by individual craftspeople.<sup>88</sup> The National Gallery of Canada attempted to showcase Native work as art rather than ethnographic artifact as early as 1927 with its exhibition *Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern*. The show combined Native and Non-native art and artists.<sup>89</sup> Emily Carr’s paintings were juxtaposed with a historical traditional Northwest Coast woven blanket; however, it was not until Doris Shadbolt mounted the exhibition *Arts of the Raven* at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1967 that contemporary modern Native craft had been displayed in a formal fine arts setting.<sup>90</sup>

With the attention of the world focusing on Canada and Expo 67, the Canadian

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<sup>86</sup> Rene d’Harmoncourt was the curator of the exhibition. He had been hired in 1936 by the Indian Arts and Crafts Board that was established under F.D. Roosevelt’s Public Works of Art Project Initiative in 1933. d’Harmoncourt was the assistant manager, and later the manager of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, and became involved in “a personal crusade to improve all aspects of the Indian Arts and Crafts situation in the United States.” In 1945 d’Harmoncourt became Director of the new department of Industrial Design at the Museum of Modern Art. Robert Fay Schrader, *The Indian Arts and Crafts Board: An Aspect of New Deal Indian Policy*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), 124-146.

<sup>87</sup> Janet Catherine Berlo and Ruth Phillips, *Native North American Art* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): 223.

<sup>88</sup> Lois Moran, Personal Interview, December 8, 1999.

<sup>89</sup> Lis Smidt Stainforth, *Did the Spirit Sing?*, 50 –52.

<sup>90</sup> Glenn Allison, Personal Interview, 14 June 2000.



government entered, as we have seen, into a period of generous spending on cultural initiatives. In an effort to make a political statement about the conditions surrounding Canada's First Nations, Native craftspeople were participants in the successful negotiations for a separate "Indians of Canada" Pavilion at Expo 67. (Figure 18) Tom Hill, a Seneca Indian from the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario who later curated the exhibition *Canadian Indian Art '74*, described the influence of Alex Janvier on the political nature of the Expo 67 pavilion. Janvier, a Chipewyan painter from Edmonton, Alberta, accepted a position at the Department of Indian Affairs in the mid-1960s. Motivated by his political awareness, Janvier undertook to develop a cultural policy for Native artists and saw Expo '67 as providing the opportunity to do so:

He encouraged the government to hire other Indian artists for the exterior murals on the Indian Pavilion at Expo '67. Besides painting a mural, Janvier spearheaded the drive to "tell it like it is" after government critics argued with the ideas in the pavilion and tried to tone down its "controversial content."<sup>91</sup>

The pavilion was designed to represent a giant teepee, with totem poles carved by the Hunt Brothers of British Columbia at the entrance.<sup>92</sup> While miniature totem poles were popular souvenirs, these giant carvings surprised many guests, with newspaper reports describing them as purposely dwarfing non-Natives. As visitors entered the pavilion they were met with a strong and accusatory message, "You have stolen our native land, our culture, our soul...and yet our traditions deserved to be appreciated, and those derived from an age-old harmony with nature even merited being adopted by

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<sup>91</sup> Tom Hill, "Canadian Indian Art: Its Death and Rebirth," *Art Magazine*, 5/18 (Summer 1974): 11. Both Tom Hill and Alex Janvier created circular exterior murals, based on the pattern of Plains-style quillwork rosettes. Janvier used both his name and treaty number when signing his mural.

<sup>92</sup> "Indians Spend Expo Cash to Tell of Poor Deal," *Globe and Mail*, 7 April 1967: 3. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, T-1015, Collection of Miscellaneous Material on Expo 67.

you.”<sup>93</sup> The reception area exhibited traditional craft objects representing six distinct regions, leading visitors to a ramp where they entered a series of displays on “The Awakening of the People,” again featuring traditional craft objects. In an effort to present these objects as “art rather than ethnographic examples,” all of the crafts were carefully displayed in individual cases.<sup>94</sup> Photographs of contemporary Native peoples were highlighted in the “Contemporary Native Achievements” bay, one of five areas surrounding the central tipi structure. These images were designed to contrast with the traditional and expected roles of stereotypical “Indianness.” Idealistic images of craftspeople creating traditional objects formed a binary to photographs of Native lawyers, doctors and businesspeople. The crafts that were contained within the pavilion in the reception area and “The Awakening of the People” display were utilized to highlight the theme of Native oppression, contrasting with the anonymous producers of non-Native-produced souvenir crafts available for tourists outside Expo 67. The “Indians of Canada” pavilion represented the first revisionist approach to a display of Native culture at an international exhibition, and provided an important starting point for Native artists and craftspeople to renegotiate the expectations placed upon their craft objects. It provided essential opposition to the stereotypical images that had surrounded pre-Expo reviews of the involvement of Indigenous craftspeople at Expo 67.

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<sup>93</sup> *The Memorial Album of the First Category Universal and International Exhibition held in Montreal from 27 April to 29 October 1967* (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1968): 118.

<sup>94</sup> Sherry Brydon, “The Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67,” *American Indian Art Magazine*, 22/ 3, (Summer 1997), 59. The regions and crafts in the reception were a Tsimshian helmet from the North West Coast, a Lillooet Cradle from the Plateau, Slavey snowshoes from the Subarctic, a Blackfoot headdress from the Plains, an Iroquois False Face Mask, from the Eastern Woodlands, and an Ojibwa basket from the Woodlands.

A September 1966 *Montreal Star* article on Eliayah Publat and Koomakoolo Saggiak, carvers and graphic artists from Cape Dorset who were brought to Montreal to create a three thousand square foot mural in the Canadian Pavilion's Tundra Restaurant, exposed the dominant culture's view of these craftspeople as pre-modern and unc cosmopolitan: "Obviously devoted to his little family, as Eskimos are noted to be...Both men are avid hunters and fishermen and still seem to consider this their real work, while carving and drawing is simply play."<sup>95</sup> Gladys Taylor was featured in a January, 1967 trip to London, England, where she gave a demonstration of her quillwork and sang an Indian hymn on the BBC to promote Expo 67. Very few Native and Inuit crafts were displayed at Expo 67 in the Canadian Pavilion as part of the craft exhibition *Canadian Fine Crafts*, where despite the gains made by the "Indians of Canada" pavilion the sole Inuit craft, an example of basketry, was listed as an anonymous, ethnographic curiosity, included in the conception of a national craft but alienated from the common goals of modern tastes, education, standards and marketing. Two contemporary Native craftspeople, Bill Reid and Elda Smith, were selected for the exhibition, where their work was not isolated as specifically Native, but instead were included as professional examples.

Bill Reid and Elda Smith were exceptions, being featured in Euro-North American craft exhibitions as contemporary peers. Although the Centennial exhibitions hosted by Canada were careful to mention the importance of Aboriginal craft, it remained stereotyped as a traditional, ethnographic part of history, rather than a living, changing art

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<sup>95</sup> "Ancient Craft for Expo Igloo: Eskimo Artists Face Biggest Challenge," *The Montreal Star*, 22 September 1966; p. 53.

form. The struggles of Native craftspeople to overcome the expectations of North American audiences were motivated by the emergence of artistic and political leaders who were introducing debates over empowerment. From Elda Smith's fight to train and work as a professional ceramist, and the Ojibwa Crafts of Curve Lake's independent craft marketing, to the political nature of the "Indians of Canada" pavilion at Expo 67, Aboriginal craftspeople were making statements on both the local and international levels.

## CHAPTER FOUR: AMERICAN IDEOLOGIES IN THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF CANADIAN CRAFT FROM 1967 TO 1972

Barry Lord, a critic and editor who organized the *Painting in Canada* exhibition for the Canadian Government Pavilion at Expo '67, issued a declaration of independence in his 1968 article, "Canada: After Expo, What?" published in *Art in America*. Assessing the impact of Expo on the Canadian cultural scene, including design, Lord postulated that Canada had established new conditions for the arts: "Centuries of reverence for things European and decades of willing subservience to the U.S. influence may be said to have definitively ended in 1967."<sup>1</sup> While Canada and Canadian craft had indeed established itself on the international scene, Lord's assertion was not completely correct. It is the intention of this chapter to demonstrate how the American Craft Council, American educators, and American values continued to define professional craft for Canadian craftspeople and administrators in the years to follow.

The craft exhibitions and conferences undertaken for Canada's Centennial celebrations attempted to provide the international craft community with a cohesive Canadian craft identity; however, an easily classifiable Canadian craft had proved impossible to achieve. The focus on professionalism and increasing standards initiated by the Canadian Craftsmen's Association and followed by the Canadian Guild of Crafts left many amateur craftspeople feeling excluded from the national organizations. Conversely, professional craftspeople like the Nova Scotia goldsmith Orland Larson avoided these groups, fearing that they continued to be dominated by "dilettante" interests; "I am a serious craftsman and teacher. What concerns me is the amount of

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<sup>1</sup> Barry Lord, "Canada: After Expo, What?" *Art in America*, 56/ 2 (March/April 1968): 94.

diddling that goes on and how the diddlers influence crucial decisions that affect all craftsmen.”<sup>2</sup> Despite the divisiveness of the professional/amateur binary that was established, the two national organizations insisted on further defining and classifying what they meant by Canadian craft, frequently utilizing the example of the United States as the measure of successful professional craft.

The need to create distinctions and guidelines for framing craft on the national scene was predicated upon a desire to establish governmental and public support for the field. In terms of international reception, it was believed that a strong, united, and recognizable professional Canadian craft definition would ensure a leading role in world exhibitions and conferences, as well as the ability to remain separate from American craft. The institutions and individuals responsible for cultivating Canadian craft relied upon the Western epistemological discourses available for the classification of craft. Michel Foucault’s theoretical writings are important for any analysis of the developments that occurred in 1960s Canadian craft. Through his interdisciplinary approach, Foucault calls into question the rationality which grounds the establishment of a regime of acceptability,<sup>3</sup> allowing us to situate the institutions that defined professional Canadian craft not as truths or givens, but as a collectivity of individuals and concepts that have historical and cultural contexts. The struggle during this period to structure and define appropriate craft objects was secondary to the development of discourses constituting the subject of craft. To focus on craft requires that the concern with the isolation and

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<sup>2</sup> Orland Larson, Goldsmith, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, *A Nova Scotia Craftsman’s View*, 1973, Canadian Craftsmen’s Association, MG28I222, Volume 1, Amalgamation Views.

<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, Colin Gordon Ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 257.

separation of characteristics within craft be considered as part of a larger concentration on craft as a developing field within an already institutionalized structure.

The arguments within the Canadian Craftsmen's Association and the Canadian Guild of Craft regarding membership shared a common concern with the politics of language. In his lecture, "The Discourse on Language," Foucault described the powerful presence of discourse in his hypothesis, stating that in every society the production of discourse is "at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality."<sup>4</sup> This concept of language as powerful is fundamental to the establishment of a professional craft identity in Canada, for language not only determined what was knowledge, but what or who was excluded from membership. According to Foucault, language structures exist beyond humans; therefore individuals are determined by the structures of meaning rather than creating meaning. This holds many implications when examining the relationships between North American craft organizations, art institutions, and craft educators in the years following Expo '67.

The American Craft Council's Museum of Contemporary Crafts, opened in 1956, had long sponsored exhibitions of craft that defied easy categorization. The Museum's mandate showed a clear focus on artistic excellence, originality and creative vigor.<sup>5</sup> Early exhibitions of Peter Voulkos's sculptural ceramics indicated that the Museum

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<sup>4</sup> Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," *Social Science Information* (10), Rupert Swyer Trans. (London: Sage Publications, Inc., 1971), 149.

<sup>5</sup> "American Craft Council 1943-1993: A Chronology," *American Craft*, 53/ 6 (August/September 1993): 138. Herwin Schaefer, the Museum of Contemporary Crafts' first director, wrote that the museum's "primary aim is to show artistic excellence, to show problems and solutions of design, not as recipes but as inspirations for originality and creative vigor... What will inspire that craftsman will also help to educate the consumer."

intended American craft to be aligned with the artistic currents found in painting, sculpture and art criticism. While Aileen Osborn Webb, whose money established the Museum, did not always agree with the craft pieces selected by the curators for exhibition, she did not interfere with their choices, trusting them to continue expanding the artistic content of American craft:

Though a determined woman, Mrs. Webb never uses her will or position to countermand the artistic decisions of those working under her. "A John has no reason for being made into pottery," she said, recalling the way she expressed her frank displeasure at a funk artwork under consideration for one show at the Museum of Contemporary crafts. But she never raised a finger to prevent its inclusion, said Paul Smith, the Director.<sup>6</sup>

In 1963 Paul J. Smith, who had worked developing educational programs for the Council since 1957, was named director of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts.<sup>7</sup> Smith brought to the Museum exhibitions that emphasized youthfulness and a unified nationwide community with strong links to the conceptual. Two of Smith's 1969 exhibitions, *Young Americans 1969* and *Objects: U.S.A.*, featured the work of craftspeople emerging from the strong craft programs in many American universities, and were praised by the press for their innovative objects and contemporary sensibilities. Descriptions emphasizing self-expression, humanistic dimensions, individuality, and experimentation filled the reviews. Rose Slivka, editor of the American Craft Council's magazine *Craft Horizons*, summarized the self-reflexive focus of the professional American craftsperson as springing from a "lack of active, indigenous folk traditions to draw upon. He is largely

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<sup>6</sup> "80 today and She Can't Wait to Get Back on the Dance Floor," Rita Reif, *New York Times*, 17 July 1972. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Craft Council/World Craft Council, MG 28I274, Volume 38. Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb and Mrs. Patch Correspondence 1969-1973, ee.

<sup>7</sup> "American Craft Council," *American Craft.*, 139.



the product of universities and workshops, and his approach is intellectual and grounded in theories of color and form.”<sup>8</sup>

In its review of *Young Americans 1969*, *Newsweek* identified two main sources of innovation in American craft; educational institutions and Abstract Expressionism:

Places like Rochester, Penland (North Carolina), Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, Berkeley, the University of Wisconsin, Haystack, Alfred University, have become the spawning ground for craftsmen whose drive toward self-expression has eroded the idea that the craft object must always be functional. In fact, Abstract Expressionism has most heavily influenced their philosophy. Ceramist-Sculptor Peter Voulkos, a genius of the first rank and a pioneer in freeform ceramics, is the acknowledged leader of the crafts breakthrough in art.<sup>9</sup>

The exhibition *Objects: U.S.A.* continued the theme of craft as art, a concept that was popularized by the media. (Figure 19) *Woman's Day*, a magazine that featured traditional crafts for the home, praised *Objects: U.S.A.* while explaining its title to its readership: “Anyone who thinks of craft as confined to ceramic ashtrays is in for a delightful surprise. The creations of many of the new breed of craftsmen are not necessarily functional, but intended for the owners to contemplate and enjoy as works of art – which is why the generic term used for the exhibition is ‘objects.’”<sup>10</sup>

The relationship between academic craftspeople and abstract expressionism appeared to be natural, but was fraught with irony given Clement Greenberg’s disdain for craft. Greenberg was a critical champion of Abstract Expressionism. Grounded in Emmanuel Kant’s formulation of intuitive experience and aesthetic judgment, Greenberg’s writings were essential in establishing the modernist institutions of art.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> David L. Shirey, “Crafting their own World,” *Newsweek*, (July 21, 1969): 62. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5782, Box 37, GA-GC2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> “Connoisseurs of Crafts,” *Woman's Day*, 11 (August 1969):47-50.

<sup>11</sup> John O’Brian, *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume One: Perceptions and Judgments*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), xxiii.

His 1939 article “Avant Garde and Kitsch” became the manifesto for the Abstract Expressionist movement, encouraging the invention of an entirely new artistic truth that rejected the subject matter of common experience. Craft objects with their traditional roots were rejected from this new aesthetic. In *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, Serge Guilbaut describes abstract expressionism as an elitist movement that appealed to “people with upwardly mobile cultural aspirations.”<sup>12</sup>

Clement Greenberg’s position as the “author” of abstract expressionism granted him the power to determine accepted art and artists. He achieved this through his writing, which immobilized craft within the powerful modernist art world through a process of neglect. The discourse of language employed by Greenberg performed a taxonomic, ordering function, arranging art into a hierarchy determined by the judgment of the art critic, with traditional craft placed on the lowest level. With the benefit of historical hindsight it is apparent that Greenberg’s cultivated neglect of craft, culminating in his 1992 assertion that “Craft is not Art,” imposed certain limitations on the language that acceptably could be used to describe craft. A determination to rid craft of its links to tradition that guaranteed a non-place in the art world led to new languages structured for gaining acceptance, such as “Objects: U.S.A.” It was American craftspeople, curators and educators who led the way in establishing a new vocabulary for crafts and craftspeople. Peter Voulkos was termed a “ceramist-sculptor,” textiles became “wall art,” and craftspeople became artist-craftspeople, although until 1974 when feminist ideologies began affecting language structures, artist-craftsmen remained in use. Canada

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<sup>12</sup> Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom and the Cold War* Arthur Goldhammer Trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 20.

followed this lead, with the Canadian Guild of Crafts dropping the outdated term “handicrafts” in 1966.

Following his 1968 assertion that Canada had emerged from the shadows of British and American influence, Barry Lord was forced to rethink his argument by 1971 after attending the First National Conference of the Canadian Artists’ Representation in Winnipeg. Lord analyzed the continuing influence of America on Canadian arts in his article “Living Inside the American Empire of Taste,” where he identified Greenberg and abstract expressionism as the culprits:

The advance of this Greenberg ideology of formalist abstraction into Canada marked a new phase in the Americanization of Canadian art. For Greenberg, art develops as a series of solutions to formal artistic problems and has little if any relevance to social reality...By the mid-1960s they had become as universal as a commodity on the international art market as the American dollar was on the exchange. And Greenberg himself made sure of their impact on Canada. The New York tastemaker not only visited [Jack] Bush; he also toured the prairies, and spent a highly influential summer session at the University of Saskatchewan’s off-season painting workshop at Emma Lake.<sup>13</sup>

During this meeting it was determined that Canada needed to increase Canadian representation in the arts. Motions were passed to allow only Canadian writers to submit to the national arts magazine *artscanada*, and to increase to an 85% quota of Canadian professors at Canadian universities, “referring specifically to the problem of American and British staff takeovers of our art colleges and the art departments of our colleges and universities.”<sup>14</sup>

The introduction of fine arts ideals into Canadian craft programs can be partially attributed to the large number of Americans who came to Canada during the late 1960s

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<sup>13</sup> Barry Lord, “Living Inside the American Empire of Taste: Canadian Artists are Struggling to Find a Way Out,” *Saturday Night*, 86/12 (December 1971): 31.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

and early 1970s to teach. To be sure European and British instructors were also responsible for the shifts in craft ideologies during this period, as were Canadian craftspeople who brought a cosmopolitan knowledge of craft techniques and forms to their students. However, Canada's close proximity to the United States meant that a substantial number of American instructors came to Canada, while a large number of Canadian students went to the United States for their craft education. An investigation of six key institutions reveals that across Canada there were differing reactions to the impact of American ideals on Canadian craft education, but that the overall significance was strong.

The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design directly imported abstract expressionism through a program of visiting artists. Unable in 1967 to find a Canadian resident to direct the College, the board hired Garry Neill Kennedy, a Canadian citizen who had been living in the United States, working as the head of the art department at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin. Kennedy gave a boost to Canadian craft education when he restored the term "design" to the College in 1968/1969. During Kennedy's tenure, 1967 to 1990, the faculty of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design increased from seventeen to twenty-six. These new hires included instructors in craft media, among them the ceramist Walter Ostrom who had completed his M.F.A. at Ohio University. In addition to the influx of instructors from the United States, Kennedy's program of visiting artists brought in the entirely male "all stars" of minimalism, conceptual art and abstract expressionism, from Sol Lewitt to Joseph Bueys.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Robert Stacey and Liz Wylie, *EightyTwenty: 100 years of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design* (Halifax: Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 1988), 76.

The American connections Kennedy brought to bear on the College affected the approach of students to craft. The Maritimes' tradition of utilitarian craft was quickly adapted to reflect conceptual, self-reflexive concerns, a shift which proved to be of concern to the faculty at the College involved in teaching craft. In a 1972 meeting between representatives from the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, it was concluded that "members of the College's faculty have tried to get the students to use materials and designs which are indigenous to Nova Scotia. They felt that students from Nova Scotia suffered from an inferiority complex about their background with the result that it took some time for them to recognize local capabilities."<sup>16</sup> This inferiority complex was experienced, to varying degrees across Canada where a wave of American ideologies and instructors were taking charge of craft programs at the invitation of institutional boards that believed Canadians were not capable of filling leadership roles in the crafts.

The Fine Arts Department of the University of Saskatchewan in Regina in 1964 hired Ricardo Gomez, an artist and administrator from San Francisco, California, as Director. (Figure 20) Gomez was involved in the hiring of Jack Sures, a director of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, in 1966, who was charged with establishing the ceramics section of the Department, where he brought forth the vision of professionalism central to the Association. (Figure 21) Gomez and Sures were instrumental in introducing abstract expressionist ideologies and popularizing sculptural ceramics through their new hires in the ceramics department and through a program of visiting artist workshops. Joe Fafard, a Canadian who had received his M.F.A. from the

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<sup>16</sup> Meredith Filshie et al. *Report on the Canadian Handicraft Situation, Industry, Trade and Commerce*, October 1972. National Archives of Canada, RG 97, DGAC 4530 – J:2, Vol. 2, Cooperation and Liason,

University of Pennsylvania, was hired in the sculpture department where he experimented with clay. Apart from the Canadians Sures and Fafard, the strongest influence in Regina came from California ceramics.<sup>17</sup> Curator Joan McNeil describes this period in California ceramics as liberating clay:

when Voulkos, [Robert] Arneson and others rejected pottery tradition and embraced abstract expressionism, surrealism and pop art. Their clay sculpture was reckless, eccentric, nastily humourous and autobiographical. They created a clean slate by stripping clay of historical meaning and encouraged slip-casting, monumental slab-building and clay collage. If any movement in ceramics disrupted tradition, this was it.<sup>18</sup>

David Gilhooly from the University of California at Davis took a position in the department, and Ron Naigle of San Francisco visited Regina to give workshops to the students at Emma Lake. Emma Lake followed the summer school held by the University of Saskatchewan, and featured American artists and curators who espoused the virtues of conceptual art. The language of art shared by Clement Greenberg, Frank Stella, Barnett Newman, Donald Judd, William Wylie and Ron Naigle helped to classify what was and was not valuable in Canadian art and crafts. Canadian students in the department adopted the emphasis on individual, non-traditional uses of craft material and forms. Vic Cicansky was a student of Jack Sures in Regina, later studying with Robert Arneson at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Maine and completing a post-graduate degree at the University of California at Davis. Marilyn Levine, another student of Jack Sures, went on to study with Peter Voulkos in California.

In September 1967, the Ontario Craft Foundation opened the Sheridan College of

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Federal Industry, Trade and Commerce.

<sup>17</sup> Ricardo Gomez, Personal Interview, 23 September 2000.

<sup>18</sup> Joan McNeil, "A Question of Identity: Twelve Canadians," Ann Roberts, Ed. *A Question of Identity: Ceramics at the End of the Twentieth Century*, (Waterloo: The Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, 1998), 28.

Crafts and Design in an effort to improve the standards of crafts in Ontario. Bill Davis, the Minister of Education, supported the initiative, and provided funds for the Foundation to hire staff and set up facilities. Bunty Hogg (formerly Bunty Muff) worked for the Youth and Recreation branch of the Province of Ontario and was responsible for provincial crafts. Active in the Canadian Guild of Crafts and soon to replace Norah McCullough as the Canadian representative to the World Crafts Council, Hogg was responsible in large part for planning the school, and suggested that the Foundation look outside Canada for faculty who possessed Masters degrees: "It was assumed that a Canadian applicant who had stayed in Canada wouldn't have as much training as the faculty should have, that advertising in Canada alone would limit applicants to those who had been denied the kind of design school they indeed now wanted to create. So Canadian applicants would have to have traveled somewhere else for education."<sup>19</sup> The American Donald McKinlay had received a Masters degree in Industrial Design from Syracuse University in 1964, and was teaching Three Dimensional Design as an assistant professor at the State University of New York at Alfred University when he was approached by Bunty Hogg to apply for a position as instructor in the Furniture studio of the new Sheridan College of Crafts and Design. (Figure 22)

Hogg met McKinlay in his capacity as trustee for the Northeast Region of the American Craft Council. McKinlay was interested in Canada before he became aware of the position available at Sheridan: "We'd been here for crafts shows and had been listening to your excellent CBC radio program...[we] felt pretty sympathetic to the

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<sup>19</sup> James Strecker, Ed. *Sheridan: The Cutting Edge in Crafts* (Erin, Ontario: Boston Mills Press, 1999), 157.

Canadian life, especially politically,” he told the *Toronto Star* in a 1974 interview.<sup>20</sup> McKinlay worked with Hogg and the board of the Ontario Craft Foundation, recommending craftspeople for faculty positions.<sup>21</sup> Robert Held, a graduate of the M.F.A. programme at the University of California headed the ceramics department and Haak Bakken, a graduate of the M.A. programme at the School for American Craftsmen in Rochester was responsible for the jewelry department. Winn Burke who joined the ceramics faculty in 1972 commented on the large American influence that dominated Sheridan from the start, “Canada as a whole doesn’t look outside themselves very far. They look to the U.S.A., but reject a lot because of a longstanding mistrust of things American.”<sup>22</sup>

The presence of instructors trained in the conceptual artistic climate of the United States had a major impact on the students and craft objects coming out of Sheridan. The ideology of self-reflexivity, with its emphasis on the non-utilitarian, non-traditional, individual craft object soon dominated the College. This approach was encouraged by the Canadian craft community, who welcomed an influx of objects and ideas that were youthful, “cutting edge,” and of interest to the wider artistic community. The staff and students of Sheridan intrigued provincial and national papers, and many articles were published commenting on the lifestyle of craft students. The *Toronto Star* commented that “beards abound as do long hair and far-out clothes,” while the *Globe and Mail* described the students as possessing “a kind of happy, hippie feeling.”<sup>23</sup> All reports on

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<sup>20</sup> Lotto Dempsey, “Craftsmen’s hands mould the Good Life,” *Toronto Star*, 18 May 1974: 32. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archive of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10-CL6.

<sup>21</sup> Donald McKinley, “The School of Crafts and Design: A personal memoir,” James Strecker Ed. *Sheridan: The Cutting Edge in Crafts*, (Erin, Ontario: Boston Mills Press, 1999), 157.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 146.

<sup>23</sup> Helen Worthington, “Potters pursue dream in unique school,” *Toronto Star*, 24 February 1969: 4/49. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5773, Box 28, EL4-EO. Mary



Sheridan noted how the individualism, industry and self-motivation of the students marked them as professional craftspeople. As Director of Sheridan, Donald McKinlay told reporters, the students were attending the school as a lifestyle choice: "They're here because they're not interested in working in places like IBM. So some of them might look like hippies...but they're too committed for that."<sup>24</sup>

The correlation drawn between craftspeople and hippies was popularized in the media. It was more than a surface comparison, as many students were seeking to utilize craft as the springboard to an alternative lifestyle, one often located in rural communities. This "back-to-the-land" movement was part of a reaction to the consumer-oriented lifestyle of the previous generation. As C.R. Robertson described in his "Task Force Report on Government Information" to Pierre Elliott Trudeau in 1969, "these people all seem to want one thing, not money or security, but self-respect and community respect and the privilege to lead their own existence."<sup>25</sup> In *Society's Shadow: Studies in the Sociology of Counter Cultures* Kenneth Westhues argues that "because the hippies could not go to Washington or Ottawa, the proponents of the new order could go only to the country, where untold thousands live today."<sup>26</sup>

The Kootenay Region of British Columbia had provided a refuge for many groups, including communities of Doukhobors and Quakers, in the decades prior to that of the "hippie" generation. A small Quaker community existed in the West Kootenays.

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Jukes, "Student Art Designed to Sell," *The Women's Globe and Mail*, 8 May 1969: W9. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5772, Box 27, EK-EL3. See also, Janet Bonellie, "An Experiment in the teaching of crafts," *The Telegram*, 21 February 1970: 11.

<sup>24</sup> Worthington, "Potters pursue dream," 49.

<sup>25</sup> Ron Verzuh, *Underground Times: Canada's Flower-Child Revolutionaries* (Toronto: Deneau Publishers, 1989), 213.

<sup>26</sup> Kenneth Westhues, *Society's Shadow: Studies in the Sociology of Counter Cultures* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1972), 183.

In the United States during the Quaker's Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1967, the Friends voted to oppose the Vietnam War effort, and to engage in an "underground railroad" sending resisters and medical supplies across the border to Canada.<sup>27</sup> The "back-to-the-landers" thus consisted not only of urban refugees, but political refugees: the American border was easily accessible, only a few kilometers away from Nelson, British Columbia. No statistics are available for the number of draft dodgers in the Kootenays, official government records suggest that by January 1974 between 5000 and 6000 Americans were living in exile in Canada, with unofficial reports of up to 40,000.<sup>28</sup> Although there is no documented evidence of a connection between Doukhobor or Quaker communities and the draft dodgers, their convergence in the Kootenays is of interest. Westhues provides a clue as to the popularity of the Kootenays to alternative group:

For many centuries, the United States and Canada were a safe refuge for countercultural movements that arose in Old World Europe in opposition to established orders and then came to the New World in the hope of finding in the vast expanse of North America a place in which to give concreteness to alternative mentalities...Mennonites, Doukhobors, Shakers...the hippies sought this refuge in the same shrinking wilderness.<sup>29</sup>

The craft activity of these groups and the creative oasis provided by the Kootenays had long been popular. Ina Campbell Uthoff came to Kootenay Lake, B.C. as a war bride in 1913, one year after her graduation from the Glasgow School of Art, and taught art classes. In 1926 Uthoff moved to Victoria where, together with Emily Carr, she organized master classes by the American painter Mark Tobey in 1929 and

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<sup>27</sup> Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 267.

<sup>28</sup> Renee G. Kansinsky, *Refugees from Militarism: Draft-Age Americans in Canada*. (New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1976), 5. Kansinsky makes a distinction between draft dodgers and deserters. The draft dodgers had higher levels of education and were of the middle class, whereas the deserters had lower levels of education and were of the lower class.

<sup>29</sup> Westhues, *Society's Shadow*, 190.

1930, and worked as the art critic for the *Daily Colonist*.<sup>30</sup> Norah McCullough, Western Liaison Officer for the National Gallery of Canada visited the Quaker Colony near Nelson in 1965, reporting back to the Gallery that the Quakers “came in 1958 to escape McCarthyism in the United States,” and produced crafts to partially support their lifestyle.<sup>31</sup>

It was in 1958 that the Kootenay School of Art opened, sponsored by Notre Dame College. By 1965 the School had an enrollment of 54 students and two full-time and one part-time instructor. One of the instructors, Santo Mignosa, was born in Sicily and had received his master’s degree at the State Institute of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy. He came to Canada in 1957, teaching at the Banff School of Arts and the University of British Columbia before moving to Nelson.<sup>32</sup> Mignosa’s approach to fine art ceramics differed slightly from those of instructors from the United States. While Mignosa was a proponent of fine art ceramics, he was interested in maintaining links between modern design and utilitarian wares. The National Design Council of the Department of Industry for a Canadian Design 1967 award selected one of Mignosa’s soup bowl designs for mass production by slip casting process.<sup>33</sup> Mignosa’s connections to Italy were strong, and he encouraged his students to participate in the Annual Exhibitions of Ceramic Arts in Faenza, Italy. The Kootenay School of Arts did well in these competitions, winning a silver medal for best over-all school in 1966. After being named as one of the top art

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<sup>30</sup> Sandra Flood, *Canadian Craft and Museum Practice 1900 – 1950*, Ph.D thesis, University of Manchester, Department of History of Art and Archaeology (Art Gallery and Museum Studies), 1998, 262.

<sup>31</sup> Norah McCullough, *Biographical Notes*, National Archives of Canada, MG30 D317, Volume 6, Norah McCullough and Family.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Tonge, “An Affair to Remember,” *Focus*, (April 1969). Nelson Museum and Archives, Kootenay School of Art (3), Accession #1997.057, Series 2/Subseries 1/File 14/ Box 2, Bay 6, Shelf 1.

<sup>33</sup> News Release, Kootenay School of Art, May 1966. Nelson Museum and Archives, Kootenay School of Art (3), Series 2/Subseries 1/File 14/ Box 2, Bay 6, Shelf 1.

schools in the world by a jury of seven Europeans, the enrolment at the School doubled, attracting students from the United States to attend a Canadian craft school.<sup>34</sup>

As was the case at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, the University of Saskatchewan and the Sheridan College of Art and Design, students at the Vancouver School of Art and the Kootenay School of the Arts were exposed to the ideologies of American craft with its emphasis on the conceptual. The Vancouver School of Art, now the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, experienced an influx of faculty in the early 1970s who had been educated in the United States. Sally Michner, herself a graduate of an American college, credits the new faculty with possessing “diverse experience and an enthusiasm for developing curriculum that looked beyond regional biases.”<sup>35</sup> As early as 1964 the Kootenay School of Arts brought in exhibitions of American craft. The exhibition *American Ceramics* was opened in November 1964 following its showing at the Edmonton Art Gallery. John MacGillivray, the director of the Edmonton Art Gallery wrote in his introduction to the exhibition that “These pots from people working in the United States show imagination and originality and a searching for new expressions in pottery as fine art.”<sup>36</sup> The ceramic work and writing of American ceramist Daniel Rhodes, who had acted as the juror for Norah McCullough’s *Canadian Fine Craft*

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<sup>34</sup> “Kootenay School of Art Wins World Art Award,” *Nelson Daily News*, 17 June 1966: 1. Nelson Museum and Archives, Kootenay School of Art (3), Series 2/Subseries 1/ File 14/ Box 2, Bay 6, Shelf 1. The jury for the exhibition in Faenza consisted of: Argan Guilio Carlo, Professor of History of Art, University of Rome, Artigas Jose Llorens, ceramist, Barcelona, Spain, Dr. Frattani Gino, Painter, Lindberg Stig, ceramist, Gustavsberg, Sweden, Dr. Pecker Andre, Paris, Dr. Rossi Filippo, Superintendent of the Galleris of Florence, Carlo Zauli, ceramist, Faenza, Italy. Mignosa’s student Sara Golling from Alabama was featured on the cover of the Nelson Daily News report. Douglas O. MacGregor the director of the Kootenay School of Art claimed that after winning the silver medal in Italy, applications “started coming in from Great Britain, Germany, Nigeria, South America, Hong Kong, and a wide selection of cities in Canada and the U.S.”

<sup>35</sup> Sally Michner, “VSA to ECIAD 1964-1994: A Faculty Perspective,” *64/94 Contemporary Decades* (Vancouver: Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, 1994), 144.

<sup>36</sup> John MacGillivray, “Introduction,” *American Ceramics*, exhibition catalogue, November 1964. Nelson Museum and Archives, Kootenay School of Art (3), Series 2/ Subseries 1/ File 14/ Box 2, Bay 6, Shelf 1.

exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada in 1967, was featured in the catalogue. An excerpt from Rhodes 1959 book *Stoneware and Porcelain* was reprinted, capturing the American focus on individuality through craft:

Pottery making is a kind of adventure in which, if one is successful, one finds, in the end, oneself. It offers the chance of making a synthesis of one's physical self, the coordination of hand and eye, the "handwriting" of ones' skills, within a philosophy, a point of view, a statement of values. When the craft of pottery becomes an art, it can never be codified, hedged with rules or principles, or fully explained, any more than any other art. Our pots, if they are to live at all, must be really good. They must be individual, expressive and beautiful.<sup>37</sup>

Santo Mignosa left the Kootenay School of Art in 1967 to study in Firenze, Italy on a Canada Council Senior Fellowship, leaving permanently in 1969 to complete a master's degree in New York. The Canadian potter Walter Dexter, whose emphasis on stoneware and functional pottery influenced students to create organic shapes with experimental glazes, replaced Mignosa. Chris Freyta, a student of both Mignosa and Dexter, feels that the American emphasis on individuality was tempered by influences coming from Alberta. Professional potter Ed Drahanchuk was well-known for his focus on natural Alberta clays, earthy colours, flecks in the glaze and bottleneck forms created an aesthetic in Canadian craft that went beyond ceramics into the earthy look of weaving, macramé and wood.<sup>38</sup> Drahanchuk's brother Walter Drohan introduced these sensibilities into the ceramics program at the Alberta College of Art. The priority given to ceramics reflects its status as one of the plastic arts, able to negotiate between the fine art of sculpture and the craft of clay. Ceramics were generally the first of the craft media

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<sup>37</sup> Daniel Rhodes, "Stoneware and Porcelain," *American Ceramics* exhibition catalogue, 6. Nelson Museum and Archives, Accession #1997.057, Kootenay School of Art (3), Series 2/ Subseries 1/ File 14/ Box 2, Bay 6, Shelf 1.

<sup>38</sup> Chris Freyta, Personal Interview, 10 August 2000.

to be introduced into Fine Arts departments. Elaine Alföldy, a student at the Vancouver School of Art from 1964 to 1968, remembers pursuing her interest in textiles independently, as the School had no instructor for the fibre arts, focusing instead on ceramics and graphic art. The Kootenay School of Art began offering instruction in textiles as late as 1971.<sup>39</sup>

Craft education in Quebec took a different direction from the rest of Canada. Whereas other provinces were concerned about introducing students to approaches popular in the United States and Britain, Quebec sought inspiration from within its own cultural background, occasionally looking outside to France. Jean-Marie Gauvreau, the director of the *École du Meuble*, influenced this approach. (Figure 23) After receiving a degree in cabinetry at L'École Technique in Montreal, Gauvreau studied interior decoration at L'École Boulle in Paris from 1926 to 1929. Gauvreau became director of L'École du Meuble in 1935, at the point when it had gained its independence from L'École des Beaux Arts. In this new school he was able to argue for the importance of avant-garde interiors in the French Art Deco style, having published a book on the subject, *Nos intérieurs de Demain* in 1929. In her book, *École du Meuble 1930-1950*, Gloria Lesser stresses that Gauvreau was a “staunch Quebec traditionalist,” dedicated to the use of native Quebec craft material and local craftsmanship, eager to halt the importation of American and European crafts, particularly furniture. When *École du Meuble* instructor Louis Parent went to the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Arts to study drawing in 1935, and the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred

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<sup>39</sup> Kootenay School of Art Faculty List, Nelson Museum and Archives, Accession Number 1997.057, Kootenay School of Art (3), Series 2/ Subseries 1/ File 3, Box 7, Bay 6, Shelf 2.

University in 1939 to study ceramics, Gauvreau “considered Parent disrespectful to the conservative continental European ceramic traditions.”<sup>40</sup>

Gauvreau’s dedication to craft based on the native materials and traditions of Quebec was enormously important in ensuring that student production remained truly Quebecois. By selecting professors who were from Quebec and France and knowledgeable of traditional crafts, Gauvreau was able to keep craft education in Quebec largely independent from the American influences that were permeating other Canadian institutions. In 1966 college-level craft education was taken over by Quebec’s CEGEP system, and in 1969 the École des Beaux Arts became part of the Université du Québec à Montréal, able to grant degrees in craft media.<sup>41</sup> Quebec’s system of craft education guaranteed a nationalist ideology of pride in native materials and craftsmanship, combined with an emphasis on craft as a professional endeavor.

Yvan Gauthier, Executive Director of the Conseil des métiers d’art du Québec, argues that Quebec’s later identification with American craft, following the integration of craft programs into CEGEP system in 1966, was not one of artistic emulation, but rather admiration for their system of professional university-level craft education and the strong focus on the business of craft. The Centrale d’artisanat du Québec, an agency created in 1950 by Gauvreau under the auspices of the Quebec government to coordinate the work of craftspeople throughout the province, communicated directly with Lois Moran of the American Craft Council in an effort to obtain information on the support and funding of crafts in the United States. In 1971 Moran, then the Director of Research and Education

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<sup>40</sup> Gloria Lesser, *École du Meuble 1930-1950, La décoration intérieure et les arts décoratifs à Montréal*, (Montreal: Musée des arts décoratifs de Montréal, 1989), 15, 19, 51.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 89.

at the American Craft Council, wrote Cyril Simard, Director of the agency, outlining the history and development of crafts in the United States, the involvement of the United States Government in supporting craft training, and the role of education in training professional craftspeople.<sup>42</sup> The Quebec government generously supported the professional associations and exhibitions, providing students with a network that could ensure success as professional craftspeople.<sup>43</sup>

The craft education Canadian students were receiving in art institutions did not meet with consistent praise. While curators, exhibitions and the media were generally positive about the accent on the conceptual and the break from the traditional, some professional craftspeople in Canada felt that the fine arts attitude to craft left students without the technical or business skills required to survive as a craftsperson in Canada. The potter Ed Drahančuk complained to Rosalind Orr, Gail Hancox and Meredith Filshie of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Commerce, that “the present university courses often lead to the development of a fine arts attitude,” and when the Madawaska Weavers in New Brunswick were asked whether they would employ graduate students from schools such as Sheridan College or the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, “the women criticized the education system in that graduating students did not understand principles of design and lacked the ability to design for mass market sales.”<sup>44</sup>

The popular image of craftspeople as “hippies” engaging in alternative lifestyles outside the social contexts of class and economics was in direct contrast to the realities

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<sup>42</sup> Lois Moran, letter to Cyril Simard, April 20, 1971. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5781, Box 36, FV-FZ.

<sup>43</sup> Yvan Gauthier, Personal Interview, 21 January 2000.

<sup>44</sup> Filshie et al., *Report on the Canadian Handicraft Situation*, 24, 57.



faced by those living independently from their craft. The national and emerging provincial organizations and schools for craft recognized the importance of providing professional craftspeople with outlets for their products as well as the skills to properly market their work. The late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed the establishment of artist-run cooperatives and craft fairs. The success of these ventures was a result of the desperate need for outlets that retailed hand crafted objects as well as their ability to market a celebration of craft as an alternative lifestyle. During a period of political and social upheavals, manifested in the drive for Quebec sovereignty, the sexual revolution, and anger toward the colonial repression of minority cultures, Canada was preoccupied with analyzing its break from the comforts of tradition. Just as Adelaide Marriott and Alice Lighthall had produced glowing histories of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in an effort to defend it from the charges of traditionalism it faced prior to 1967, articles emphasizing the positive aspects of a nostalgic “lost” Canada emerged during this time of social questioning. *Chatelaine* magazine regularly featured pieces by Canadian craftspeople as well as craft projects for their readers, claiming in 1973 that “Crafts have been with us as a splendid record of the taste and skills of each generation for 300 years. And today we’re more interested in getting in touch with our roots than ever before.”<sup>45</sup>

(Figure 24)

Mass production, marketing and the alienation of the worker were criticized as a reflection of the disenchantment of the modern world. Craft objects were able to serve as “possessions of self hood,” acting as nostalgic symbols. “People are buying wall hangings, as they are other handcrafted work, to warm and humanize their surroundings.

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<sup>45</sup> Annabelle King, Marjorie Harris, Michelle Labrèche, “Craft Boom,” *Chatelaine*, (October 1973). Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3-CK7.

It's going back to nature, part of the revolution. Buying a wall hanging could be looked at as a way to enjoy taking part in the social revolution," claimed Paul Bennett, Executive Director of the Canadian Guild of Crafts Ontario branch.<sup>46</sup> Craftsmanship, with its links to tradition, continues to operate as a nostalgic symbol as is witnessed through the direct exchange between creator and purchaser at studios and craft fairs. The craftsman is seen as an extension of his or her objects, representing an idealized image of a person safe from some fundamental dangers of our society.<sup>47</sup> The twentieth century consumer then uses this idealized image to counter the homogenizing effects of mass production and consumption. "Craft objects reinforce personal identity...consumers intuitively read the uniqueness of the handmade object as a tangible analog to their own singularity: the marks of hand fabrication symbolize the uniqueness of an individual life."<sup>48</sup> The Canadian Guild of Crafts continued to operate their outlets in Toronto, Montreal, and Winnipeg, while the Canadian Craftsmen's Association initiated Christmas and summer craft fairs in Ottawa.<sup>49</sup> The Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec began their annual Salons in Montreal, limited to only professional craftspeople, as early as 1955.<sup>50</sup>

The Association also attempted an apprentice program sponsored by the Federal Opportunities for Youth initiative. During the summer of 1971 students from recognized art colleges and institutions received one hundred dollars to apprentice with craftspeople across Canada. Several of those who benefited from these "free" assistants were

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<sup>46</sup> "Interest in Craft Work Booming as part of Social Revolution," *Owen Sound*, November 1973., Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU 5757, Box 12, CK10-CL6.

<sup>47</sup> Rudolf Arnheim, "The Form We Seek," *Fourth National Conference of the American Craftsmen's Council*, August 26-29, 1961, University of Washington, Seattle. American Craft Council Archive, Box 1.

<sup>48</sup> Bruce Metcalf, "Replacing the Myth of Modernism," *American Craft*, 1/53 (Feb/March 1993): 45.

<sup>49</sup> The Canadian Craftsmen's Association sponsored Christmas Craft Exhibitions at the Ottawa Civic Centre from 1971 to 1973, and held a Craftsmen's Market at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa during the summer of 1973. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen's Association, MG28I222, Vol. 9.

<sup>50</sup> Yvan Gauthier, Personal Interview, 21 January 2000.

instructors, including Jack Sures of the University of Saskatchewan, Monique Mercier from the Université de Québec, Robin Hopper of the Georgian College of Applied Arts and Technology, and Orland Larson from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. That craftspeople affiliated with art colleges and universities received summer assistance from apprentices was perceived by some members of the Association as unfair. Sheila Stiven, the Canadian Craftsmen's Association executive secretary who oversaw the program, was sent several letters from angry craftspeople such as John de Vos, a professional potter from Vinemount, Ontario, who complained that "teachers need apprentices like they need a hole in the head. One small group, that I belong to, makes it possible for the public to get used to using handmade things by putting them in the stores. The courses that are open for students are really a poor education for someone who wants to be a producing potter. We are not adequately represented by anybody and we are constantly ignored."<sup>51</sup>

The definition of professional craftsperson shifted, depending upon the intended audience. Consumers purchasing utilitarian craft objects from outlets categorized craft differently from those viewing crafts in staged exhibitions sponsored by art institutions. Whereas art critics may have acknowledged the presence of crafts in a fine art setting, or the work of students in craft media at a recognized university or art college, craftspeople like John de Vos remained unrecognized by the social institutions surrounding professional craft. As Janet Wolff summarizes, "judgments and evaluations of works and schools of art, determining their subsequent place in literary and art history, are not simply individual and 'purely aesthetic' decisions, but socially enabled and socially

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<sup>51</sup> John de Vos, letter to Sheila Stiven, July 21, 1971. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen's Association, MG28I222, Vol. 11.

constructed events.”<sup>52</sup> The 1969 exhibition *Craft Dimensions Canada* was heralded by the Ontario branch of the Canadian Guild of Crafts as the most important and comprehensive national exhibition of craft ever held in Canada. It played a key role in determining the discourses surrounding professional Canadian craft, and not surprisingly, was heavily tinged with American craft influences.

*Craft Dimensions Canada* was organized by the Ontario branch of the Canadian Guild of Crafts as part of their modernization campaign. Three days after the exhibition opened, Guild president B.S. Ellis wrote to Peter Swann, director of the Royal Ontario Museum thanking him for the opportunity to increase the value of the Guild:

Over the recent years we, at the Guild, have sensed a definite unrest amongst the craftsmen – a sense of frustration that their work, their labour, has been denied adequate public recognition. Now *Craft Dimensions Canada*, through the Royal Ontario Museum, has provided the physical setting and the magnificent display which will act as a vehicle for tremendous public exposure. The standard of objects submitted and chosen are of such excellence that they will undoubtedly merit public acclaim.<sup>53</sup>

The exhibition was hosted by the Royal Ontario Museum, and received additional funding from the Canada Council.<sup>54</sup> It ran from 23 September to 23 November 1969 and was divided into two sections, contemporary crafts in the lower level exhibition hall, and historical crafts on the upper floor. Harold Burnham, the former president of the Guild, curated the exhibition of traditional crafts in *Craft Dimensions Canada*. In his review of the show for *Canadian Antiques Collector*, he was careful to distinguish between “older,

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<sup>52</sup> Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art* (New York: New York University Press, 1981, 1993), 40.

<sup>53</sup> B.S. Ellis, letter to Peter Swann, Director, Royal Ontario Museum, September 26, 1969. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, *Craft Dimensions Canada*, No 20a, Box 5. Peter Swann who had recently moved to Canada from Britain, was a proponent of crafts and was instrumental in having the Royal Ontario Museum host the exhibition. After leaving the Museum Swann became director of the Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation which sponsored the Saidye Bronfman award for Canadian craft beginning in 1976.

<sup>54</sup> Bernadette Andrews, “Pelletier Opens Craft Guild Show,” *Toronto Telegram*, 23 September 1969. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5772, Box 27, EK-EL3. The

usually utilitarian products for everyday use” and the art-craft work of the new pieces produced since 1967.<sup>55</sup> All objects in the exhibition were for sale, continuing the consumer orientation of craft exhibitions that had troubled curators at the Royal Ontario Museum in 1948, and at the National Gallery of Canada in 1967. Guild volunteers were provided with a “craft kit” for selling objects.<sup>56</sup>

*Craft Dimensions Canada* stressed proper display techniques for the craft objects, mounting them on pedestals, on the walls and behind glass, following the formal reading of objects so important to modernist gallery spaces. (Figure 25) The lack of tactility was part of a cultivated plan to shift both the perception and aesthetic of the craft objects in the show, and ran parallel to the increased self-reflexivity of the objects with their breaks from tradition. This display emphasized the observer paradigm, where the observer and object formed two autonomous realities.<sup>57</sup> The historical craft objects were displayed in a more conventional, but similar manner, forcing the viewer to rely on a single sense for artistic authority. While Peter Swann had convinced the Royal Ontario Museum to mount an exhibition of Canadian crafts, despite its emphasis on sales, there remained resistance to the introduction of aesthetic synesthesia, which threatened to erode the hierarchy of economic, cultural and symbolic value that had been cultivated to divide art spaces along class, race and gender lines. First Nations, traditional Québécois and ethnic crafts were categorized as historical, and relegated to the upper display halls, while modern conceptual production occupied the lower halls as Canadian craft. Organizers

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Canada Council contributed \$12,000, the Royal Ontario Museum gave \$7000, and the Canadian Guild of Crafts Ontario branch paid \$7000 toward the exhibition.

<sup>55</sup> Harold B. Burnham, “Canadian Crafts – Old and New,” *Canadian Antiques Collector*, January 1970. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, *Craft Dimensions Canada*, No 20a, Box 5.

<sup>56</sup> Memo to Craft Volunteers, Royal Ontario Museum, *Craft Dimensions Canada*, No. 20b, Box 5.

<sup>57</sup> Edwina Taborsky, “The Discursive Object,” Susan Pearce Ed. *Objects of Knowledge* (London and Atlantic Highlands: The Athlone Press, 1990), 59-60.

had considered creating an exhibition that contrasted modern crafts against a background of native and ethnic material, but concluded "this has to be an unconscious source of inspiration."<sup>58</sup> The cultural construction of the exhibition demonstrated Michel Foucault's hypothesis that all forms of rationality have a historical specificity, a regime of acceptability.

Initially, Marjory Wilton, head of the Guild's exhibition committee, had turned to Paul Smith of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York for advice on mounting the contemporary craft portion of the exhibition. Wilton and the exhibition committee had met Smith in 1968 when he had accompanied an exhibition of contemporary crafts from America House in New York to Toronto.<sup>59</sup> After having lunch with Smith, Wilton wrote to Mrs. Hugh R. Downie, Royal Ontario Museum Programme Secretary that she believed having "his ideas from the very beginning would result in a very significant exhibition."<sup>60</sup> The Guild and the Royal Ontario Museum began courting Smith in the hope that he would agree to curate the exhibition. Smith was polite in his refusal, stating that while he endorsed the idea of the exhibition and would be happy to offer advice, he strongly believed that the show should be organized by a Canadian not an American.<sup>61</sup> In order to ensure that *Craft Dimensions Canada* showcased modern fine craft sensibilities

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<sup>58</sup> Marjory Wilton, letter to Mrs. Hugh Downie, August 24, 1967. Royal Ontario Museum, Craft Dimensions Canada, No 20 b., Box 5.

<sup>59</sup> Annual Report of the Canadian Guild of Crafts Exhibition Committee, April 29, 1968. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5750, Box 5, BU-BW2.

<sup>60</sup> Marjory Wilton, letter, to Mrs. Hugh Downie, August 24, 1967. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Craft Dimensions Canada, No 20b, Box 5.

<sup>61</sup> Memo regarding Paul Smith, July 1968, Royal Ontario Museum. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Craft Dimensions Canada, No. 20a, Box 5.

that identified the Guild as a forward thinking organization, Wilton and her committee were convinced of the importance of seeking American guidance in the exhibition.<sup>62</sup>

Rather than hiring Smith to act as the sole curator of the show, the Guild's exhibition committee sent out calls for craftwork that would then be juried by a panel of three experts. Canadians from across the country responded to this call, sending in a total of 900 entries, from which 189 were selected.<sup>63</sup> The choice of the jury seemed simple to the committee, who believed that "Canadian handicraft hasn't developed to the point where we have anyone qualified to judge our own."<sup>64</sup> Instead, the Guild selected three jurors from leading professors and craftspeople, all male and all American.

Described by the Royal Ontario Museum news releases as an "international jury," the three jurors were Robert Turner, professor of ceramics, Syracuse University, Glen Kaufman, professor of textiles, University of Georgia, and Ronald Pearson, metal smith and co-owner and founder of Rochester's Shop One craft outlet. (Figure 26) The Guild, the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Canadian press praised the jurors for their symbolic and cultural capital, manifested in their ability to bring high standards to Canadian craft.

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<sup>62</sup> The exhibition committee also sought advice from British sources, bringing in Hugh Wakefield of the Victoria and Albert Museum to lecture on "Contemporary Crafts in the Museum." During Wakefield's October 2 lecture he alienated Quebec craftspeople by insisting that "As an Englishman I cannot forebear pointing out that it was Britain, which played a leading part in the early phases of the industrial revolution, that the contemporary craftsman first appeared more than a century ago in the intellectual revolt associated especially with the name of William Morris." While British craftspeople and ideas influenced parts of English Canada, British administrators were turning to Canada for guidance on how to structure an effective national craft organization. Mary Eileen Muff, Canadian Representative to the World Crafts Council, received a letter from George Sneed of the Society of Designer Craftsmen in London inquiring about "the position of craftsmen in Canada in relation to the government," and thanking Muff in advance, "British craftsmen will be most grateful to you if you will in this way help them to obtain the Government recognition they feel they require." Hugh Wakefield Lecture, October 2, 1969. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5772, Box 27, EK-EL3. George Sneed, letter to Mary Eileen Muff, October 30, 1969. National Archives of Canada, World Crafts Council, MG28I274, Vol. 35, WCC1971/70 Y File.

<sup>63</sup> "Artists must fight apathy – Pelletier," *Toronto Star*, 23 September 1969. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5772, Box 27, EK-EL3.

<sup>64</sup> Bernadette Andrews, "Pelletier Opens Craft Guild Show," *Toronto Telegram*, 23 September 1969. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archive of Canadian Craft, MU5772, Box 27, EK-EL3.

“The judges for the exhibition are renowned authorities,” wrote *Canadian Interiors*, while the Royal Ontario Museum press releases emphasized the jurors as the finest, “internationally known craftsmen.”<sup>65</sup> What becomes evident from the jurors’ statements is that they brought to the exhibition the conceptual art emphasis that American instructors had been importing into Canadian educational institutions. This relationship was cyclical, as students instructed in these approaches did well in the jurying process, and the jury praised the advances made in Canadian craft. As Pierre Bourdieu states, “taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier.”<sup>66</sup>

Glen Kaufman lauded the textile work “employing non-woven structure” and criticized Canadian textile artists who failed to see “the whole work as a unified statement.” In jurying the ceramics, Robert Turner questioned the intention of the pieces which he found to be of good quality, but subdued: “the group as a whole is good if not notably provocative in range of colour and shape: perhaps inevitably a group appears quiet today which does not include the vibrant color, hard-edge painting, or pop art approach of current art fields.” Ronald Pearson’s assessment of the other craft fields was positive, as he had found that “Canadian expression parallels work done in other countries yet I do not find it imitative.” The distribution of the twenty-three awards of one hundred dollars heavily favoured Ontario, which received fifty-seven percent of the prizes.<sup>67</sup> Craftspeople from only six provinces won all the awards, and many of the winners had direct ties to universities and art colleges. Donald McKinlay, the Director of

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<sup>65</sup> “Craft Dimensions,” *Canadian Interiors*, September 1969. “Jurors for Craft Dimensions Canada Exhibition,” Press Release. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Craft Dimensions Canada, No. 20a, Box 5.

<sup>66</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* Randal Johnson Ed. (London: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 2.

<sup>67</sup> Memo, September 22, 1969, Craft Dimensions Canada Award Winners. The awards were distributed as follows: Alberta, 4/23 or 17%, Ontario, 13/23 or 57%, Quebec, 3/23 or 14%, New Brunswick, 1/23 or 4%, Nova Scotia, 1/23 or 4%, Newfoundland, 1/23 or 4%.



the Sheridan College of Art and Design, and his wife, ceramist Ruth Gowdy McKinlay, won top prizes for his table and lamp of polyvinyl chloride, tubing and sheet plastic, and her stoneware ceramics. Robert Turner chose Ruth Gowdy McKinlay for a special juror's award for ceramics. Sheridan students and faculty received nine of the twenty-three awards, providing the new school with a reputation for providing exceptionally high standards in Canadian craft.

Pearson delighted the organizers by viewing the exhibition as being of sufficient quality as to merit a venue in the United States.<sup>68</sup> Although his proposal was not followed through by the American Craft Council, the idea indicated a substantial shift in the perception of Canadian craft. The American Craft Council's journal *Craft Horizons* featured *Craft Dimensions Canada* in their September 1969 issue, giving a brief history of crafts in Canada, describing the influence of American immigrants and imports, and expressing admiration for "a stirring exhibition [that]...shows the vitality and scope of Canadian crafts."<sup>69</sup> This praise from American "authorities" contrasted greatly to the comments made in 1955 by Gerard Bretl, Director of the Royal Ontario Museum regarding the possibility of mounting a Canadian Modern Design exhibition. Bretl had concluded that the standards of Canadian craft and design were disappointing, and, as such, a show of Canadian objects "seems to be a long way off."<sup>70</sup> Fifteen years later, *Craft Dimensions Canada* was taken to prove that Canadian craft had evolved into a professional artistic field. Canadians responded favourably to the exhibition as well, with

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<sup>68</sup> Juror's Statements, *Craft Dimensions Canada*. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, *Craft Dimensions Canada*, No. 20a, Box 5.

<sup>69</sup> David Piper, "Canada Dimensions 1969," *Craft Horizons*, September 1969. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, *Craft Dimensions Canada*, No. 20a, Box 5.

<sup>70</sup> Gerard Bretl, letter to Robert Fennell, Chairman of the Museum Board, December 22, 1954. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, *Designer Craftsmen*, No. 14, Box 1.

128 craftspeople participating, over 25,000 visitors in six weeks, and more than two-thirds of the craft pieces sold during the show.<sup>71</sup>

On the surface, most Canadians seemed to appreciate the involvement of Americans in judging their craft production. Their praise for the high quality of professional craft in Canada was regarded by some as an indication that Canadian craft had been established as a dynamic, artistic and professional movement. English-language papers made very few negative comments about the jury, with the exception of Bernadette Andrew's comment in the *Toronto Telegram* that "a lot of people would disagree" with the Guild's opinion that there were no Canadians qualified to judge.<sup>72</sup> It was Quebec's press that recognized the hegemonic overtones of importing Americans to act as the sole judges of professional Canadian craft. The Montreal newspaper, *La Presse*, described the importation of American jurors as a colonial situation, suggesting that the American favouring of art craft may have resulted in the low number of Quebecois craftspeople who received awards from the jury.<sup>73</sup> Quebec craftspeople were poorly represented in *Craft Dimensions Canada*, with many of them making a political statement by not submitting to the exhibition. Rather than contributing to a national craft show, many Quebec craftspeople exhibited within the province, later rallying in 1971 to participate in the first international Francophone craft exhibition, *Unity in Diversity* (*l'unité en la diversité*).

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<sup>71</sup> Canadian Guild of Crafts, President's Report, Annual Meeting, April 27, 1970. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3-CK7.

<sup>72</sup> Bernadette Andrews, "Pelletier Opens Craft Guild Show," *Toronto Telegram*, 23 September 1969.

<sup>73</sup> "Art, Artistes, Artisans," *La Presse*, 27 September 1969. "Pour cette exposition, on avait invité trois Américains pour former le jury (question d'impartialité au situation de colonisés?... ) ceux-ci n'ont cependant pas hésité à reconnaître les oeuvres d'artistes. Aussi, je ne sais si c'est le fait de cette nouvelle tendance dans l'artisanat, mais trois Québécois seulement sont parmi les gagnants de 23 prix de \$100."

Organized by the Paris-based Agence Culturelle, twenty-two countries with strong Francophone populations were represented in *Unity in Diversity*, which ran in Canada in Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Moncton.<sup>74</sup> Objects for the exhibition were selected for their “authenticity,” allowing Quebec craftspeople to submit work that incorporated traditional materials and forms, “beside scenes of French Canadian life we find Eskimo sculptures; Black Africa is represented not only by totems from Dahomey or gold filigree from Senegal, but also swagger sticks from Rwanda or Tuareg camel saddles.”<sup>75</sup> Both the Canadian Guild of Crafts Ontario branch and the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association were eager to help this new Francophone organization in the hope that it would lead to a more favourable association between their national groups and Quebec craftspeople.

The increase in the number of institutions training craftspeople, the outlets available for retailing craft, and the popular interest in consuming craft, made the classification of craft more difficult than it had been previously, when national organizations could argue that they were preserving dying traditions. While books like *A Heritage of Canadian Handicrafts*, compiled by the Federated Women’s Institutes of Canada in 1967, still relied upon the easy definition of regional craft traditions to create clear distinctions, where Canadian craft began and American influences ended became more difficult to identify.<sup>76</sup> In 1969 Aileen Osborn Webb proposed the establishment of

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<sup>74</sup> “International Handicraft Exhibition,” *Craftsman/L’Artisan*, 4/2 (1971): 6.

<sup>75</sup> *Minutes of the meeting on the International Craftsmanship Touring Exhibition of the Agence de Cooperation Culturelle et Technique*, April 13, 1971. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5781, Box 36, FV-FZ.

<sup>76</sup> H. Gordon Green (ed.), *A Heritage of Canadian Handicrafts*, (Toronto, Montreal: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967), x.

a North American Alliance in the World Crafts Council. In addition to facilitating the administration of the World Crafts Council, Webb felt that such an Alliance would strengthen the bond between Canadian and American craftspeople. Webb organized a meeting between the Canadian and American committees of the World Crafts Council at her family home in Shelburne, Vermont, in August 1969.<sup>77</sup> Beyond the practical necessity of administrating North America as a single unit, Webb expressed her hope that the union would create a “strong and enduring Canada-United States alliance.” Frustration was expressed toward the governmental barriers that prevented full participation between the countries, including problems of customs and tax for craftspeople transporting work across the border, the need for bi-national exhibitions, and the necessity of a guide for North American craftspeople.<sup>78</sup> With the formation of a North American Alliance in the World Crafts Council, Canadian craftspeople and administrators were forced to reconsider their relationship to the dominant American Craft Council; an organization now identified as an equal partner with Canada’s craft organizations under the new Alliance. E.N. Roulston, the Nova Scotia representative who attended the meeting, concluded that although Canadians had become more nationalistic following the Centennial celebrations, “we still have strong traces of our old habit, of “Let George do it,” particularly when it came to financing the costs of the Alliance.” In the Nova Scotia craft journal *Handcrafts*, Roulston urged Nova Scotia

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<sup>77</sup> Nineteen Canadian representatives attended the meeting, including Mary Eileen Muff, Don McKinley, Jack Sures, Sheila Stiven, Gordon Barnes and Art Price. Fourteen of the Canadians were from Ontario.

<sup>78</sup> “Proceedings of the Formation of a North American Alliance of the World Crafts Council,” Shelburne, Vermont, August 24, 1969. National Archives of Canada, World Crafts Council, MG28I222, Vol. 15.

craftspeople to accept the responsibilities that resulted from living in an independent nation.<sup>79</sup>

Mary Eileen Muff, the Canadian representative on the World Crafts Council, was fond of Webb, and sought her advice on a number of administrative issues. In particular, Webb intervened on Muff's behalf to secure permission from the Federal government to sponsor a gift from Canada to the people of Ireland during the 1970 World Crafts Council conference in Dublin. Webb and Muff had agreed that a totem pole would be a good symbolic gift from Canada to Ireland. Webb used her position to write to Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in order to secure funding for the gift; "As President of the World Crafts Council, I am being so bold as to write and request that the government of Canada send Mr. And Mrs. Robert Davidson to our biennial conference in Dublin, Ireland. The purpose of Mr. Davidson's presence would be to carve a totem pole, demonstrating the skills of the Canadian Indians in wood carving."<sup>80</sup> Reaction to Davidson's totem pole from the international craft community reflected the still entrenched colonial constructions of "Indianness."

Robert Davidson was a professional Native artist, who had graduated from the Vancouver School of Art in 1970. After Webb's intervention, Robertson and his wife were sent to Dublin as part of the Canadian delegation to the 1971 World Crafts Council conference. While there, Robertson carved a totem pole as part of on-going live

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<sup>79</sup> E.N. Roulston, "World Crafts Council," *Handcrafts*, 28/3 (July 1971), 2.

<sup>80</sup> Aileen Osborn Webb, letter to Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, March 2, 1970. National Archives of Canada, World Crafts Council, MG28I274, Vol. 38. This was not the only time Webb had written letters regarding the promotion of Canadian crafts. In 1969 Sheila Stiven, Executive Secretary of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association received a letter from Marilyn Stonier of Perth, Ontario, stating "I have just received a letter from Mrs. Webb of the World Crafts Council giving me the name and address of your association...for I have been having a most difficult time ascertaining an individual or indeed even an organization to which I may write." National Archives of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen's Association, MG1222, Vol. 12.

demonstrations, which at the close of the conference was presented to Ireland as a gift from Canada. Somewhat later, Mary Eileen Hogg (nee Muff), received a letter of thanks from the Irish World Crafts Council representative, along with a newspaper clipping about the totem pole, which had been put next to the Canadian black bear pit in the Zoological Gardens. Hogg reported to her fellow Canadian representatives that she had the write-up “and any of you who would like to read it are welcome to read it but the last paragraph starts off in such a way that I have not even been able to send a copy to the carver of the totem pole: The Red Indians of North America are far from savage and most of them stay on their reservations.”<sup>81</sup>

Hogg’s embarrassment about the newspaper report reflected new attempts by the national craft organizations to assist aboriginal craftspeople in establishing themselves as professional artists. While this was a departure from the traditional philanthropic “civilizing mission” of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, problems remained in reconciling the emergence of autonomous, professional Native craftspeople with expected Native “souvenir” crafts. Disdain for mass-produced, poorly made imitations of Indigenous craft was frequently conflated with the images of “Indianness” found in souvenirs of “ersatz Indians and lumpy Eskimo imitations.”<sup>82</sup> The Canadian Guild of Crafts Ontario branch had begun to rethink its approach to First Nations and Inuit crafts. In 1971 Joan Chalmers, the chair of the Exhibition Committee, wrote to James Noel White, the Vice-President for the European section of the World Crafts Council, asking

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<sup>81</sup> Canadian Craft Council 1974 Report, 14-15. National Archive of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen’s Association, MG28I222, Volume 1, Stats Canada Survey.

<sup>82</sup> Natalie Edwards, “Made in Canada: Our craftsmen turn out beautiful work,” *Starweek*, November 25-Dec 2, 1972. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10 – CL6.

for his advice on the display of Canadian craft in the forthcoming 1974 World Craft Council exhibition. Among her many questions on the proper display of craft, Chalmers indicated that aboriginal craft was not considered a normal part of the Guild's juried shows, asking, "should Indian and Eskimo work be submitted?"<sup>83</sup> The Guild wanted to take a more inclusive approach, noting "the situation has changed considerably," with Indigenous craft reaching "a point of world recognition and a degree of financial independence."<sup>84</sup>

Native craftspeople had organized several important institutional changes that allowed them to gain entrance into the field of professional craft. Arthur Soloman, a Native craftsman from Ontario, had been involved in the national craft scene since he attended the 1964 First World Congress of Craftsmen in New York, and had expressed frustration over the administration of Canadian craft which he felt was inadequate in comparison to the American model:

We seem to always be on such a high level of thinking that we never get down to where the people are, it seems to be a sterile and artificial level, it has left me out right from the start till now, this is not my feeling with Mrs. Webb and Mrs. Patch...Our Canadian delegation at New York left me cold except for two people, it was the same in Winnipeg when we founded the Canadian Craftsmen's Association...Most of our Canadian World Crafts Council and Canadian Craftsmen's Association members seem to be only cold, capable, supremely self-confident and lacking in real humility and unselfishness.<sup>85</sup>

Soloman's opinions may have been only his, or they may have reflected a general

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<sup>83</sup> Joan Chalmers, letter to James Noel White, September 28, 1971. National Archives of Canada, World Craft Council, MG28I274, Vol. 35. WCC 1971/70 Y File.

<sup>84</sup> Elizabeth McCutcheon, Report of the Indian-Eskimo Committee, Minutes of the Canadian Guild of Crafts, January 26, 1972. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3-CK7.

<sup>85</sup> Arthur Soloman, response to World Crafts Council Questionnaire, 1968. National Archives of Canada, World Crafts Council, MG 28I274, Vol. 34. WCC Questionnaire 1968 File.

consensus amongst the Native craftspeople of Canada who did not play a role in the administration nor the exhibitions of the Canadian groups. The production of contemporary craftspeople continued to be overshadowed by popular exhibitions of traditional Native crafts which showed no modern pieces; “Aboriginal Art in Paris” which showed at the Musée de l’Homme, later traveling to the National Gallery of Canada as “Masterpieces of Indian and Eskimo Art,” and the American exhibition, “Native American Arts” were examples of such exclusionary events.<sup>86</sup>

Art Soloman addressed the colonial attitude toward Native craft in his 1969 presentation to the Department of Northern Affairs. He deconstructed the myth of the disappearance of Aboriginal craft that had been popularized by the Canadian Handicrafts Guild and James Houston, their Arctic Representative, arguing instead that the problem was one of organizing the supply of craftwork to match the demand. Insisting on diminished governmental involvement with Native crafts, Soloman urged the Parliamentary committee to reconsider its own definition of Indian craft. “We must not think of Indian crafts as being only beaded moccasins and mukluks, snowshoes and such things; we must think in terms of the Indian’s ability to make an absolutely unlimited variety of beautiful and useful things to suit the needs of everyday shoppers, as well as those of the most sophisticated and demanding buyer.”<sup>87</sup> Soloman took his argument into the Native communities, holding a meeting of forty First Nations representatives at Sioux

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<sup>86</sup> *Native American Arts* was shown at the Institute of American Indian Arts, United States Department of the Interior during 1968. *Aboriginal Art in Paris*, composed of two hundred items from thirteen Canadian Museums, was exhibited in the spring of 1969, opening at the National Gallery of Canada on November 20, 1969. Baroness Alix de Rothschild, President of la Societe des Amis du Musée de l’Homme, Paris, opened the exhibition, providing links to the tradition of philanthropic connoisseurs supporting the trade in increasingly valuable traditional craft objects. See *Craftsman/L’Artisan*, 2/2, (Summer 1969): 3, and *Craftsman/L’Artisan*, 2/3 (1969): 2.

<sup>87</sup> Arthur Soloman, “Presentation to the Parliamentary Common, Northern Affairs,” *Craftsman/L’Artisan*, 2/2 (Summer 1969): 10-11.



Lookout, Ontario, in October 1969. The meeting resulted in the unanimous passing of a motion that Art Soloman “should devise and implement a craft development programme...also request [sic] the Union of Ontario Indians to give me help in that regard.” A second motion, forming the short-lived Indian Crafts Council, with Art Soloman as the Director, allowed him to “speak on behalf of the craftsmen before governments.”<sup>88</sup> Soloman’s organization was directed toward “Indian” crafts, which he felt remained underdeveloped in comparison to Inuit crafts. By 1969 there were forty Cooperatives for Inuit craftspeople. The main organization, Canadian Arctic Producers, estimated sales for 1969 at \$800,000, with ninety percent of the profits returning to the craftspeople themselves.<sup>89</sup> Soloman started to turn the situation around quickly: Indian Crafts of Ontario, which replaced the Indian Crafts Council, was incorporated on February 13, 1970, receiving a start-up grant of \$200,000 from the Province of Ontario.

The stated aims of the non-profit organization were to “reach Indian communities especially in the North, bringing back authentic Indian arts and crafts for wholesale distribution,” to provide “Indian teachers to communities fully qualified to teach both traditional arts and crafts and also the more contemporary expressions of Indian culture,” and to develop a distinctive “Indian craft tag” with a symbol of the Thunderbird.<sup>90</sup> Art Soloman was responsible for overseeing the selection of the craft, ensuring that it

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<sup>88</sup> Arthur Soloman, *To the Indian Craft Workers of Ontario*. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5781, Box 36, FU-FZ. Indian Crafts of Ontario File. Soloman’s 1969 meeting was unique in that the participation was limited exclusively to First Nations’ representatives. This followed the revolutionary 1966 meeting of the conference of Northwestern Ontario Indians which was described by the *Globe and Mail* as unique in that “it was organized entirely by Indians and whites played only a subservient role.” “Indians form New Association,” *Globe and Mail*, 8 October 1966: 18.

<sup>89</sup> *Telegram*, 16 February 1969: 4:1. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, MU5781, Box 36, FV-FZ.

<sup>90</sup> *Indian Crafts of Ontario*, Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5781, Box 36, FV-FZ. The directors of the new organization were Art Soloman, Alma Houston (James Houston’s wife), of the Canadian Arctic Producers, and the quillworker Clara Baker.

maintained high standards of quality. Unfortunately, Indian Crafts of Ontario soon ran into both financial and aesthetic trouble, with prohibitive prices for the pieces being demanded, and confusion regarding what qualified as “proper” Indian craft.<sup>91</sup>

Following the Indian Crafts of Ontario initiative, the Ontario provincial government sponsored a new program with a focus on education rather than the distribution of First Nations' crafts. Referencing back to earlier attempts by the Canadian Handicrafts Guild to foster self-respect through crafts, the Manitou Arts Foundation was a cultural renewal project which received \$300,000 to provide local and summer school programs to Native artists in an effort to “reaffirm a proud sense of Indian-ness and self-esteem, without which no race can survive.”<sup>92</sup> Although Arthur Soloman’s hope for an independent marketing board for contemporary Native craft had not succeeded, the support of the provincial and federal governments for the work forced the national craft organizations to rethink their official positions regarding Aboriginal craftspeople. In his 1972 report on Canadian craft for the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, John Gibson noted the importance of crafts as “opportunities for Indians and Eskimos to exercise their own autonomy.” Gibson summarized that “Indian craft is therefore more general and more of a souvenir production than Eskimo craft...Indian products tend to be inexpensive and of a simple design.” Gibson recommended that the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development continue offering opportunities for formal training as well as research and development in Native craft, stressing that “recognition

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<sup>91</sup> The Archives of Ontario contains a number of handwritten messages and urgent memos between Arthur Soloman, Bunty Muff and R.F. Lavack of the Youth and Recreation Branch of the Ontario Department of Education. Soloman expresses worry and regret that things have gone badly with the new company, stating, “I think there’s going to be hell to pay.” Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, MU5781, Box 36, FV-FZ.

<sup>92</sup> Manitou Cultural Teach-In News Release, Saturday, March 1971. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5781, Box 36, FV-FZ.

and appropriateness must be dominant factors.”<sup>93</sup> This opinion was reflected in the minutes of the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association meeting of December 11, 1971, where Gerry Tillipaugh “expressed concern about the lack of Indian/Eskimo representation.”<sup>94</sup>

This concern was motivated by self-preservation. With two national craft organizations competing for funding from the same sources as many of the new Native craft organizations, the Federal government began taking a closer look at the phenomenon of craft. The Canadian Guild of Crafts enjoyed the positive feedback from its exhibition *Crafts Dimensions Canada* that had been opened by Secretary of State Gerard Pelletier. Pelletier revealed the Federal government’s interest in the crafts during his opening address, in which he advised craftspeople to continue producing for the emotional and cultural well-being of Canada, warning that “the uniformity of urban life is producing alienated and apathetic people.”<sup>95</sup> The presence of Pelletier at the opening of *Craft Dimensions Canada* was perceived as a boost for the Canadian Guild of Crafts, which had become increasingly worried about their lack of political connections in comparison with the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association. Despite having to work together on the Canadian committee of the World Crafts Council, there remained resentment and mistrust between the two groups. While they had attempted to work together on producing a national craft magazine, *Craftsman/L’Artisan*, with the Canadian Guild of Crafts lending the name and financial support and the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association

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<sup>93</sup> John W. Gibson, *A ‘Desk’ Commentary: The Role of Federal Government Departments with Respect to Canadian Handicrafts*, 13, Travel Industry Branch, Office of Tourism, Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Ottawa, February 1972. National Archives of Canada, RG 97, Vol. 441, File 4530 – J:2, DGAG 4530 – J:2, Vol. 2, Cooperation and Liason; Federal Industry, Trade and Commerce.

<sup>94</sup> Canadian Craftsmen’s Association Minutes, Meeting December 11, 1971, Hotel Bonaventure, Montreal. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU 5782, Box 37, GA-GC2.

<sup>95</sup> “Artists must fight apathy – Pelletier,” *Toronto Star*, September 23, 1969. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5772, Box 27, EK-EL3.

providing the articles and editing, the Guild withdrew their support following the first issue.<sup>96</sup> The Guild feared that did not have truly national representation, and that the Ottawa connections of Sheila Stiven, the Executive Secretary of the Association, made the Federal government all too aware of the Association. Following the Secretary of State's 1969 grant of \$10,000 to the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, the Guild issued a report "Becoming Better Known in Ottawa." The Guild concluded that "we had been too much wrapped up in our two operation in Montreal and Toronto, and had paid too little attention to Ottawa and the rest of Canada...we must broaden our concept of the national organization and how it should operate."<sup>97</sup>

Meanwhile, the Canadian Craftsmen's Association had been cooperating with the Education Division, Cultural Information Section, to formulate a national survey on Canadian crafts. The results of the "Canadian Crafts Survey and Membership Plebiscite" were released in November, 1972, making it clear that Canadians wanted one national craft organization. On November 8, 1972, the executive of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association and Gordon Barnes of the Canadian Guild of Crafts met with Federal government representatives from the Secretary of State, Statistics Canada, and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Following the meeting an official release was issued by the Guild and the Association which stated, "The National General Committee of the Canadian Guild of Crafts and the Council of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, take the results of the Plebiscite, part of the 1972 Crafts Survey,

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<sup>96</sup> Editor Sheila Stiven reported in the second issue of *Craftsman/L'Artisan*, "Among our critics was the Canadian Guild of Crafts who, while appreciating the difficulties implicit in producing a first issue, complicated by a mail strike, thought that the first issue was not too satisfactory" and stopped their financial contribution. *Craftsman/L'Artisan*, 1/2 (November 1968): 1.

<sup>97</sup> Canadian Guild of Crafts President's Report March 31, 1970, "Becoming Better Known in Ottawa," 8, 15. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archive of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3-CK7.

as a mandate from their respective membership and the Canadian craft community to proceed with the establishment of a single Canadian craft organization.”<sup>98</sup>

Despite this declaration, the Federal Government continued to be dissatisfied with the dual nature of national craft representation in Canada and undertook its own investigations into the state of Canadian craft.

Craft fell under the jurisdiction of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, which prepared two major reports during 1972. In February 1972 John W. Gibson released “A ‘Desk’ Commentary: The Role of Federal Government Departments with Respect to Canadian Handicrafts.” The purpose of Gibson’s report was to provide background information on Canadian crafts to assist in decisions regarding future research and development. Gibson wanted to preface his report with a definition of handicraft, but immediately reported that no general definition existed. The discourses surrounding craft and its institutional roles defied classification, forcing Gibson to provide two separate descriptions of what constituted handicrafts. The first he took from the Report of the Royal Commission of National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences, published in Ottawa in 1951, which defined handicraft as:

An individual product of usefulness and beauty, created by hand on a small scale, preferably by the same person from start to finish, employing primarily the raw materials of his own country and, where possible, his own locality.

The second definition, like many of Canadian craft ideas of the time, was borrowed from an American source, the October 1966 publication “Encouraging Americans in Crafts: What Role in Economic Development?” produced by the Economic Development Administration, United States Department of Commerce:

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<sup>98</sup> News Release, November 14, 1972. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen’s Association,

Arts and Crafts, handcrafts and handicrafts are terms generally used synonymously to refer to articles produced predominantly by hand rather than by line techniques so that there is a maximum of control of the design and the process by the hand worker so that the finished product exhibits a special quality or individuality as a result of the method of production. A true craft object reflects the time, the place, the man, and the methods by which it was made.<sup>99</sup>

Gibson acknowledged that the American definition was more relevant, and was more appropriate for the type of craft he was addressing in his paper. The differences between these definitions are important, for the choice of the second reinforced the assimilation of the American emphasis on individuality, the importance of self expression, and the need for uniqueness in design. It is interesting that a more recent definition for craft had not been produced in Canada, and that Gibson's report employed the term "handicraft," a word both the Canadian Guild of Crafts and Canadian Craftsmen's Association had agreed was outdated. Several Federal departments were identified as craft supporters, ranging from Agriculture, Health and Welfare to the Secretary of State. The Canadian Craftsmen's Association was named as the key national craft organization, receiving annual grants from the Secretary of State. Sheila Stiven, the Executive Secretary of the Association, was listed as a craft consultant to the Federal Government. Gibson concluded his report with the suggestion that the corporate structures of the Guild and the Association be examined, with the aim of establishing a corporate body "with the ultimate objective of improving the quantity and quality of Canadian handicrafts."<sup>100</sup>

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MG28I222, Vol. 1, Statistics Canada Survey.

<sup>99</sup> John W. Gibson, *A 'Desk' Commentary: The Role of Federal Government Departments with Respect to Canadian Handicrafts*, 4, Travel Industry Branch, Office of Tourism, Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Ottawa, February 1972. National Archives of Canada, RG97, Vol. 441, File 4530 – J:2, DGAG 4530 – J:2, Vol. 2., Cooperation and Liason; Federal Industry, Trade and Commerce.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, 23-24.

One month after Gibson's assessment, an anonymous report, directed toward furthering the industrial development of craft, was drafted. Unlike Gibson who was careful to identify the current trend toward individuality and self-expression in Canadian craft, the Materials Branch of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce report was not interested in the artistic temperaments of Canadian craftspeople. The lack of a relationship between the crafts and industry was blamed upon craftspeople, "Artisans by temperament and training, most are not adequately prepared nor do they have the inclination to look after business details." Craft organizations were also targeted: "The sector as a whole is fragmented with several national organizations and many regional and local associations infrequently having common objects."<sup>101</sup> While the study acknowledged that there was a minor role for art craft, it argued that more emphasis needed to be placed on industrial craft which would reach a broader population, the ideal being "a system where one artisan designs and produces a type which is then farmed out for manufacturing by a firm using mass production methods."<sup>102</sup> The Department undertook a full investigation of the possibility of adapting crafts to industry.

During the summer of 1972 Meredith Filshie, Gail Hancox and Rosalind Orr of the Materials Branch traveled Canada, speaking with craftspeople and administrators from every province. Submitted in 1972, the resulting "Report on the Canadian Handicraft Situation" exceeded one hundred pages and contained the most comprehensive Federal research on Canadian craft ever undertaken. The findings of the

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<sup>101</sup> *Program to Support the Canadian Handicraft Industry*, Prepared by the Materials Branch, Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, March 20, 1972, 1-2. National Archives of Canada. RG97, Vol. 441, File 4530 – J:2, Vol. 2, DGAG 4530 – J:2, Vol. 2, Cooperation and Liason; Federal Industry, Trade and Commerce.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

study reflected the differing concerns of craftspeople from across Canada, concluding that craftspeople in British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec and Ontario had attained more sophisticated levels of design in craft, while the Atlantic provinces were in need of more opportunities for skill development. Several common themes emerged, namely changes to the tax laws affecting craftspeople, the need for small, low-interest loans, traveling exhibitions of craft that would reach craftspeople living in rural areas, and an increase in educational opportunities.<sup>103</sup>

The desire for changes to tax laws and customs and excise duties was something that had been consistently stressed by Aileen Osborn Webb, who argued that it limited the exchange of exhibitions between Canada and the United States.<sup>104</sup> Unlike “Fine Art” and sculpture, which could enter the United States duty free for either display purposes or sale, the work of Canadian craftspeople was subject to duties based on the basic materials used and could reach as high as fifty-five percent for luxury materials used in jewelry. Craftspeople earning over three thousand dollars a year were subject to a twelve-percent sales tax on the finished object, while the fine artist was taxed only on the cost of materials.<sup>105</sup>

In addition to the hierarchy dictated by such a system of categorization, the classification of craft as small manufacturing rather than art had an economic impact on craftspeople. The language system that distinguished craft as non-art reflected the

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<sup>103</sup> Meredith Filshie et al. Report on the Canadian Handicraft Situation, 1-2. National Archives of Canada, RG97, Vol. 441, DGAC 4530-J:2, Vol 12, Cooperation and Liason, Federal Industry, Trade and Commerce.

<sup>104</sup> Proceedings of the Formation of a North American Alliance of the World Crafts Council, Shelburne, Vermont, August 1969, 3. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen’s Association, MG28I222, Volume 15.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 8, 28, 68. Filshie, Hancox and Orr recommended in their report that the Federal government raise the taxation level from \$3000 to \$15,000 before requiring sales tax, that the tax structure be changed to remove Federal Sales Tax from finished articles and materials.



intellectual climate of an earlier period. With the discourses surrounding craft shifting in the university and college systems toward art craft, the code of knowledge reflected in the Canadian taxation, custom and excise laws was being challenged by professional craftspeople who questioned the arbitrary nature of their designation as non-artists. Filshie, Hancox and Orr concluded that “artist-craftsmen” were their target group, and that although the Department wished to increase the industrial crafts of Canada, the cultural climate dictated that artist-craftspeople were the source of well-designed items. Their report called for the National Gallery of Canada to play a more important role in elevating the status of Canadian craft, recommending that the Gallery “display quality Canadian crafts in a permanent exhibition and that the National Gallery should consider circulating such an exhibition both in Canada and abroad.”<sup>106</sup>

A careful distinction was made between professional and hobby craftspeople in the “Report on the Canadian Handicraft Situation:”

Hobbyists would not be considered in any departmental program since their production does not contribute substantially to the Canadian economy. Remaining, therefore, are artist-craftsmen and industrial-craftsmen. The group that this Department would identify with most closely would be the cottage industries and craft-based industries or the industrial crafts.<sup>107</sup>

An extensive analysis of the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association and the Canadian Guild of Crafts was also proffered, coming to the damning conclusion that “professional craftsmen indicated that they avoided commitment to craft associations because these groups did not meet their needs.” The major recommendation made to the Department was for the craft industry to “be encouraged to form one national organization, with

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 86.

national representation.”<sup>108</sup> To the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association and the Canadian Guild of Crafts this was a strong message: it was time to set aside their differences and focus on unification. It was a timely warning, for Canada had been selected to host the 1974 World Crafts Council conference and exhibition in Toronto, and as for Expo ’67, the cultivation of a united craft image was deemed imperative.

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 90.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE DIS/UNITY OF CRAFT: *IN PRAISE OF HANDS*,  
TORONTO, 1974

“They thumped the desks yesterday in the legislature, with justification. The Ontario Science Centre has been selected as the site of the first World Crafts Council exhibition” reported the 25 April 1972 *Toronto Star*.<sup>1</sup> Mary Eileen Hogg, crafts advisor for the province of Ontario and Canadian representative to the World Crafts Council, had succeeded in convincing Aileen Osborn Webb of the suitability of Toronto to host the tenth anniversary conference and exhibition of the World Crafts Council. The promise of generous provincial funding for the project and Hogg’s friendship with Webb had in fact led to the selection of Toronto as host city the year before, when R.E. Secord, Director of the Youth and Recreation Branch, Ontario Department of Education, had written to Webb inviting the World Crafts Council to hold its 1974 conference in Toronto. Securing a suitable venue for an exhibition had been the final challenge in guaranteeing both the conference and exhibit for Toronto. Through the connections of Joan Chalmers, Vice-President of the Canadian Guild of Crafts, Ontario branch, who knew Raymond Moriyama, the architect of the Ontario Science Centre, the Centre came to the rescue.<sup>2</sup>

The biennial conference of the World Crafts Council was held at York University in Toronto from 9 – 15 June 1974, uniting 1500 craftspeople from over seventy countries, although the Soviet Union, the People’s Republic of China and other communist nations were notably absent. An accompanying exhibition, *In Praise of Hands*, the first

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<sup>1</sup> Joan Sutton, “Sutton’s Place,” *Toronto Star*, 25 April 1972: 24. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10 – CL6.

<sup>2</sup> James Plaut, memo, National Archives of Canada, Canadian Crafts Council/World Crafts Council, MG28I274, Vol. 38, Mr. Plaut, Secretary-General, World Crafts Council, 1968-75, ee10.

international craft exhibition organized by the Council, ran from 11 June to 2 September 1974, and was seen by over half a million people. As Joan Chalmers declared, “1974 must be a total craft year,” a command turned into reality through the efforts of the Canadian Committee of the World Crafts Council.<sup>3</sup> The Canadian Committee consisted of Mary Eileen Hogg, Joan Chalmers, North American Representative on the World Crafts Council Exhibition Executive Committee, Glen Wilton, Chairman of the World Crafts Council Planning Committee, Gordon A. Barnes, Chairman of the Canadian Committee, and Alan Campaigne, Chairman, Selection Committee for Canadian Entries.<sup>4</sup> Members of the Co-ordinating Committee who worked with the main organizers included members of the Ontario branch of the Canadian Guild of Crafts: Paul Bennett, Ruth Markowitz, Beth Slaney, and Leland Thomas.

Celebrating the two main events, the National Film Board of Canada produced a film, “In Praise of Hands,” and Benson and Hedges helped to fund a book of the same name. The federal government supported craft initiatives: the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Commerce sponsored the first Design Canada Craft Awards, and the Department of Indian Affairs allowed Tom Hill to take a paid leave of absence to organize the Royal Ontario Museum show *Canadian Indian Art '74* which ran from 10 June to 31 August, timed to coincide with *In Praise of Hands*. Other art spaces followed the Royal Ontario Museum’s lead, and over twenty-five galleries across Canada held craft exhibitions in conjunction with *In Praise of Hands*. Publications geared toward the crafts were funded,

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<sup>3</sup> Joan Chalmers, “The International Scene,” National General Committee of the Canadian Guild of Crafts, *Report of the Annual Meeting* April 26, 1972. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archive of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3-CK7.

<sup>4</sup> *A Brief to the Secretary of State From the Canadian Committee*, July 1972, 1. National Archives of Canada, World Crafts Council/Canadian Crafts Council, MG281274, Vol. 34, Gordon Barnes, Chairman Committee, 1972-1974.

most notably *Chatelaine* craft editor Una Abrahamson's coffee table book, *Crafts Canada: The Useful Arts*, aimed at both professional artist craftspeople and recreational hobbyists. The City of Toronto was enthusiastic about hosting the World Crafts Council event, with Toronto mayor David Crombie proclaiming 9 – 15 June "Craft Week, Toronto." Birks, Eatons and Simpsons featured Canadian craft entries in their window displays, while their advertisements urged consumers to "get crafty" by purchasing kits they were selling to promote Craft Week. (Figure 27) Television programs on craft ran during *In Praise of Hands*, highlighting Canadians engaging in ethnically specific craft activities.<sup>5</sup> Thomas Cook World Travel Service offered conference delegates special craft tours to Northern Canada, Western Canada, Historic Ontario, and Historic Quebec, as well as the Eastern United States. Most important to the future of the Canadian craft field was the 15 June inaugural meeting of the newly formed Canadian Crafts Council, held during the conference.

This chapter investigates the state of the professional crafts in Canada at a time when they appeared to have been given a leadership role, albeit temporary, in the world craft community. A less than happy picture emerges as the specifics of the many craft activities comprising and surrounding the World Craft Congress events are looked at closely. The national infrastructure for Canadian craft, on the verge of being reorganized again, was strong enough to attract unprecedented financial resources for its showcasing on the international stage, but was unable to deal with many of the issues which had troubled it over the past decade. Canadian organizers ignored important regional and

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<sup>5</sup> *Star T.V. Guide*, June 19, 1974. "This is World Crafts Year and this program looks at three different artisan co-ops in the Maritimes." Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10-CL6. Toronto Star television guides dating from "summer 1974" list shows of First Nations, Inuit and Ukrainian crafts. Television Ontario (tvo), showed a three part series in

cultural questions, in part because one of their primary goals seems to have been to garner the approval of American craft professionals. In the end, they created a situation in which the emulation of American craft ideals led to the treatment of Canadian craft as a divided rather than genuinely national pursuit, a fragmentation which paralleled the underlying problematics of Aileen Osborn Webb's search for a global craft community.

Immediately following the announcement of the Ontario Science Centre as the exhibition venue for *In Praise of Hands*, the *Globe and Mail* reported that "Vanderbilt Webb of New York...has set up an executive committee for the exhibition."<sup>6</sup> In fact, Webb and the staff of the World Crafts Council headquarters in New York had already been working closely with Hogg, Chalmers and members of the Canadian Committee, preparing initial guidelines for the conference. Accompanied by Hogg, James Plaut, the Executive Secretary of the World Crafts Council, flew to Ottawa in August 1971, to seek federal support for the 1974 conference and exhibition. Plaut's presence in Ottawa may have had a positive effect, with Webb writing enthusiastically about his visit to Hogg: "we have established a pleasant sense of comradeship between the two countries which bodes well for the future."<sup>7</sup>

Plaut embodied the cultural capital cultivated by Aileen Osborn Webb and sought by those members of the Canadian craft field who perceived themselves as professionals. A Harvard graduate, Plaut was entrenched in the world of fine art: appointed Director of

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conjunction with the World Crafts Council, "In the Making," "Fibres and Clay," "The Conference," Valerie Hatten, Librarian, Ontario Science Centre, January 30, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> "World Craft Show in Toronto in 1974," *Globe and Mail*, 25 April 1972: 18. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, CK10 – CL6, Box 12, MU5757. Aileen Osborn Webb, Margaret Patch and James Plaut formed the core of the executive committee.

<sup>7</sup> Aileen Osborn Webb, letter to Mary Eileen Hogg, June 21, 1971. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Crafts Council/World Crafts Council, MG28I274, Volume 38.

the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston in 1939, he had been the Director of the Art Looting Investigations Units in Washington, London, France, Italy, Germany and Austria immediately following World War II. He had made the radical transition to a supporter of crafts during his involvement in organizing the Industrial Design Division of the Museum of Modern Art in 1948. Through his friendship with Aileen Osborn Webb, Plaut was fully aware of the modernization of craft sought by the American Craftsmen's Council. Webb had personally selected Plaut to act as the Executive Secretary of the World Crafts Council in 1967, believing him capable of extending his fine arts sensibilities to the international craft world.<sup>8</sup>

Following the Ottawa visit, the North American Assembly of the World Crafts Council met in Toronto during November 1971, to discuss ideas for the conference. Plaut's comments during this meeting betrayed the secondary role Canada was about to play as host of the New York directed conference and exhibition. When the Canadian Committee expressed concern about the process of selection for the exhibition, "Mr. Plaut explained that the Host Country [Canada] and the World Crafts Council always take full responsibility for the ideology and planning for a conference, and they would welcome any help from Canada."<sup>9</sup> Canada was to be the facilitator, rather than the executor, of the two events. There was a slight edge in Hogg's succinct explanation of the relationship between Canada and the United States in her 1974 World Crafts Council

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<sup>8</sup> James Plaut, *Resume*, North American Assembly Conference, 10-11 June, 1971, regarding World Crafts Council 1974. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Crafts Council, World Crafts Council, MG28I274, Volume 35, *World Crafts Council Conference Newsletter*, May 1974, 6. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5783, Box 38, GD-GG4. James S. Plaut Papers, Archives of American Art Collection, mq238577, reels 581 and 5139.

<sup>9</sup> North American Assembly Conference, 10-11 June, 1971, regarding World Crafts Council 1974. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Crafts Council, World Crafts Council, MG28I274, Volume 35.

Progress Report; “We work under direction from New York.”<sup>10</sup> The omnipresence of the United States in the UNESCO-supported World Crafts Council greatly influenced the ideologies and approaches toward the attainment of a global craft community that would be stressed in Toronto.

Aileen Osborn Webb’s internationalist intentions continued to dictate the direction of the world body, causing resentment among certain Canadian craft administrators. Sheila Stiven, former Secretary of the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association, objected to the dominance of the American Craft Council in the decision-making processes of a supposedly neutral organization, pointing out to Webb during a 1974 meeting that the close relationship between the American Craft Council and the World Crafts Council caused confusion as to where American interests stopped and world interests began. In a very blunt fashion, she urged the World Crafts Council to “extricate itself from the clutches of the American Craft Council.”<sup>11</sup>

Stiven’s concerns failed to modify the situation. It was a handful of select, friendly players - in particular Webb, Plaut, Chalmers, Hogg and Paul Bennett, Executive Director of the Canadian Guild of Crafts (Ontario) - who intended to unite the world through craft, while offering Canada national cohesion along the way. They possessed enough Western political and cultural connections, as well as access to economic capital, to influence the perception of professional craft. The Western classification of craft promoted through *In Praise of Hands* was bound up with issues of consumption, class

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<sup>10</sup> Mary Eileen Hogg, *World Crafts Council Progress Report*, 1974 Report, Canadian Crafts Council, 9. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen’s Association, MG28I222, Volume 1.

<sup>11</sup> World Crafts Council Discussion, July 5, 1974. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Craft Council/ World Crafts Council, MG28I274, Volume 35.



distinctions, and exoticized images of the “other,” creating binaries in the promotion of professional Western crafts.

Aileen Osborn Webb’s vision of the World Crafts Council uniting all craftspeople regardless of race, class, gender or geography had not wavered since she introduced it in 1964 at the First World Congress of Craftsmen in New York. The American respect for individuality in craft would elevate the crafts of world from traditional, joyless labour lacking aesthetic direction, to art craft, marketable throughout the capitalist market economies of the world. As she argued, “We’ve removed crafts from the level of the church fair in this country – now we must do it for the world.”<sup>12</sup> Webb’s message was timely, as craftspeople and the general public were concerned with the effects modernization would have on craft objects and society in general. Like the ethnologists and philanthropists who had been involved in preserving Native American craft production in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Webb was dedicated to conserving particular forms of craft activity that would adhere to American art categorizations. Her work uniting American craftspeople through the American Craft Council was praised for its ability to generate a cohesive community of craftspeople, something she believed could be pursued on the world stage.

The idea of a community based on craft had been eagerly embraced by the delegates represented at the 1964 conference in their attempts to establish national craft communities. It seemed logical to the World Crafts Council that these national communities could be easily blended to form a strong international or global community. Globalization continued to emerge as a concept, although theorists like Canada’s Marshal

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<sup>12</sup> Rita Reif, “Eighty Today and She Can’t Wait to Get Back on the Dance Floor,” *New York Times*, 17 July, 1972. National Archives of Canada, CCC/WCC MG38I274, Volume 38, ee 9.

McLuhan were cautious in their definitions of a “global village,” a concept popularized by the media as an ideal universal goal. Only recently has this formulation been deconstructed by sociologists who argue a global society is impossible due to the constraints placed upon the possible fields of exchanges, and the colonization and domination of particular economic, political and cultural systems.<sup>13</sup> It now seems clear that Webb’s vision of a global community was part of the “Americanization” of the world in the cold war climate of the 1960s, where American values and economic and political systems would be used to “elevate” all countries. The World Crafts Council can be read as one of the participants in this American-controlled global community. Although affiliated with UNESCO, the Council had its headquarters in New York, and an administration composed mainly of Americans. Canada’s role as the host of the 1974 exhibition and conference might be perceived as a convenience for the American organizers, but for the Canadians involved it was considered to be more than an American puppet operation. *In Praise of Hands* was seen as the chance to emerge as a strong national unit on the international stage, a chance to replay the aspirations of Expo 67.

The 1971 announcement of Toronto as the host city for the World Crafts Council gathering sped up the process of unification between Canada’s two national craft organizations. So too did the two major reports issued in 1972 by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Commerce, both of which concluded that the formation of one national craft organization was imperative. The Canadian Craftsmen’s Association and the Canadian Guild of Craft, concerned over a possible impact on their funding from the

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<sup>13</sup> John H. Simpson, “The Great Reversal: Selves, Communities, and the Global System,” *Sociology of Religion*, 57:2 (1996): 115-125. See also, Barry Wellman Ed. *Networks in the Global Village: Life in*

Department of the Secretary of State, began working together on amalgamation. The first joint meeting of the Association and Guild's boards and executives took place in Toronto in January 1973. This was followed by a meeting in Ottawa in March, sponsored by the Secretary of State, which resulted in the announcement of the formation of a single national craft organization for Canada, the Canadian Crafts Council. Embracing all crafts, this group was to be chartered on 23 March 1974, just in time to hold its founding sessions during the World Crafts Council Conference. It was to displace the Canadian Guild of Crafts and the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, putting an end to the decade-long existence of two competing national organizations.<sup>14</sup>

The pressure to come together and to operate "effectively" had not been and would not be subtle. In the wake of the March 1973 meeting, Secretary of State J. Hugh Faulkner wrote a warning letter to Ann Suzuki, Chair of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, in which he identified the key concerns of the Federal government:

I think it is most important that a truly national structure evolve from this action capable of representing craftsmen throughout Canada and which will take into account the country's bilingual and multi-cultural character and also reflect provincial and regional aspirations. I believe that the degree of confidence which the government might place in the organization which emerges from your deliberations will depend in large part on the extent of its success in achieving these goals.<sup>15</sup>

Faulkner identified the issues of bilingualism, regionalization and multiculturalism that had plagued both the Association and Guild in their previous attempts to unite Canadian craftspeople into a national community. Most of those

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*Contemporary Communities* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> George Shaw, letter to Herman Voaden, November 14, 1968, Jack Sures, letter to Herman Voaden, January 7, 1969, York University Archives, Herman Voaden Fonds, 1982-019/013, File 8.

<sup>15</sup> J. Hugh Faulkner, Secretary of State, letter to Ann Suzuki, chair, Canadian Craftsmen's Association, 14 March 1973. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen's Association, MG28I222, Volume 1.

involved hoped the new Canadian Crafts Council would be able to overcome language, ethnic and regional differences, but from the beginning it was clear that resolution, if possible at all, was not going to come easily. A January 1973 letter from Rei Nakushima of the Visual Arts Centre in Montreal to Ann Suzuki and Sheila Stiven of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association indicated that tensions between Quebec craftspeople and English-speaking craftspeople remained high:

The approach to crafts is entirely different here. Here they are interested in raising the general level of the crafts which are done on a production level. The tradition of crafts in the home is long and provides the background which brings out this value...it is a type of industry to them. In contrast, the Canadian Craftsmen's Association has always emphasized the "one-of-a-kind," "unique" item and their activity is based on this premise. The Artist is praised, the craftsman is ignored. They feel that after ten years of hitting their heads against a wall, they no longer had the patience to listen to anymore unrelated discussions to their own circumstances. Quebecers have had a long suppressed situation. The Latin temperament and the Anglo-Saxon Puritan traditions are miles apart.<sup>16</sup>

Nakushima urged the Association directors to come and listen to the executive of the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec before the March amalgamation meetings, but her advice was ignored. No meeting took place, and instead the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec they held their own congress in May 1973, adopting an independent five-year plan which stressed the nationalistic ideals of their craft production, arguing that crafts were the "vehicle of Quebec cultural identity."<sup>17</sup>

While the Canadian Committee of the World Crafts Council set about requesting a grant of \$111,500 from the Government of Canada to support the Toronto conference

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<sup>16</sup> Rei Nakushima, Visual Arts Centre, Montreal, letter to Ann Suzuki, chair, Canadian Craftsmen's Association, January 18, 1973. National Archive of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen's Association, MG28I222, Volume 1.

<sup>17</sup> *Quebec Congress of the Applied Arts*, May 25-27, 1973, Orford, Quebec, 5. National Archive of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen's Association, MG28I222, Volume 1.

and exhibition, arguing that such an event would enhance the Canadian mosaic through the active participation of diverse craft organizations, Guy Vidal of the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec wrote the Secretary of State in anger over the exclusionary practices of the exhibition committee. Ironically, the Canadian Committee which was justifying its requests on the Committee on Bilingualism and Biculturalism's finding that craft production was one of the ways in which the many cultural groups were able to retain their identity in Canada, provided English-only correspondence about the World Crafts Council exhibition.<sup>18</sup> This enraged the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec: the English-only correspondence was cited as representative of a lack of respect for the craftspeople of Quebec. They accused the organizing committee of not understanding there were two cultures in Canada with different philosophies and major cultural differences. As a result, the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec declined participation in the World Craft Council exhibition, stating that it would not submit Quebec craft objects as part of the Canadian entries. Instead, they offered to organize and present an exhibition on Quebec craftspeople to run during *In Praise of Hands*, juried by the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec.<sup>19</sup> The Canadian Committee did not accept this offer. Quebec's official craft organization supported the new Canadian Crafts Council on paper only, making their displeasure clear through their refusal to participate in the June 1974 founding meetings.

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<sup>18</sup> 1974 -*The Crafts Year in Canada*, A Brief to the Secretary of State from the Canadian Committee, World Crafts Council, July 1972, 2. National Archives of Canada, World Crafts Council, MG28I274, Vol. 33.

<sup>19</sup> Guy Vidal in Collaboration with the Métiers d'Art du Quebec to the Canadian Guild of Crafts (Quebec and Ontario), the Visual Arts Centre, Montreal, the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, the World Crafts Council, the Secretary of State, 19 January 1973. National Archive of Canada, DGAC4000 – C47, RG 97, Volume 1, Associations, Clubs, Societies – Canadian Guild of Crafts. Vidal wrote, "Votre organisme semble ignorer que la langue des artisans du Quebec est le français et que pour les rejoindre, il faut s'adresser a eux dans leur langue...Il exist un malaise parmi les artisans québécois face a cette , manifestation, et c'est la raison pour la quelle la plupart n'ont pas participé."

Sheila Stiven of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association had read over Mary Eileen Hogg's initial brief to the Secretary of State requesting financial support for the World Crafts Council conference and responded strongly to the Ontario focus of the draft. She reminded Hogg of the importance of having a truly national involvement in the project: "indicate active involvement with groups in the West, the Maritimes, and especially Quebec...I believe you are jeopardizing your chances by such TORONTOISM!"<sup>20</sup> Despite these warnings, the split between Quebec's professional craft organization and the rest of Canada was not focused upon by the Canadian Committee; rather it emphasized the multicultural nature of the new organization and exhibition. The hypocrisy of the situation was not overlooked by Quebec craftspeople who felt increasingly excluded from the vision of a national community, as they continued to receive World Crafts Council rhetoric mailed to them in English. Memos from the organizing committee were filled with global sentiments, particularly with regard to the type of objects to be included in the exhibition. The stated goals of the exhibition were to "promote greater public understanding of the role and condition of the creative craftsman in contemporary society" and "to set, by example, standards of excellence in the crafts."<sup>21</sup> Evidently, the examples were not to be those of Quebec.

While Quebec craftspeople refused to participate in the new national craft organization and the World Crafts Council exhibition, Ontario craftspeople took the opportunity to solidify their position at the apex of professional Canadian craft. The Canadian Guild of Crafts Ontario Branch had enjoyed renewed status following the

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<sup>20</sup> Sheila Stiven, memo to Mary Eileen Hogg, August 8, 1972. National Archive of Canada, World Crafts Council, MG28I274, Volume 35.

<sup>21</sup> Memorandum from World Crafts Council to all World Crafts Council directors and representatives, February 8, 1972. National Archives of Canada, World Crafts Council, MG28I274, Vol. 34.

success of their 1969 exhibition *Craft Dimensions Canada*, selected by an exclusively American jury, and had undertaken a series of high-profile shows. Joan Chalmers, the daughter of the wealthy publishing philanthropists and craft supporters Floyd and Jean Chalmers, had more than a little to do with these successes. A graduate of the Ontario College of Art, Chalmers had been a writer for *Canadian Homes and Gardens*, and the art director of *Mayfair Magazine*, *Canadian Bride Magazine*, *Canadian Homes and Gardens* and *Chatelaine*.<sup>22</sup> Chalmers became a director of the Ontario branch of the Guild in 1967, and soon took up the organization of large-scale exhibitions, serving as Exhibition Chair from 1970-1972. She was elected as the first woman President of the Canadian Guild of Crafts in the spring of 1974. As the North American Representative on the World Crafts Council Exhibition Executive Committee, Chalmers played an important role in deciding various aspects of the *In Praise of Hands* exhibition.

Like Aileen Osborn Webb, Chalmers was born into a public-spirited family who possessed the economic capital to enhance her cultural and symbolic capital. Chalmers' presence on the board of the Ontario branch of the Guild was significant, for she provided recognizable cultural capital within the field of craft. Unlike Webb, whose parents did not have prior involvement in the crafts, Chalmers' mother, Jean Chalmers, had served as the Vice-President of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in the 1940s, and her father Floyd S. Chalmers, visited New York in 1939 to investigate the possibility of opening up markets for Canadian crafts in the United States. Floyd S. Chalmers was one of Canada's leading cultural philanthropists. He joined the *Financial Post* in 1919, becoming the chief editor in 1925. By 1942 he had become the Vice-President of the Maclean-Hunter

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<sup>22</sup> *World Crafts Council Fact Sheet*, Toronto, Canada, June 1974, 4. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5783, Box 38, GD-GG4.

publishing empire, and was made President in 1952, then Chairman from 1964-1969. During his career Chalmers amassed a substantial personal fortune, which he shared generously through his support of various Canadian cultural initiatives. He established the Floyd S. Chalmers Foundation in 1963, remaining President until 1979. The Foundation funded a wide range of activities, from theatre and music to the visual arts. In 1973 the Chalmers Awards were instituted, and Joan Chalmers encouraged the Foundation to support Canadian craft through annual monetary awards.<sup>23</sup>

Newspaper accounts of both Webb and Chalmers conveyed images of confident, culturally important women. A 1974 *Toronto Star* article described Chalmers as “tall, attractive Joan Chalmers, newly elected as the first woman president of the Canadian Guild of Crafts (Ontario), and a key figure in bringing the first World Crafts Council exhibition to Toronto,” while a 1972 *New York Times* description of Webb stated, “the five-foot, ten-inch tall regal-looking Webb...is organizing the first World Crafts Exhibition, scheduled to take place in Toronto in 1974.”<sup>24</sup> In Joan Chalmers, Canada had finally found a figurehead for the crafts of similar stature to Aileen Osborn Webb. Chalmers was enthusiastic about her role in promoting the crafts in Canada, becoming well recognized as she drove around Toronto in a Jeep Wagoneer bearing the license plates “WCC074.”

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<sup>23</sup> Floyd S. Chalmers was awarded the *Diplôme d'Honneur* by the Canadian Council of the Arts in 1974, the Order of Canada in 1967 and was made a Companion of the Order of Canada in 1984. York University Archives, Herman Voaden Fonds, 1991 – 020/011, File 12. See also,

<http://www.canadiantheatre.com/c/chalmersf.html> and <http://www.emc.ca/whoweare/hm#Founder>

<sup>24</sup> Lotta Dempsey, “Metro Woman plans First World Crafts Show,” *Toronto Star*, Wednesday, May 22, 1974. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10 – CL6. Rita Reif, “Eighty Today and She Can’t Wait to Get Back on the Dance Floor,” *New York Times*, 17 July 1972. National Archive of Canada, Canadian Crafts Council, World Crafts Council, MG28I274, Volume 38.



Both Webb and Chalmers worked to elevate the standards of craft and the taste of the public. Utilizing their cultural pedigrees and position within the cultural nobility of North America, they sought to improve the material conditions of the world through craft. Their taste was “good taste,” accepted by the cultural field as a given rather than a social and cultural construct; the determining factors of class, race and economic capital were deemed secondary to this innate good taste allegedly possessed by both women. While Webb and Chalmers were cognizant of the differences that existed between their elite status and the masses, as evidenced through their philanthropic deeds, they used their position to legitimate “proper” crafts. These objects tended to be reflections of the cultural constructs that formed the ideology of the prevailing artistic taste of the times, rather than objects reflecting the popular aesthetic.<sup>25</sup> Following the philosophy of William Morris, Webb advised Canadians during the 1955 exhibition *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.* to have one or two beautiful handcrafted objects in the house to provide pleasure while raising the standard of taste to a higher level. Chalmers argued that the best education was exposure to beautiful crafts:

If you go to any craft fair, especially the church basement ones, you just know how awful it's going to be... What's worst of all are the crocheted fancy dress ladies that become socks to go over the extra roll of toilet paper... if people don't have a developed taste it's their problem. All you can do is try to educate people by exposure to beautiful crafts.<sup>26</sup>

In her role as Exhibition Chair of the Ontario Branch of the Canadian Guild of Crafts, Chalmers attempted to elevate the standards of Canadian craft through large-scale

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<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of the role of the “popular aesthetic,” with its emphasis on the continuity between art and life, versus “pure taste” and the “aesthetic disposition” see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Richard Nice Trans. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 28-50.

<sup>26</sup> James Strecker Ed. *Sheridan: The Cutting Edge in Crafts*, (Erin, Ontario: Boston Mills Press, 1999), 20.

exhibitions emphasizing art-craft. One of the most important of these, *Entr'Acte*, ran from November 13, 1973 to January 15, 1974, and asked craftspeople to create pieces based on the idea of the theatre.<sup>27</sup> The exhibition received \$15,000 in private sponsorship from the cigarette manufacturer, Benson and Hedges Canada, which hoped to benefit from the popularity of contemporary craft. Benson and Hedges' President Charles Lombard was featured in many newspaper articles across Canada, shown viewing various craft pieces. Described alternately as "examining," "gazing," or "admiring" craft, Lombard's gaze represented the entry of professional Canadian craftspeople into the corporate scene and their acceptance as fine artists, symbolized by a widening spectatorship. This process mirrored that in the United States, where private sponsorship of craft exhibitions had long involved corporations such as Ford and Johnson and Johnson.

The Guild took advantage of the exhibition to honour Adelaide Marriott, a member and employee for over forty years. Calling Marriott the "mother of our crafts: nurse to our growing pains and a patient but firm upholder of the verities of honest professionalism," the Guild paid tribute to her with the purchase in her name of Harold O'Connor's sculptural piece "Left Out" shown in *Entr'Acte*, while York University in Toronto gave her an honorary doctorate.<sup>28</sup> It was Floyd S. Chalmers, Chancellor of York University from 1968 – 1974, who conferred the Doctor of Laws degree on Adelaide Marriott.<sup>29</sup> If Joan Chalmers operated as a symbol for the newly revitalized Guild, promising private philanthropy and showy exhibitions similar to the American model,

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<sup>27</sup> One of Floyd S. Chalmers' main interests was the theatre. He helped to establish the Stratford Festival, and provided Chalmers Awards for Canadian plays, directors and young playwrights.

<sup>28</sup> "Pioneer Craft Sponsor gets Honorary Degree," *Toronto Star*, 6 June 1973. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10-CL6.

Marriott was recognized as the figurehead for the long history of the Guild, providing a link between the new Guild ideals of professional art craft and the necessary corps of volunteers and amateurs who had been increasingly dismissed as dilettantes. Even *Chatelaine* magazine had criticized dilettantes in the 1970 article “Who Runs Culture in Canada?” classifying “handmaidens...daughters of rich families, wives of rising young executives” and matrons “with the bun of hair, smoothing her skirt with plump, ringed hands” as the true cultural establishment of Canada, deciding “to an astonishing degree what our Canada needs.”<sup>30</sup> The Canadian Craftsmen’s Association also involved female volunteers, but in contrast to the Canadian Guild of Crafts, they were never dismissed as “dilettantes.” This could be due to the professional nature of the female administrators of the Association, who consisted of career women such as Norah McCullough, the Western Liaison Officer for the National Gallery of Canada, and Ann Suzuki, a full-time craftsperson. Nonetheless, the women of both organizations, all open admirers of Aileen Osborn Webb, played tremendously important roles in determining the type of craft promoted in Canada.

In contrast with its intense involvement in the craft exhibitions surrounding Expo 67, the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association played a minor role during the organization of *In Praise of Hands*. This shift might be explained by Mary Eileen Hogg’s replacement of Norah McCullough as the Canadian Representative to the World Crafts Council. In 1972 the government department where Hogg worked, the Youth and Recreation Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, was announced as officially

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<sup>29</sup> Canadian Guild of Crafts (Ontario), *President’s Report*, April 18, 1974. York University Archives, Herman Voaden Fonds, 1991 – 020/011, File 4.

<sup>30</sup> Christina Newman, “Who Runs Culture in Canada?” *Chatelaine*, 43/6 (June 1970), 26, 27, 79.

assisting the Canadian Committee of the World Crafts Council in organizing the 1974 events. This was followed by the decision of the Youth and Recreation Branch to enlist the services of the Canadian Guild of Craft, Ontario branch, and the Ontario Craft Foundation in the official arrangements. Glen Wilton, a member of both the Guild and Foundation, was appointed Chairman of the Conference, and the Canadian Guild of Crafts was made responsible for selecting Canada's entries for *In Praise of Hands*. Hogg's decisions regarding the organization of the conference and exhibition effectively excluded the Canadian Craftsmen's Association.<sup>31</sup> McCullough's retirement from the National Gallery and the loss of Sheila Stiven as editor of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association publication *Craftsman/L'Artisan* to the Nova Scotia provincial department concerned with craft, were also contributing factors.

The Canadian Guild of Crafts was perceived by Jack Sures and George Shaw, former Chairs of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, as fueling opposition between the groups by arguing that they were in competition with each other. In separate letters to Herman Voaden, the President of the Canadian Guild of Crafts from 1968 – 1970, Sures and Shaw outlined their vision of the Guild leading Canadian craftspeople in marketing and exhibitions, while the Association took responsibility for "policing the crafts scene." Shaw wrote to Voaden that the Association was created to "provide an alternative to the Guild," stating that he was saddened when Voaden "interpreted the existence of the Guild and Association as conflicting, which it is not." The letters of Sures and Shaws provide clues regarding the lack of involvement of the Association in the high-profile exhibitions surrounding the World Crafts Council conference in 1974, a

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<sup>31</sup> Mary Eileen Hogg, "Memo to All Members of the Canadian Section of the World Crafts Council," 1972. York University Archives, Herman Voaden Fonds, 1991 – 020/011, File 3.

task that the executive of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association may have perceived as belonging to the Guild.<sup>32</sup>

Exhibitions such as *Craft Dimensions Canada* and *Entr'Acte* indicated that the administrators and craftspeople involved with the Guild now supported individualistic, self-expressive craft objects, often products of professional craftspeople with formal artistic training. In other words, they too had adopted the Canadian Craftsmen's Association's goals. Not everyone was happy with this "conversion." The 1973 exhibition *Entr'Acte* was held at the O'Keefe Centre, an elegant, large cultural venue in downtown Toronto: across the street in the St. Lawrence Centre for the Performing Arts was an exhibition titled *Salon des Refusés*, comprised of the work of artist-craftspeople who had been rejected from the official Guild event. Playing off the famous Salon des Refusés mounted by the late nineteenth-century Impressionist artists rejected from France's official Salon, this group of artist craftspeople released a manifesto outlining complaints against the professional Canadian craft establishment: "We of the *Salon des Refusés* are a diverse group. We: question exclusivity...question the right of institutions to form the aesthetic opinion of the time."<sup>33</sup> Those exhibiting were mostly professionals whose work had been deemed inadequate by the Canadian Guild of Crafts (Ontario) jury, but their Salon was considered by many to be a very respectable adjunct to *Entr'Acte*. Both exhibitions were favourably reviewed, with Kay Kritzwitzer of the *Globe and Mail* acknowledging that both were of high quality. The questioning of standards and exclusivity by the craftspeople rejected from the Guild's formal exhibition paralleled,

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<sup>32</sup> George Shaw, letter to Herman Voaden, November 14, 1968 and Jack Sures, letter to Herman Voaden, January 7, 1969, York University Archives, Herman Voaden Fonds, 1982-019/013, File 8.

<sup>33</sup> Alan Campaigne, *Manifesto of the Salon des Refusés*, National Archives of Canada, Canadian Craftsmen's Association, MG28I222, Volume 9.

although certainly did not echo, the concerns of the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec. Having been selected by Hogg and Webb as the main organization to be involved in the *In Praise of Hands* exhibition, the Canadian Guild of Crafts remained focused on promoting nationwide its message of raising standards for professional crafts, evidently largely untroubled by the concerns of the Salon and the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec. It is important to note, however, that Alan Campaigne, the author of the "Manifesto of the Salon des Réfuses," became a member of the Canadian Committee for *In Praise of Hands*, perhaps an attempt at reconciliation with one of the disgruntled groups.

Another powerful figure behind the message was Paul Bennett, Executive Director of the Ontario branch of the Canadian Guild of Crafts. Bennett was an arts administrator who was vocal in emphasizing the need for professionalism and equality for crafts within fine arts structures. Before joining the Guild, Bennett had been the director of the Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa, Ontario, and an advisor to the Community Programs Branch of the Sports and Recreation Bureau for the province of Ontario, where he became familiar with the political and social structures determining the cultural policies of Ontario.<sup>34</sup> This was important information for the Guild which worried over securing governmental and private support. The combination of Joan Chalmers' presence and Paul Bennett's practical expertise led to unprecedented financial support for the Guild, and its largest undertaking ever, organizing *In Praise of Hands* for the World Crafts Council.

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<sup>34</sup> Mary Eileen Hogg, *Memo to All Members of the Canadian Section of the World Crafts Council* York University Archives, Herman Voaden Fonds, 1991 – 020/011, File 3.

In total, over \$600,000 was raised for the exhibition and conference. Federal sources of funding totaled \$225,000. The Secretary of State, Art and Culture Branch, spent \$22,000 to bring craftspeople in as demonstrators; the Multicultural branch donated \$18,000 to sponsor “ethnic nights” at the Ontario Science Centre; the Canada Council gave \$10,000 for a four-colour, sixteen page supplement of crafts to be distributed in cultural magazines; the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce contributed \$14,000 toward administration costs; and the Department of External Affairs granted \$15,000 to bring ten international master craftspeople to Toronto. The government of Ontario contributed over \$300,000 for administration and exhibition costs, as well as maintaining the salary for Mary Eileen Hogg who worked exclusively on the exhibition. The municipal government of Toronto sponsored a barbeque at Black Creek Pioneer village for almost 1500 delegates to the conference, and the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and New Brunswick paid a total of \$20,000 to send craftspeople to Toronto. In addition to the generous provincial and federal funds, Benson and Hedges president Charles Lombard pledged \$50,000 to be shared between the establishment of a Benson and Hedges house to accommodate craftspeople involved in demonstrations at the exhibition, as well as the official poster and book for *In Praise of Hands*.<sup>35</sup> (Figure 28) Jean Chalmers donated \$25,000 to purchase all the Canadian entries in the exhibition, and an anonymous private donor gave \$5000 to have craft students at Ontario colleges brought in for the conference and exhibition.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> “Donation for Crafts,” *Globe and Mail*, 27 March 1974. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10-CL6. Lombard’s glowing statement on the necessity of crafts “perhaps more than any other human activity, at the heart of every society, reflect the realities and dreams of all men,” was tempered by the anonymous author of the article who reminded readers that “still, the donation has practical value for the company.”

<sup>36</sup> These figures have been taken from the Archive of Ontario, Ontario Craft Council, Archive of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10-CL6 and the *Canadian Committee of the World Crafts Council 1974*

As the contributions toward the exhibition continued to grow, the Guild sent Paul Bennett across western Canada to promote *In Praise of Hands*. The February 1974 tour to major cities in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and northern Ontario turned into a media event, popularizing Bennett's view on the importance of professional crafts in Canada, which he claimed had finally come of age. In addition to interviews with major newspapers and radio stations in the cities he visited, Bennett and his observations on Canadian craft were foregrounded in *Craft Ontario*, the publication of the Ontario Craft Foundation.<sup>37</sup> "I take the attitude that any program we develop should be aimed at the very highest level of craftsmen," stated Bennett, who referred to the graduates of Canadian craft programs as the top level of young professionals, "Thus we emphasize the professional craftsmen." For the first time since the term professional had been introduced into Canadian craft discourse, a definition was proffered, Bennett seeing it as referring to:

One who has artistic ability, a sense of design, a definite period of artistic training, an intent or determination. The attitude to life itself is so important. You must believe that what you are doing is worthwhile, so important that you have to do it despite your low income when you are young and just beginning.

When asked by the interviewer what he felt about the "discord aroused by people making a contemptuous distinction between the amateur and the professional," Bennett simply

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*Report*, MU5783, Box 38, GD-GD4. For a good listing of sources, see Kay Kritzwiser, "In Praise of Hands: the craftsman's orbit," *Globe and Mail*, 31 May 1974. The ten master craftspeople sponsored by the Department of External Affairs were: Magdalena Abakanowicz, Poland, Jagoda Buic, Yugoslavia, Daniel Cobblah, Ghana, Marea Gazzard, Australia, Tony Hepburn, United Kingdom, Mona Helsing, Australia, Ritzi and Peter Jacobi, Germany, Klaus Moje, Germany, John Rimer, Denmark, Seka Severin Tudja, Venezuela.

<sup>37</sup> The Ontario Craft Foundation had been established in April 1965 during the Ontario Crafts Conference at Geneva Park, Lake Couchiching. Organized by Mary Eileen Hogg (nee Muff), the chief mandate of the new organization was the establishment of a specialized craft training centre, realized by the Sheridan College of Art and Design. In 1976 the Ontario Craft Foundation and the Canadian Guild of Crafts, Ontario branch, joined to form the Ontario Crafts Council.



replied that “such conduct is unprofessional.”<sup>38</sup> Obvious from Bennett’s interviews was his insistence that craft is art, and professional craftspeople must conduct themselves accordingly. As Anita Aarons, Merton Chambers and the supporters of the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association had argued in the mid-1960s, amateur and hobbyist craftspeople were no longer included in the formal definition of craft being promoted by Canadian craft organizations. In her 1970 oral history interview with the Smithsonian Institution, Aileen Osborn Webb acknowledged the divisive nature of defining craft professionals:

Now a person who doesn’t need to make any money can be a professional, to my mind, as long as he really is highly skilled and the quality is there. There has always been a great deal of quarreling about what is a professional. A lot of people like to say that it’s just a person who earns his living at it. I don’t agree with that. I think a professional is a person who is outstanding in his work and makes a contribution.<sup>39</sup>

This indeed was a “contemptuous” distinction, for the membership of the Guild and the Association included large numbers of part-time or amateur craftspeople now being told they did not possess the proper qualifications to be regarded as professional craftspeople. A system of classification had been practiced in Quebec since the formation of the Conseil des métiers d’art du Québec, which insisted on a rigorous peer jury system for members. Unlike the situation in Quebec, however, even professional craftspeople who earned their full-time income from their art now faced possible exclusion if they were not properly educated, or if they relied upon traditional designs. Although Aileen Osborn Webb’s definition of professional differed somewhat from Bennett, Aarons and Chambers, Bennett’s definition of professional craft paralleled the

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<sup>38</sup> “Paul Bennett’s View of Craft Development,” *Craft Ontario*, 8 April 1974. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archive of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10-CL6.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Cummings, Oral history interview with Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb, 47. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., mq 240004.

views of the American Craft Council, made public by *Craft Horizons* editor Rose Slivka and Museum of Contemporary Craft curator Paul Smith. In a 1969 *Newsweek* interview, Slivka and Smith confirmed that “the best craftsmen are, in both their approach and achievement, artists by any definition.”<sup>40</sup>

In the notes from a 1972 “think tank” session of the North American Assembly held in Toronto, Bennett and Plaut were in complete agreement that the World Crafts Council conference and exhibition had to target professional craftspeople. “Any amateur can get a glimmer of what is happening here,” stated Bennett, with Plaut agreeing that they should evolve “the most challenging program imaginable for professional craftsmen. If an amateur or non-practicing craftsman doesn’t like it so much the better.”<sup>41</sup> Bennett’s aggressive promotion of Canadian crafts as professional extended into the United States through his interviews with American newspapers. The *Detroit Free Press* quoted Bennett as saying “It’s time Canadians began to think of their craftsmen as professionals... When most Canadians hear the word “crafts” they think of a little old lady who crochets doilies for antimacassars.”<sup>42</sup> Una Abrahamson, author of *Crafts Canada*, a glossy book released in time for *In Praise of Hands*, repeated Bennett’s views on professionalism in interviews promoting the book: “too often crafts have been lumped with hobbies and cottage industry. I am talking about the creations of professional craftsmen who combine skill and imagination to produce exquisite work.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> David L Shirey, “Crafting their Own World,” *Newsweek*, (July 21, 1969) 62. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5783, Box 38, GD-GG4.

<sup>41</sup> *Think Tank Session*, Ascot Inn, January 6, 1972, 5. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Crafts Council/World Crafts Council, MG281274, Vol. 36, World Crafts Council Conference 1974, kk.

<sup>42</sup> “Craft Exhibit Invites Visitors to Pitch In,” *The Detroit Free Press*, 19 May 1974: 18. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5783, Box 38, GD-GG4.

<sup>43</sup> Jo Carson, “Handmade in Canada,” *Globe and Mail*, 4 July 1974: 6. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10-CL6.

Members of the Women's Committee of the Canadian Guild of Crafts were aware of their categorization, often expressed in very dismissive terms, as amateurs or dilettantes. Despite this, they continued to play an active role in the conference and exhibition, serving as information staff, hostesses, guides, and salespeople. Over one hundred and seventy female volunteers assisted in 1974. Although their names were not mentioned in publications and their voices within and regarding the exhibition were rarely heard, they believed that even though "scant attention was paid to our views at the Committee level, yet there is no doubt that the exhibition bore the stamp of our personality."<sup>44</sup> While this program of professionalization was perceived as a positive step toward insinuating the crafts into the realm of fine art, many groups who had benefited from craft activity, specifically women and ethnic minorities, were left out of a formulation based on privilege and access to proper education.

Radio, television and newspaper reports about Bennett show a fascination with the international scope of the exhibition. In addition to promoting the professional nature of Canadian craft, the theme of the global community was stressed by Bennett. Articles with the titles, "A global holding of hands," and "Crafts around the World," waxed poetic about the "common thread of empathy and understanding and artistry running through the whole craft world."<sup>45</sup> Bennett promised that the lifestyles of craftspeople would be highlighted, providing new understandings between people who occupied very different worlds. The discrepancies between western and non-western craftspeople were acknowledged in some of the articles, but the larger theme of global harmony prevailed:

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<sup>44</sup> Ruth Markowitz, "The Insiders," *Craft Dimensions*, (July 7, 1974). National Archives of Canada, Canadian Crafts Council/ World Crafts Council, MG28I274, Volume 39, articles ff.

<sup>45</sup> Kay Alsop, "A global holding of hands," *Vancouver Province*, 25 February 1974: 16. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archive of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10 – CL6.

“The disparity of the lifestyles of the master craftsmen appearing...will enable the conferees to gain new comprehension of such extremes as the conditions prevailing in the most remote crafts-producing villages and the most sophisticated centres of technologically-oriented production.”<sup>46</sup>

Bennett took the opportunity of his tour to locate Canadian craftspeople of various ethnic identities to come to Toronto as demonstrators, promising honorariums as well as airfare and accommodation to those selected. A problematic division of Canadian craftspeople emerged. Those possessing visible ethnic traits were recruited as demonstrators, while the “professionals” consisted mainly of English Canadians. Some demonstrators, though living in Canada, were brought in as “Danes” and “Tibetans,” thus conflating “ethnicity” and “global.” Bennett told reporters that:

visiting craftsmen will be able to see an Atlantic Dory, an Indian dugout canoe, an Eskimo kayak, and a Prairie sod shack, all made by native or ethnic craftsmen. An entire family is being transported from Quebec – the mother a weaver, the father and brothers furniture builders – to work at their crafts in their own living room and workshop which will be moved lock, stock and barrel to the exhibition location.<sup>47</sup>

Yet these same craftspeople were not represented in the exhibition itself. Their work, denied standing as official Canadian craft, merely lent “colour” to the event.

The process of selection for the official Canadian entries to *In Praise of Hands* further underscored and exacerbated issues of exclusivity. The selection process was intended to be two-phased. First, member countries would collect and jury their own crafts, and then these items would be sent on to a New York-based international jury with members from the United States, Switzerland and Japan, which would make the final

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

choices. The call for Canadian entries had the initial deadline of December 1, 1972, and a three-dollar entry fee was charged. All pieces were to have been produced after 1970 and were to be for sale. The response to the call was enthusiastic: two hundred and ninety-seven craftspeople submitted a total of five hundred and eighty-four entries. These were adjudicated at the Ontario Science Centre during January, 1973, by a jury consisting of the textile artist Joyce Chown, architect Arthur Erikson, ceramist Luke Lindoe, painter Christopher Pratt, and jeweler Guy Vidal.<sup>48</sup>

The jurors, all recognized artists who adhered to the principles expounded by Bennett, brought to the judging their particular conceptualization of craft, and were disappointed in the first set of entries, which they felt fell below proper standards. Joan Chalmers shared their disappointment, reporting to the National General Committee of the Canadian Guild of Crafts how “it quickly became obvious that the standard of entries ranged from the ludicrous to the superb. Bad design and colour naturally over-ruled what might have been fine craftsmanship.” As Chalmers’ mother Jean had agreed to purchase the works representing Canada, Joan Chalmers had a personal interest, some might even say a conflict of interest, in ensuring the highest standards, as defined by the taste of the purchaser. Following the jury selection, the exhibition committee agreed that “the works submitted were not truly significant of the craft quality available in Canada today,” and decided to solicit specific craftspeople to submit work. Chalmers indicated the pressure felt by the Canadian Committee to impress their American counterparts, stating that the

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<sup>48</sup> *In Praise of Hands entries*, Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5780, Box 35, FN-FU.

main objective of the jury “was to send only the very best crafts representative of Canadian craftsmen to New York.”<sup>49</sup>

The Committee was aware of the potential for controversy if craftspeople were made aware of the decision. The only public report came in April, 1974, long after the jury had completed its second set of deliberations, when the *Globe and Mail* reported that the preliminary selection had been a disappointment, forcing the committee to send out calls to “Canadian professionals” in order to send “what it felt was a representative selection of Canadian crafts to New York for further viewing.”<sup>50</sup> The fact that the committee had the power to decide what and who qualified as “representative” Canadian craft indicates the cultural/political power at play in the categorization of craft and the hegemony that allowed a small group to override the intentions of the whole. The desire to create a homogenous, national group of “true” Canadian craft objects was predicated upon a set of accepted categorizations based on class, race and gender lines. Professional craftspeople were largely educated Anglophones who did not fall into the category of female “hobbyists.”

Led by Aileen Osborn Webb and the American Craft Council, the pursuit of art craft was being replicated in Canada. As Pierre Bourdieu emphasizes, different social groups have access to different classificatory systems, based on different cultural capitals, circulating in different cultural economies.<sup>51</sup> The aesthetics of high culture have always defined themselves against the popular, and in the case of the selection of Canadian

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<sup>49</sup> *National General Committee of the Canadian Guild of Crafts – Reports of the Annual Meeting*, April 26, 1973, Montreal, 20-25. National Archives of Canada, DGAC 4000 – C47, RG97, Volume 1, Associations, Clubs and Societies, Canadian Guild of Crafts.

<sup>50</sup> “15 Canadian Works in International Exhibition,” *Globe and Mail*, 12 April 1974: 20. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archive of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10-CL6.

<sup>51</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 12.

objects for *In Praise of Hands*, this remained true, with art craft and traditional craft positioned as binaries. The exhibitors selected to represent Canada were professional craftspeople known to the small organizational group, most with the proper educational background, and all with artistic intentions for their final pieces. Following the resubmission of pieces by selected craftspeople, the jury in New York met again in April, 1973, and sixty pieces were sent to New York. There fourteen pieces by twelve Canadian craftspeople were chosen for the exhibition.<sup>52</sup> It is significant that nine of the twelve Canadians were from Ontario, and that of those nine, four were associated with the Sheridan College of Art and Design in Mississauga, Ontario.

The international jury consisted of Erica Billeter, the curator of Zurich's Museum Bellevue, Paul Smith, director of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York, and Sori Yanagi, the head of the Yanagi Industrial Design Institute, Tokyo. (Figure 29) Billeter had curated international exhibitions of textiles and ceramics for a variety of museums in Switzerland, as well as writing extensively on the subject for the accompanying catalogues. The jury met for four days, and selected 387 pieces from 2400 slides submitted from over seventy countries.<sup>53</sup> On the surface, the jury appeared to have no trouble making the final selection, agreeing in their official selection statement that:

whereas esthetic judgment was exercised, the committee did not consider that it was serving as a 'jury' to *judge* objects as 'good' or 'bad' but rather to *select* those objects that would come together

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<sup>52</sup> The Canadian craftspeople selected were: Bailey Leslie, Toronto, porcelain compote and footed porcelain pot, Ruth Gowdy McKinley, Mississauga, porcelain wine server and three piece stoneware tea set, Robert Held, Mississauga, stoppered glass decanter, Mary Keepax, Ballinafad, Ontario, white stoneware table, Haakon Bakken, Mississauga, sterling silver neckpiece with pearls and moonstone, William Reid, Montreal, gold and sterling silver necklace, Mrs. Winnie Tatya, Putumiraqtuq, appliqued wool wall hanging, Heidi Koukema, West Montrose, Ontario, black wool wall hanging, Richard Hunter, Victoria, silk hammer, Elin Corneil, Toronto, woven wall hanging, Hilde Schreier, Ottawa, hanging fibre sculpture, Alan Perkins, Toronto, three silver, enamel wine goblets.

<sup>53</sup> Kay Kritzwiser, "Judges Choose Final Craft Entries," *Globe and Mail*, 11 December 1973: 16. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10-CL6.

to form a great exhibition within the agreed upon humanistic spirit of the theme.<sup>54</sup>

However, Yanagi was vocal in his displeasure over the non-traditional focus of the exhibition. A *Financial Post* interview with Yanagi identified the split in the World Crafts Council between traditional and conceptual crafts, with Yanagi complaining that “The exhibits from the United States were mostly what we call craft objects, created more for self-expression than for providing utility, and seem to communicate the psychological confusion and uncertainty of American today.”<sup>55</sup> The tensions within the Canadian craft hierarchy were mirrored in the international community, as seen in Yanagi’s comments.

Although Yanagi was in favour of uniting the world through *In Praise of Hands*, it was understandable that he adopted the more conservative approach to the crafts. He was the son of Soyetsu Yanagi, Director of the National Folk Museum in Tokyo and a friend and admirer of Bernard Leach.<sup>56</sup> In his famous 1940 *A Potter’s Book*, Leach had espoused the philosophy of truth to materials and natural forms to craftspeople around the world. Although Leach’s dedication to tradition differed from the views of the American Crafts Council, his desire to unify the east and west through craft was not dissimilar to the ideals of Aileen Osborn Webb. British craft historian Tanya Harrod compared Webb to Leach, stating that “Her internationalist ideas were a cruder variant of Leach’s proselytising for a unity of eastern and western aesthetics, in which connections and

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<sup>54</sup> *World Crafts Council News*, Autumn 1973, 1. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5783, Box 38, GD-GG4.

<sup>55</sup> Arnold Edinborough, “How the World’s Craftsmen Keep Individuality Alive,” *Financial Post*, 68 (June 22, 1974): 13. Although not all of the accepted pieces by American craft artists were included in the book *In Praise of Hands*, fourteen of the twenty-four shown were listed under “The Maker’s Statement” chapter.

<sup>56</sup> Yanagi’s father admired the simplicity of Leach’s pottery, an approach Leach had adopted from Japanese tradition.



friendship between craftsmen of all races would create harmony between nations.”<sup>57</sup>

Leach’s dislike for the sculptural approach to ceramics advocated by the art critic Herbert Read and the potter William Staite Murray, a professor at the Royal College of Art in London, was well known.

The same ideological split was evident in North America. The proponents of self-referential, one-off craft pieces by artist-craftspeople, particularly the members of the governing body of the 1974 conference, were in conflict with adherents of traditional craft techniques. As early as the 1968 World Crafts Council conference in Lima, Peru, Canadian craftspeople were questioning the predominance of conceptual craft. Art Soloman of Garson, Ontario, reported that “There was no place in the conference for an ordinary, everyday, practicing craftsman. I wholeheartedly endorse the objectives of the World Crafts Council...but I seriously wonder whether there is any place in it for craftsmen?”<sup>58</sup> The dichotomy between *In Praise of Hands* and the activities surrounding the exhibition, such as the sale of craft kits, maintained the divide between “ethnic” demonstrators and professional artist craftspeople. One of many examples of this tension was demonstrated in the June 1974 edition of *Craft Horizons* which featured special sections on the World Crafts Council and the crafts in Canada.<sup>59</sup> Rose Slivka’s editorial, “The Object as Poet,” was a lyrical ode to the supremacy of art craft, presented with the understanding that Canada and the United States were agreed on the view of “the modern craftsman [as] an object-poet, transcending the material and functional limits of the object.” Slivka was an admirer of sculptural ceramics. As the biographer of Peter

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<sup>57</sup> Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1999), 385.

<sup>58</sup> Art Solomon, Letter, *Craftsman/L'Artisan*, 1/ 2 (Nov. 1968): 8.

<sup>59</sup> A condensed version of James Plaut’s catalogue essay was included in the issue.

Voulkos and active supporter of art craft, Slivka acknowledged the similarities between the United States and Canada's "plurality and sheer individualism," noting that this differentiated North America from European and Latin American dependence on the patronage of the church and the ruling classes. This independence, she concluded incorrectly, was embodied in the training of craftspeople through North American universities and professional schools, where "the secret is in the unique imprint of individual personality not in virtuoso techniques."<sup>60</sup>

Slivka's assessment of North American craft was clearly shared by the Canadian Committee of the World Crafts Council, as well as the Canadian Guild of Crafts. At the end of her article she thanked Mary Ellen Hogg and Paul Bennett for the special trip they made from Toronto to New York to consult with the American Craft Council on the material and ideas presented in the special issue. Jean Libman Block, a well-published American author known for a wide variety of novels, contributed an alphabetized list of "The Crafts in Canada," focusing on the question, "What is the Canadian style?"<sup>61</sup> She paid tribute to the conceptual art influences of the United States, highlighting craftspeople who were involved in this approach. "R" was for Regina, Saskatchewan, "home to an extraordinary group of ceramists, a number of them trained on the west coast of the United States," while "V" was for the videotape creations of Vancouver's Evelyn Roth, "who finger-crochets a slip-cover for her car, sculptural sweaters that encase up to

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<sup>60</sup> Rose Slivka, "The Object as Poet," *Craft Horizons*, 34/3, (June 1974): 12. Craftspeople trained in Europe and South America frequently acknowledged the apprenticeship system. The United Kingdom, France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Finland had an extensive program of formal craft education within universities and art schools. British schools were similar to North America in their emphasis on developing conceptual craft programmes.

<sup>61</sup> Block's books included biographies, romance novels, mysteries, non-fiction health books and articles for popular women's magazines. In 1983 she co-authored *Life With Jackie*, a biography of Jacqueline Susann written with Irving Mansfield, Susann's husband. During the 1980s Block wrote articles on Nancy Reagan

four human beings in a cozy huddle and her major work, an eight-hundred square foot canopy for the Vancouver Art Gallery.”<sup>62</sup> The pieces illustrated throughout the special section reflected the professional craftspeople embraced by the Canadian craft organizations, including Marilyn Levine, Anita Aarons, and Ruth Gowdy McKinley.

Six historical quotes regarding the antipathetic relationship between Americans and Canadians were taken from Raymond Reid’s 1973 book *The Canadian Style* and scattered throughout in separate small text panels. Reid’s book sought to demonstrate the unique character of Canada by examining statements Canadians had made about themselves. One of his goals was to overcome the perception that Americans and Canadians were essentially the same, arguing “after a few minutes discussion with Americans, a Canadian soon begins to realize that he is talking from a different set of premises, a different national experience, a different background.”<sup>63</sup> An 1895 quote from Lady Aberdeen, the wife of the former Governor-General of Canada, and supporter of the Women’s Art Association that later became the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, was featured. “...for myself, my antipathy to the essential spirit of the American people, their customs, their everything, grows every time I come into contact with them, and my thankfulness that there is still such an essential difference between them and the Canadians.” The quotes operated, however, as playful reminders of the tensions that historically existed between Canadians and Americans, and the segment was a celebration of the shared approach to professional crafts in North America. (Figure 30)

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and Barbara Bush for *Good Housekeeping*, “My Life in the White House,” *Good Housekeeping*, (September 15, 1981), and “The Best Time in My Life is Now,” *Good Housekeeping*, (November 1989).

<sup>62</sup> Jean Libman Block, “The Crafts in Canada,” *Craft Horizons*, 34/3 (June 1974): 15.

<sup>63</sup> Raymond Reid, *The Canadian Style*, (Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Ltd., 1973), ix.

Nestled in the letters page of the magazine was a reminder of the existence of the growing debate in North America over the increasing use of art-craft to represent all contemporary craft. David Smith of Maine, a production potter, had written in disgust over *Craft Horizons*' earlier feature article on the sculptural funk ceramics of California's Robert Arneson. Smith argued that the recognition of Arneson "is a blow to the identity of the craft potter – a slap in the face and an insult that cannot go unrationalized any longer."<sup>64</sup> Although the national craft organizations and the World Crafts Council had decided that North America was to be represented through art craft at the 1974 conference and exhibition, this was not a view shared by all practicing craftspeople.

Rose Slivka used one of several new Margaret Atwood poems featured in the issue to open her editorial. Many of the poems alluded to the struggle between machines and human creativity, a theme which continued to be popular in discussions of the importance of craft. Atwood's poem, "For G. Making a Garden," set amongst photographs of the Canadian landscape and craft objects, followed Slivka's poetic tribute to North America's pioneering craft spirit:

    this is archaic, this joyful  
    savage destruction breaking  
    open a place, the  
    machines will do this for us  
    now, the machines do this  
    too much and better, but with no joy

This anti-machine spirit enabled organizers to bridge the obvious gap between western and non-western craft objects represented in the exhibition. Crafts appeared to be the ideal medium for the revolutionary spirit of the 1960s; supporting the back-to-the-land movement, and the creation of a global community through the commonality of the hand.

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<sup>64</sup> David Smith, letter. *Craft Horizons*, 34/3, (June 1974): 11.

Theoretically this was so, but beneath each of these individual movements there remained tensions separating the centre from periphery, for it was the centre that continued to decide how and what crafts were participants in the cultural shifts of the times.

In determining the type of crafts to be submitted to the New York jury from each national group, the organizing committee expected that “special emphasis will be placed upon those crafts for which each country is justly known. Many countries will select objects of popular or folk art, while others will select the work of contemporary designer-craftsmen and some countries will appropriately select both kinds.”<sup>65</sup> The juries at both the national and international levels approached the crafts with certain preconceived expectations. As the Canadian example shows, it was each national committee’s taste and perception that were sent forward.

The question must be asked, was self-identification suppressed in the attempt to create an image of national craft? The main emphasis of the seventy separate national juries appears to have been on harmony. By examining the objects and demonstrators involved in the final exhibition, it appears that the creation of a harmonious image for the global craft community was of primary importance. Issues relating to the role of craft within non-western societies, such as the impact of income generated from crafts on gender relations, the patriarchal basis of global capitalism and the gender systems operating in specific indigenous groups, were not considered by the Canadian and American organizers. Instead, they were concerned with creating an exhibition that

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<sup>65</sup> Joan Chalmers, “The International Scene,” National General Committee of the Canadian Guild of Crafts, Report of the Annual Meeting, April 26, 1972. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3-CK7.

replicated the ideology of harmony through craft.<sup>66</sup> The final international jury, composed exclusively of members from industrialized nations, could only approach their final selection with the gazes they possessed.

Taizo Miake, the Ontario Science Centre's Director of Programs and Exhibitions, was excited by the opportunity to design an international craft exhibition and, like many of the World Crafts Council organizers, he believed that the early technology embodied in craft was relevant to a science centre. (Figure 31) The hope was to create a non-traditional exhibition, opening up objects to physical interaction with viewers; however, many of the traditional ritual objects in the exhibition continued to be presented in an anthropological or ethnological manner – contained behind glass as exotic curiosities. This was in contrast to the art craft pieces, particularly the textiles, which were hung directly along the path of the viewers. Miake's design featured an ornate two-story wooden structure in the Great Hall, intended to keep viewers moving past exhibits that were accessible to their touch. This arrangement was described by the *New York Times* as "a giant double decker structure. In that outsized jungle gym, gossamer laces, multicoloured tie-dyes, bold patchworks and exotic prints function as canopies or hang from the rafters."<sup>67</sup> (Figure 32) The lower level was referred to as the "action deck"

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<sup>66</sup> Margaret B. Swain, "Women Producers of Ethnic Arts," *Annals of Tourism Research*, 1/20 (1993): 33, 34, 35.

<sup>67</sup> Rita Reif, "Toronto Crafts Show is Enormous...And So Are Problems World's Craftsmen Face," *New York Times*, 12 June 1974: 50. In the 1990s Rita Reif's writing and personal life have focused on the issue of repatriation. She has written many articles for the *New York Times* on the impact of auctions on the repatriation of Native American art. See: <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/3207/repatriation.html> for a complete listing of her articles. In 1998 Rita Reif and Henri Bondi claimed that their families, persecuted in the Holocaust, were the rightful owners of two Egon Schiele paintings on temporary display at New York's Museum of Modern Art. The works were seized from the gallery by the Manhattan District Attorney's Office until they were ordered returned to the Leopold Foundation in Austria. The writing surrounding the case emphasized the importance of resolving repatriation cases in the United States. See <http://museum-security.org/securma@xs4all.nl> and *The Art Brief* 75 (May 15, 1998).

providing space for the demonstration booths. Although visitors and participants alike enjoyed the interactive nature of the exhibition, the high attendance put certain objects at risk, in particular the textiles.<sup>68</sup>

Over 600,000 visitors were able to touch many of the wall hangings, which were hung to correspond with participation rather than contemplation. As Kay Kritzwiser of the *Globe and Mail* remarked, "If I have any criticism of the installation, it's that full justice hasn't been done to the wall hangings. You get bisected views, and I shudder to think what that feather carpet by Spain's Esperanza Rodriguez will look like if many more dumb women ruffle it."<sup>69</sup> By August, work was being damaged through constant interaction, and organizers were forced to remedy the circumstances which had raised insurance concerns. The *New York Times* analyzed the situation as an ideological gap between the World Craft Council's "look" policy and the Ontario Science Centre's "touch" policy. After debate between the two organizations, the World Craft Council had the display assessed by an insurance company, and twenty-three fibre pieces were removed from the exhibition. These pieces were temporarily exhibited at the Science Centre warehouse, situated one mile from the Centre, causing controversy, particularly among visitors who had come to see the missing textile pieces.<sup>70</sup> With the exception of

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<sup>68</sup> The multisensory intentions of the exhibition were present during the conference as well. During the European half-day, a large-scale presentation on European craft consisted of slides of craft objects synchronized with sounds of craft making such as potters' wheels and looms, intended to bring the viewer into closer contact with the processes. Demonstrators from all of the participating countries were active every day throughout the exhibition. Donald Winkler's montage film, "In Praise of Hands," produced for the National Film Board of Canada, took a similar approach, excluding commentary in the hopes of replacing language barriers with auditory and visual sensory signs. Mixing scenes of craftspeople from all six areas of the world, Winkler linked the scenes through the cadence of craft, the sounds of spinning, throwing, weaving and hammering.

<sup>69</sup> Kay Kritzwiser, "A Shorn Sheep Cleaves Craft from Art," *Globe and Mail*, 15 June 1974: 19. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10 – CL6.

<sup>70</sup> Virginia Lee, "Craftsmen and Museum: Out of Touch," *New York Times*, 4 August 1974: 53. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5783, Box 38, GD-GG4.

certain “art” pieces and ritual objects, visitors to *In Praise of Hands* were able to enjoy physical contact with the objects in addition to interacting with the craftspeople, affording intimacy and nostalgia while opening up their experience to multiple senses:

And down there in a corner of the exhibition centre, suddenly we were in a crofter’s kitchen, where hands were busy, patiently, monotonously combing the fleece, carding wool, spinning it on wheels directed by a rhythmic foot...where the clacking of tongues and bits of songs and story-telling fall so sweetly on the ear in a day when the ear hears not a thing but that cursed television blither. This kind of personal emphasis in a vast and beautiful exhibition dedicated to the hands of the world.<sup>71</sup>

This process of exhibition and consumption was similar to that of craft fairs, a phenomenon that was growing in popularity across North America and Europe.<sup>72</sup> These interactions were in opposition to traditional gallery spaces which utilize the observer paradigm, where observer and object are two autonomous realities.<sup>73</sup> Modernist tradition dictates that visual art must rely on a single sense for artistic authority, and is resistant to an aesthetic synesthesia, for it erodes the hierarchy of economic, cultural and symbolic value, which has been cultivated to divide art spaces along class, race and gender lines. The British craft historian Pamela Johnson has argued that the value of crafts lies in helping to restore conceptual responses to the realm of the senses, that the contemporary interest in craft is not one of nostalgia, but rather one of fulfillment, recapturing the ability to engage with the world through materials and narrative.<sup>74</sup> *In Praise of Hands*

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<sup>71</sup> Kritzweiser, “A Shorn Sheep,” 19.

<sup>72</sup> Sandra Alfoldy, *Theory and Craft: The Kootenay Christmas Faire*, M.A. thesis, Concordia University, 1997, Grace Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia: a history*, (Kensington, New South Wales: New South Wales University Press, 1992), Paula Gustafson, “Mapping the Terrain,” *Made by Hand*, (Vancouver: Crafts Association of British Columbia, 1998), Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in BRITAIN in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, (Hartford: Yale University Press, 1999), 342 – 355.

<sup>73</sup> Edwina Taborsky, “The Discursive Object,” Susan Pearce Ed. *Objects of Knowledge* (London and Atlantic Highlands: The Athlone Press, 1990) 59, 60.

<sup>74</sup> Pamela Johnson, “Out of Touch: The Meaning of Making in the Digital Age,” Tanya Harrod Ed. *Obscure objects of desire: reviewing the crafts in the twentieth century*. (London: Crafts Council, 1997), 293.



marked an important moment in the postmodern reconsideration of gallery display techniques, providing new possibilities for the display of craft and the disruption of the accepted hierarchy of the visual.

While the organizers of *In Praise of Hands* believed the exhibition capable of offsetting the reality of the marginalized nature of many of the World Craft Council members, the international craft community was subject to the binarism of centre and periphery made evident through both the craft objects and the demonstrators themselves. This difference can be clearly discerned in the classifications of craft used in the exhibition and book *In Praise of Hands*. Five categories were utilized: Apparel and Adornment, The Home: Utility and Embellishment, Play, Ritual and Celebration, and the Maker's Statement (Clay, Glass, Metal, Fibre). The majority of conceptual pieces, all the work of craftspeople from industrialized nations, were placed in the Maker's Statement category. These pieces were signed and formally attributed to individual makers. Very few of the western pieces in other categories were anonymous, operating in contrast to a significant percentage of non-western traditional items. For example, in the "Apparel and Adornment" chapter, almost fifty percent of non-western objects were anonymous. This ratio was reversed in the "Maker's Statement" chapter, where all ninety-five percent of the objects were attributed to specific western craftspeople.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> These numbers are calculated based on the illustrations provided in the book, *In Praise of Hands*, and not the actual number of items in the exhibition, which numbered close to one thousand. Western has been designated as industrially advanced countries. The chapters are divided as follows: "Apparel and Adornment," named western, 38%, named non-western, 11%, anonymous western, 2%, anonymous non-western, 49%. "The Home: Utility and Embellishment," named western, 41%, named non-western, 3%, anonymous western, 9%, anonymous non-western, 47%. "Play," named western, 30%, named non-western, 11%, anonymous western, 15%, anonymous non-western, 44%. "Ritual and Celebration," named western, 17%, named non-western, 24%, anonymous western, 6%, anonymous non-western, 53%. "The Maker's Statement," named western, 95%, named non-western, 5%.

The split between traditional and non-traditional crafts was encapsulated in the essays contained in the book *In Praise of Hands*. Ironically, the book began with an extract from Soetsu Yanagi's "The Kizaemon Tea-Bowl," adapted by Bernard Leach, which espoused the beauty of simple, functional crafts: "Its healthiness is implicit in its function."<sup>76</sup> This sentiment accorded well with the essay "Use and Contemplation" by the Mexican poet and Nobel Prize winner Octavio Paz. Paz was not a casual choice for the exhibition essayist, he was well known for his controversial relationship with the Mexican government over the 1968 Mexican massacre of students prior to the Olympic games. Paz had many international connections; he had served as the Mexican cultural attaché to Paris from 1945 to 51 and served as the Mexican Ambassador in India from 1962 to 1968. His American connections were strengthened during his tenure as the Charles Eliot Norton Professor at Harvard University from 1971 to 1972.<sup>77</sup> Arguing that usefulness made handcrafted objects captivating, Paz identified major issues affecting a global craft community that paralleled the problematics raised by the exhibition. In a critique of the display techniques associated with craft objects, he urged viewers to remember the historical contexts and specific functions that were intimately related to the senses beyond sight, "Not an object to contemplate: an object to use." Although it could "acquit itself honorably" in the museum setting, craft did not share the destiny of art which was "the air-conditioned eternity of the museum." Contradicting the World Craft Council ideals of government support for craft and the global village, Paz positioned craft as a local rather than international phenomenon, adding that "bureaucracies are the

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<sup>76</sup> Octavio Paz, James S. Plaut, *In Praise of Hands: Contemporary Crafts of the World* (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society and World Crafts Council, 1974): 1.

<sup>77</sup> Jason Wilson, *Octavio Paz*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), xi.

natural enemy of the craftsman, and each time that they attempt to 'guide' him, they corrupt his sensibility, mutilate his imagination and debase his handiwork."<sup>78</sup> In underscoring the impossibility of global unity due to the persistence of local communities Paz was rebelling against popular sociological theories of the time. In contrast, James Plaut's essay, "A World Family," maintained the theme of the united world.

Utilizing the essentialist symbol of the hand featured in Harold Town's poster for the exhibition, Plaut wrote, "Whatever their differences of origin, race, tradition, geography, or social order, the world's craftsmen have one thing – one great gift – in common. They work, create and achieve *with their hands*...the dominant, overwhelming impact of this assemblage of the world's crafts is that it underscores the *universality* of craftsmanship." For his part, Plaut seemed blissfully unaware of craft's inability to overcome political barriers. Ignoring Paz's view of government as damaging craft development, Plaut applauded the measures being taken by "many third world governments, made newly aware of their country's richness and tradition in the crafts."<sup>79</sup>

The eleven-day conference was marked by a series of panels on topics relating to the crafts. The panel topics ranged from "Education through International Communication" and "Design for Production," to "The Preservation of the Cultural Values of a Society through Craftsmanship."<sup>80</sup> The theme of government was central to

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<sup>78</sup> Octavio Paz, "Use and Contemplation," Octavio Paz and James S. Plaut Eds. *In Praise of Hands: Contemporary Crafts of the World*, (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society and World Crafts Council, 1974), 23.

<sup>79</sup> James S. Plaut, "A World Family," Octavio Paz and James S. Plaut Eds. *In Praise of Hands: Contemporary Crafts of the World* (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society and World Crafts Council, 1974), 9, 11.

<sup>80</sup> The panels were: "The Craftsman in a Changing World," Keynote speaker Dr. d'Arcy Hayman, Head, Section of Arts Education and Cultural Development of the Community, UNESCO, Paris, "Preservation of the Cultural Values of a Society through Craftsmanship," Chair, Mme Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, India Handicrafts Board, New Dehli, India, "Production and Marketing in One World," Keynote speaker Stanley Marcus, President, Neiman-Marcus Co., Dallas, Texas, "Planning an International Association of Craftsmen," Keynote speaker Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb, "Education through International Communication,"

the conference as well as the exhibition. North American organizers decided to hold a special international seminar on "Government Participation in Crafts." Although the Canadian Committee worried that such a panel might generate a negative response toward government involvement, the federal and Ontario governments sponsored the visit of several international speakers. Viscount Eccles, chairman of the British Library and former Paymaster General, chaired the session, which was considered a success.<sup>81</sup> The capitalist overtones of the government session fed into a discussion of marketing, one of the key issues at the conference. The World Crafts Council had prepared a study, "Marketing Crafts from the Third World," done by an American research firm, and this formed the nucleus of many of the seminar discussions. The popularity of non-western craft products led the World Crafts Council to worry about the possible exploitation of craftspeople by wholesalers and importers. They believed that government supervision of the crafts could provide proper assistance in marketing crafts.<sup>82</sup> Plaut credited the purchase of these imported goods by North American and European consumers with drawing the world's attention to the crafts of the "third world," which he believed were

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panelists from West Pakistan, Venezuela, England, Germany, Italy, the United States, Thailand, "The Contemporary Scene," Keynote Speaker Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director, Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Design for Production," Keynote Speaker, Arthur Hald, President, Swedish Society for the Arts, Crafts and Industrial Design, "Our Changing Environment," "Art Concepts in Architecture," "Vistas in the Arts," Keynote speaker Harold Rosenberg, "Vistas in the Future," Keynote speaker Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb.

<sup>81</sup> *World Craft Council Fact Sheet*, Toronto, Canada, June 1974. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5783, Box 38, GD-GG4. Participants in the panel included: Ruth Dayan, Israel, Founder of Naskit, craft marketing organization, Abdoulaye Ba, Senegal, Directeur, Office Senegalais de L'artisanat, Tonatiuh Gutierrez, Mexico, Administrator General of the Crafts, Federation of Mexico, Lloyd New, Chairman, Indian Arts and Crafts Board, United States Department of the Interior and Director of the Institute of American Indian Arts, Felicity Abraham, Director, Craft Enquiry, Australia Council for the Arts, Robert Secord, Director, Sports and Recreation Bureau, Government of Ontario, James Noel White, World Crafts Council Vice-President for Europe, Andre Guerin, General Director of Textiles and General Production, Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Canada.

<sup>82</sup> A.D. Little Inc., *Marketing Crafts from the Third World*, World Crafts Council News, Tenth Anniversary Conference Issue, June 1974. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archive of Canadian Craft, MU5783, Box 38, GD-GG4.

fragile and in need of preservation. This sentiment echoed that of the early Canadian Handicrafts Guild with their dedication to the preservation of Canada's Indigenous crafts, a largely female concern that has been linked to the "civilizing mission" of imperialism. Indeed, the imperialistic overtones of *In Praise of Hands* are undeniable, from the ethnological approach to the non-western crafts on display to the importation of "exotic" demonstrators who were on display outside the Science Centre and in the "Great Hall" below the gallery space.

The *Toronto Star* reported on the Benson and Hedges' "Craftsmen's Stopover" house on Prince Arthur Avenue in Toronto. Paradoxically, the Tibetan and Danish couples featured in the article were Canadian citizens, who had been brought to *In Praise of Hands* to demonstrate not as Canadians but as Tibetans and Danes. They were demonstrators at the exhibition, but their traditional crafts of weaving and lace making were not part of the official Canadian entries.<sup>83</sup> According to Tanya Harrod, British representatives at *In Praise of Hands* were disturbed by the strong presence of marginalized ethnic demonstrators. Harrod quotes Marigold Coleman's review of the show in the journal *Crafts*, where Coleman expressed worry about the ethics of the conference, describing a Mexican (most likely Jose Sanchez) in traditional dress demonstrating his craft:

He raised too many questions in my mind about the reasons for his work, the validity of its context, the alternatives open to him and the buying power of his remuneration after others had taken their cut.<sup>84</sup>

Richard Baumin and Patricia Sawih believe that the role of folk life participants in

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<sup>83</sup> Monda Rosenberg, "Craft exhibitors share cuisine," *Toronto Star*, 24 July 1974: F1.

<sup>84</sup> Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, 386.

festivals and exhibitions constitutes a political field independent of the larger political arenas. In their article, “The Politics of Participation in Folk life Festivals,” they provide the perspective of the participant rather than the organizer, claiming that the adaptation and reframing of the activities the folk demonstrators are expected to perform is a complex and problematic process. The power and authority rests in the hands of the festival producers, who dictate the space and format available to the demonstrators: in an effort to promulgate the organizers’ ideologies, “participants can all too easily be taken as relatively passive and objectified communicative instruments in the service of a larger message.”<sup>85</sup> For craftspeople demonstrating at *In Praise of Hands*, these constraints were in operation. Although the global nature of craft and the universal quality of the hand were intended to unite all craftspeople, demonstrators were forced to perform in a decontextualized setting, under the watchful eye of western organizers and officials.

The demonstrations of craftspeople as well as their objects continued a long tradition of the display of the “other” in western exhibitions. While *In Praise of Hands* was juried and displayed as an art exhibition, the presence of continuous demonstrators, the sale of the pieces in the show and the participation of visitors turned it into a celebratory event with obvious ties to the tradition of the exposition. Curtis M. Hinsley describes expositions as imperialist in their conception and construction, beginning with the 1851 Great International Exposition at London’s Crystal Palace. Hinsley argues that all subsequent fairs contained two aspects: the display of industrial achievement and the exhibition of primitive “others” collected from the colonies. The first American

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<sup>85</sup> Richard Baumin and Patricia Sawih, “The Politics of Participation in Folk life Festivals,” Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine Eds. *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*

exposition, the 1853 New York “Crystal Palace” fair, under the direction of Phineas T. Barnum, featured the “Wild Man of Borneo,” Fijian man-eaters, and 300 Natives from fifty tribes under the direction of “George Anderson, the Famous Texas Scout.”<sup>86</sup> People, Hinsley demonstrates, were raw material. The Paris Exposition of 1889 introduced the popular display of ethnographic villages, where visitors were educated in human culture by viewing imported “others” undertaking ritual tasks in their “natural” setting. Chicago’s 1893 World Exposition was supervised by the Smithsonian Institution, and intended to replace Barnum’s earlier side show display of exotic peoples with “an illustrated encyclopedia of humanity,” in an effort “to educate and formulate the Modern.” The anthropologist Franz Boas, who influenced Canadian ethnographer Marius Barbeau, was chief assistant for the Chicago exposition, and brought in a group of Kwakiutl Indians from British Columbia, along with an entire village from Skidegate, Queen Charlotte islands, which was reassembled on the fair grounds. Hinsley notes that despite the presence of a Native village at the fair, the Kwakiutl people had to sleep on the floor of the stock pavilion. The display of ethnic groups at these fairs was utilized as a marketing tool. By constructing the identity of “others” in relation to the centered viewing subject, these fairs indicated that the way to overcome these differences was through the equality of trade and exchange. The process of commodification, Hinsley argues, was the great “equalizer,” comforting western audiences with the knowledge that “the world, no matter, how bizarre, is reducible to cash terms.”<sup>87</sup>

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(Washington/London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 290, 291, 292.

<sup>86</sup> Curtis M. Hinsley, “The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893,” Ivan Karp and Steven D. Levine Eds. *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, (Washington, London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 345.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 349, 362.

Although *In Praise of Hands* intended to overcome inequalities between international craftspeople, many of Hinsley's arguments apply to the exhibition. All objects were for sale in the exhibition, and the conference seminars on government and marketing worked toward a greater freedom of exchange of craft as commodity. The flow of goods, however, remained from the periphery to the centre, replicating the colonial structures at the base of earlier expositions. In general, non-western craftspeople sponsored to demonstrate at *In Praise of Hands* could retail their work, but did not possess the capital to purchase pieces, particularly those done by the artist craftspeople of North America and Europe. Attendance lists indicate that there was a limited number of attendees from non-western countries.<sup>88</sup> The universal symbol of the hand and the emergence of discourse surrounding "handcraftsmanship," "handcrafted" and "handcraftsmen" allowed western consumers to believe they were contributing to a better lifestyle for "third world" craftspeople. At the same time, the marketing of non-western crafts relied on easy categorizations of these products as exotic, non-industrialized craft done in remote villages by indigenous peoples. This stereotyping remains intact today.

Carol Hendrickson's analysis of mail-order catalogue images of Guatemalan craft demonstrates that Mayan products remain classified as "primitive" in the western world. The terminology surrounding these objects refer to the distance of their exotic geographic origins. Hendrickson summarizes that the transnational presentation of craft leads to the intimacy and familiarity purchasers feel toward these objects and makers. These catalogues with their generic use of "primitive," referring to no single national, cultural or social group, lead western consumers to believe that their patronage of these

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<sup>88</sup> Many of the attendees from Africa, Asia, and Latin America were either demonstrators or Directors of the World Crafts Council. *World Crafts Council Conference Fact Sheet*, June 9-15, 1974, 3. National



craftspeople will allow them to make positive changes in the world.<sup>89</sup> Like the early Canadian Handicrafts Guild's mission of Christian charity through the crafts, the philanthropic purchases of contemporary consumers reflects a desire to preserve traditional crafts described as facing extinction. The concept of preservation through western intervention was stressed by the World Crafts Council. In his catalogue essay, Plaut wrote of the "curious paradox" of non-industrial crafts: "left alone, the indigenous crafts would have ceased to exist."<sup>90</sup> The changes forced on these crafts as imperialist intervention forced them to adapt to industrialized markets and the expectations of western consumers remained unacknowledged by the World Crafts Council; however, reviewers of the exhibition noted the obvious difference between western and non-western participation, frequently describing it as a breakdown between traditional and conceptual craft.

Kay Kritzwiser, reviewer for the *Globe and Mail*, quoted Plaut on the paradox of the survival of indigenous craft, going on to critique the strong presence of art craft, which she felt fell below the standards set by the more traditional pieces. Kritzwiser revealed how the contrast between traditional and non-traditional objects in the exhibition had forced her to philosophize on the relationship between art and craft. She concluded the two were not compatible. Her admiration for the "wool, dyed and woven into garments, into useful accessories and truly gorgeous hangings" contrasted with her contempt for the American ceramist Patti Warashina Bauer's "Car Kiln," a "silly clay

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Archives of Canada, Canadian Crafts Council/World Crafts Council, MG28I274, Vol. 36.

<sup>89</sup> Carol Hendrickson, "Selling Guatemala: Maya export products in U.S. mail-order catalogues," David Howes Ed. *Cross-Cultural Consumption: Global Markets, Local Realities* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996), 107, 112, 113, 117.

<sup>90</sup> Plaut, "A World Family," 11.

car.” Conceding that Warashina’s piece made of “hand built clay with low fire clay glaze, underglazes and china paint, wood and leather base” was a marvel of technology, Kritzwiser felt the “Car Kiln” was symptomatic of the descent of the crafts of developed countries into “Tom Wolfe’s The Kandy Koloored Tangerine Flake Streamline Baby Syndrome.” For Kritzwiser, craft was an object to live with, not “a showcase of ego,” which she believed described the ceramic objects, in particular Australian ceramist Joan Ground’s stoneware wrapped parcel, which promised on the ceramic label that it contained a traditional tea set inside the conceptual exterior.<sup>91</sup> In contrast Sol Littman of the *Toronto Star* took the opportunity to criticize what he saw as the conservative nature of Canada’s official entries to *In Praise of Hands*. Littman was excited by the items in *Ceramics '74*, the Canadian Guild of Potters annual exhibition, composed mainly of sculptural ceramics: Joe Fafard’s portrait figures, Victor Cicanski’s Champagne Fountain showing a farming leaving an outhouse, David Gilhooly’s frog woman perched on a cookie jar, Gathie Falk’s “funky” dinner set:

Throughout the United States and Canada, the barriers separating “art” and “craft” have been tumbling down. Potters, weavers and leather workers are no longer content to make cookie jars, stoles and sandals. Instead they talk of “sculpture in thread,” “ceramic sculpture,” “leather art”...these works say more about where we are today than the mannered pieces selected by the judges [of *In Praise of Hands*].<sup>92</sup>

*New York Times* reviewer Rita Reif shared Kritzwiser’s enthusiasms, stating in her article that the traditional items “pulse with the greatest power.” Reif was more neutral toward the non-traditional ceramics which she described as continuing to “reflect

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<sup>91</sup> Kay Kritzwiser, “A Shorn Sheep,” 19.

<sup>92</sup> Sol Littman, “Prairie Sculptor’s Ma and Pa figures highlight of Guild of Potters’ exhibition,” *Toronto Star*, 24 May 1974: 14. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Crafts Council/World Crafts Council, MG1274, Volume 38, articles ff.

trends in the world of painting and sculpture, especially pop art,” citing Grounds’ stoneware parcel as her example. The traditional ceramics, Reif argued, including a platter by Shoji Hamada, “possess in their simplicity and obvious functionalism something far more memorable.”<sup>93</sup> British reviews of the exhibition took the opposite approach, insisting that the dominance of traditional crafts “had the effect of drowning out everyone else and unbalancing the exhibition.”<sup>94</sup> Reviews of *In Praise of Hands*, ranging from Rose Slivka and Marigold Coleman’s endorsements of art in craft to Kay Kritzweiser’s disdain for the art of craft, were among the first to delve into the art/craft binarism that continues to divide the craft world. While the theme of art versus craft had certainly been alluded to in earlier writing, foreshadowed by the debate over the definition of professional, the World Crafts Council events of 1974 highlighted the differences between functional and non-functional craft, as well as the split between non-western and western objects, resulting in an unresolved ideological divide.

In an effort to redress previous exclusions, the Indian and Eskimo Committee of the Guild grappled with how it should involve Native art during *In Praise of Hands*. As early as 1968 the women of the Committee had been concerned about the future role of the Guild in assisting Native craftspeople. Committee chair Diana McDougall stated her concerns in a letter to the Guild president Herman Voaden:

I feel that it is our responsibility to show the nation and visitors to the nation that we strongly maintain our interest in Native crafts. There are craftsmen amongst the Indians who are thinking and working along contemporary lines and I feel that a small exhibition by invitation of some of the better artists... would contribute greatly to the work of the National Guild. It is true that the

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<sup>93</sup> Rita Reif, “Crafts Show: New and Vigorous, But Tradition’s Impact is Solid,” *New York Times*, Sunday, 16 June 1974: 48.

<sup>94</sup> Marigold Coleman, “Personal View,” *Crafts* 10 (September/October 1974): 10.

federal and provincial governments are increasingly concerned about our Native crafts but I feel that as a National Guild of Canadian Crafts we cannot ignore the Indians and Eskimos as Canadian craftsmen.<sup>95</sup>

Elizabeth McCutcheon, who was to become Committee chair in 1970, was put in charge of the Guild exhibition *Canadian Indian Arts/Crafts '70* to be held at Place Bonaventure in Montreal. An announcement for entries was issued in English and French with space for translation into Indian dialects. The Committee had approached the National Indian Brotherhood, a group of Native cultural leaders, for help in advertising the exhibition. They sponsored a visit to Montreal by Kwakiutl Chief James Sewid, the Vice-President of the British Columbia Brotherhood, to promote his autobiography *Guests Never Leave Hungary*. Alice Lighthall, the founder of the Indian and Eskimo Committee, worked with McCutcheon on the exhibition, and was active in encouraging the increased participation of Native craftspeople and leaders. *Canadian Indian Arts/Crafts* operated as an exhibition, competition and sale, and ran from 10 –22 November 1970. The Committee received 295 submissions, of which 235 were selected by the jury members Tom Hill, Art Price and Jean Noel Poliquin. Price was a Native artist who had actively promoted the importance of traditional First Nations' designs in contemporary work. Poliquin was a full-time Francophone artist. Chief George Manuel, President of the National Indian Brotherhood gave the opening address for the exhibition, commending the Guild for its continuing efforts in supporting Native craftspeople.<sup>96</sup> *Canadian Indian Arts/Crafts '70* was a tremendous success, and in an effort to continue the advances being

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<sup>95</sup> Diana McDougall, Chair, Indian and Eskimo Committee, letter to Herman Voaden, President, Canadian Guild of Crafts, September 25, 1968, York University Archives, Herman Voaden Fond, 1982 – 019/013, File 3.

<sup>96</sup> *National General Committee Report of Canadian Indian Arts/Crafts 1970*, York University Archive, Herman Voaden Fonds, 1982-019/013, File7.

made toward artistic independence by Indigenous craftspeople the earlier philanthropic “subjects” of the Guild, the committee made a radical decision.<sup>97</sup>

In January 1972, Committee Chair Elizabeth McCutcheon, with the support of her exclusively non-native committee, requested that the Guild undertake a show dedicated to contemporary and traditional Native arts and crafts, this to run concurrently with the World Crafts Council conference and exhibition. In her argument for such an exhibition, she claimed that, “Indian Affairs, since Mr. Tom Hill started working for them, has been doing increasingly more...I would like to see an exhibition of Indian work that is both modern and traditional.”<sup>98</sup> Her proposal was approved, and in the summer of 1972 the Royal Ontario Museum agreed to host the show. Following their successful collaboration on *Canadian Indian Art/Crafts '70*, McCutcheon believed that Tom Hill, a Seneca Indian from the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario who worked at the Department of Indian Affairs, would be the ideal curator for the exhibition.

Tom Hill was known for his book *Indian Art in Canada*, one of the first to present contemporary Native craft as legitimate art. The Department of Indian Affairs agreed to release Hill from his regular duties in order to act as the coordinator of the exhibition. Along with Dr. E.S. Rogers of the Royal Ontario Museum, Hill set out across Canada collecting contemporary pieces for the exhibition, which would be contrasted with historical pieces from the Royal Ontario Museum’s collection. The Department of Northern Affairs, the Guild and the Royal Ontario Museum contributed \$90,000 toward

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<sup>97</sup> Elizabeth McCutcheon, letter to Dr. E. Rogers, Royal Ontario Museum, May 16, 1972. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Canadian Indian Art, No. 12, Box 9.

<sup>98</sup> Elizabeth McCutcheon, *Report of the Indian-Eskimo Committee*, Minutes of the Canadian Guild of Crafts, January 26, 1972, 11. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5756, Box 11, CK3-CK7.

the exhibition, with the Central Marketing Division of Indian Affairs agreeing to purchase the contemporary objects in the exhibition for future shows in Canada and abroad. Most important to Hill was the designation of the final jury for the objects he was amassing. It was agreed that the jury, composed of “Indian people with artistic backgrounds” would be selected by Hill.<sup>99</sup> The exhibition, named *Canadian Indian Art 74*, would provide Native craftspeople with the opportunity to make a statement to the international craft community about their contemporary production.<sup>100</sup> (Figure 33) As well as sponsoring the exhibition, the Department of Indian Affairs arranged an Inuit arts seminar to correspond with the *Canadian Indian Art 74* and *In Praise of Hands* exhibitions.

Through *Canadian Indian Art 74* Tom Hill offered to Canadians a new perspective on Native art and craft. In his interviews and catalogue essay, Hill deconstructed traditional approaches to Native craft as souvenir or anthropological curiosity. “This display proposes to give the more wondrous arts and crafts an identity that will distinguish it from a vast quantity of souvenirs being produced” Hill told the *Indian News*.<sup>101</sup> In an interview for the *Art Magazine*, Hill theorized three key reasons for the decline of Indigenous art and craft during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the adaptation of Native art forms to the predominant taste of the western world for commercial success; the attitude of Victorian Canadians toward Native art as anthropological remnant and the popularity of “curios” in Victorian parlours; and the

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<sup>99</sup> *Canadian Guild of Crafts, Indian-Eskimo Committee Minutes*, April 16, 1973. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5782, Box 37, GA-GC2.

<sup>100</sup> “In Praise of Hands,” *Collingwood Ontario Enterprise Bulletin*, 14 August 1974. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5757, Box 12, CK10-CL6.

<sup>101</sup> “Indian Art 74 has international impact on native arts and crafts in Canada,” *Indian News*, (March 1974). Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Canadian Indian Art, 10 June – 31 August 1974, No. 12, Box 9.

Canadian government's official policy of assimilation, specifically Section 114 of the Criminal Code of Canada in force until 1951 and forbidding "pagan rites."<sup>102</sup> The exhibition attempted to shift the boundaries defining Native craft and art, and reviews indicated that Hill's educative mission was succeeding.

Hill stressed that traditionally Native arts and crafts were not classified according to Western categorizations. The *Globe and Mail* described the "hazy boundary" between craft and art occupied by the contemporary craft objects utilizing traditional forms to make modern, individual statements. John Blueboy's twig decoys made of woven tamarack reeds were praised for their stylised and graceful form, and the abstracted Salish tapestries of Ely and Monica Phillips were credited with translating a traditional geese in formation pattern into a bold geometric design.<sup>103</sup> (Figure 34) The separation of Indigenous craft from the universalizing *In Praise of Hands* exhibition helped to highlight the professional nature of contemporary Native craftspeople. Hill's desire to give First Nations' craftspeople the opportunity to participate on a separate but equal level with other Canadian professional producers was realized through the exhibition, and in his catalogue introduction he was careful to thank Elizabeth McCutcheon and the Canadian Guild of Crafts for taking the initiative in providing a new awareness of the cultural experience of Native Canadians.

*Canadian Indian Art '74* provided the setting for a pivotal moment during the

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<sup>102</sup> Tom Hill, "Canadian Indian Art: Its Death and Rebirth," *Art Magazine*, 5/18 (Summer 1974): 10.

<sup>103</sup> William MacVicar, "Indian Art, traditional and modern," *Globe and Mail*, 11 June 1974: 8. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Canadian Indian Art, 10 June – 31 August, 1974, No. 12, Box 9.

conference, the retirement of Aileen Osborn Webb from the presidency of the World Crafts Council. At age eighty-two, Webb was ready to step aside as the leader of the organization she had founded and helped to fund for a decade. Webb was described by the *New York Times* as “the talk of the conference,” with Joan Chalmers proclaiming that “she’s not the initiator, she’s the glue of this movement.”<sup>104</sup> Praise for Webb filled the conference reports. Webb’s successor as President, Viscount Eccles, told the 1500 attendees, “What a patron saint you have had. Without her where should we be today? Not here in Toronto, at best poking around a craft shop in our own country.”<sup>105</sup> The official book, *In Praise of Hands*, was dedicated to Aileen Osborn Webb and Margaret Patch, who had helped her to initiate the World Crafts Council and described them as “two American women of courage, generosity, and vision, pioneers in befriending and supporting craftsmen everywhere.”<sup>106</sup> Conference notes, reviews and discussions offered no critiques of Webb’s universalizing view of the crafts, nor of her position as a dominant imperial force on the international craft scene. Instead, Canadian organizers expressed sincere sadness over her departure as World Crafts Council president.

A decade after Aileen Osborn Webb’s First World Crafts Congress had forced Canadian craftspeople and administrators to assess their failure as a national group, Webb’s retirement marked the birth of the Canadian Crafts Council, an idealistic project designed to continue the dream for the unification of professional craftspeople across provincial borders. Mary Eileen Hogg’s speech at the conference opening was a tribute

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<sup>104</sup> Rita Reif, “Toronto Crafts Show is Enormous...And So Are Problems World’s Craftsmen Face,” *New York Times*, 12 June 1974: 50.

<sup>105</sup> Viscount Eccles, *World Crafts Council Conference Address*, June 10, 1974. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5783, Box 38, GD-GG4.

<sup>106</sup> James S. Plaut, Octavio Paz Eds. *In Praise of Hands: Contemporary Crafts of the World* (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society and World Crafts Council, 1974), 1.



to Webb and her role in guiding Canadian crafts onto the professional scene, “We appreciate your generous offering of guidance and encouragement and your enthusiastic response to artistic accomplishments...Mrs Webb, thank you from all of us. We respect you and we love you.”<sup>107</sup> The Canadian committee of the World Crafts Council presented Webb with a pot by Bailey Leslie, one of the Canadian craftspeople selected for the exhibition. (Figure 35) In the ceremony at the Royal Ontario Museum, Webb was celebrated again by the Canadian Committee who arranged to have Webb participate in a ceremonial dance by the Jimmy Skye Dancers of the Six Nations Reserve. (Figure 36) Engaging in this ritual of Native exhibition, with its allusions to the long history of Indigenous encounters with dominant white culture, was an ironically symbolic exit for Webb, who had seemingly managed to unite the crafts of the world. Her exit was timely as the ideological separations between traditional and conceptual craft as well as tensions between western and non-western craftspeople were threatening to erode her project of a globally harmonious craft world.

Mary Eileen Hogg’s tribute to Webb promised that Canadians would continue to work toward “strengthening that internationally common bond,” celebrated at *In Praise of Hands*.<sup>108</sup> The excitement surrounding the success of the conference and exhibition overshadowed the founding meeting of the newly formed Canadian Crafts Council on 15 June 1974. Celebrated as a truly Canadian organization, and endorsed by both the former groups and the federal government, the Canadian Crafts Council was nonetheless plagued by issues that had surfaced during the previous decades. The Conseil des métiers d’art du

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<sup>107</sup> Mary Eileen Hogg, *Speech*, Monday, June 10, 1974. Archives of Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Archives of Canadian Craft, MU5783, Box 38, GD-GG4.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

Québec agreed in principle with the amalgamation, but felt that it still was not receiving fair representation at the national level. Native craftspeople had been offered an olive branch by the Canadian Guild of Crafts in the form of *Canadian Indian Art '74*, but they were not participants in the new organization. Members struggled to balance the desire for inclusive membership with the maintenance of professional standards. As well, the dependence on government sources of funding, acclaimed by Webb as “taking the lead...in the development of craftsmen sponsored by government help,” threatened to lead to complaisance and a lack of private philanthropy and commercial support.<sup>109</sup> With the retirement of Webb, Canada had lost an important ally in the struggle to unite craftspeople on both the national and international levels. Although the professional infrastructures Webb had put in place were staggering in their scope and ambition, neither of the American-led Councils had provided direct instruction for the Canadian Crafts Council on dealing with the divisions it continued to confront. The internal problems faced by the Canadian Crafts Council at its inception as a national body foreshadowed some of the elements which have led to its current status as, first and foremost, a provincially supported potential web-site and information coordinator.

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<sup>109</sup> Aileen Osborn Webb, *1974 Address*. National Archives of Canada, Canadian Crafts Council/World Crafts Council, MG28I222, Vol. 16.

## CONCLUSION

As Aileen Osborn Webb left Toronto in 1974, it may well have appeared to her that the crafts in Canada had reached a stage where they could be full, and fully professional, partners in the vision for crafts she had sponsored so ardently in the United States through the American Craft Council and its “outreach” activities. The tenth anniversary conference of the World Crafts Council and its exhibition *In Praise of Hands* had enjoyed great success, and the Canadians who had helped the events to achieve such prominence were poised to set up a new national organization designed to further enhance the perceived quality of craft production. In her view, a decade of sustained contact between Americans and Canadians must have appeared to have bridged the gap assumed to have existed between the neighbouring countries by the literature produced for the First World Congress of Craftsmen.<sup>1</sup>

As this dissertation has demonstrated, any such reading of the situation would have been false. Even a glance beneath the surface of the Toronto events, including the founding session of the Canadian Crafts Council, would have revealed serious fissures, indicative of the complex nature of the Canadian context. In the haste to re-activate a national craft strategy, brought about by the selection of a Canadian venue for the World Crafts Council conference and by pressure from Canadian government agencies, a great deal had been left outstanding. There had been no resolution of how to address the concerns of the representatives of Quebec craftspeople, and relations with the burgeoning

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<sup>1</sup> In the October 1979 obituary for Aileen Osborn Webb the author made it clear that Webb retained the desire to help Canadians achieve a unified craft community until her death: “Mrs. Webb was keenly interested in Canadian craftsmen and was always willing and eager to assist them when invited to do so. In her last letters to a Canadian friend, [Hogg] May 17, she wrote ‘My pleasure in knowing the Canadian

field of contemporary First Nations craft continued to be clumsy. Moreover, there was much to suggest that the influence of Ontario craft organizers had reached a great level of imbalance: in any sphere of Canadian activity, the perceived dominance of that province is scrutinized and viewed with dismay.

This dissertation has attributed many of the “flaws” in the Canadian Crafts Council’s launch into the future to the negative impact of the quick adoption of the American exemplar, or better put, the taking on board of the strongly centralized model of organizing crafts propounded through the American Craft Council. From 1964, Canadian craft organizers had been in sustained contact with an organization with an intelligently conceived, all-embracing programme for the professionalization of craft. Not only could the American Craft Council boast of a well-financed set of initiatives, which included a Museum of Contemporary Crafts located across the street from the Museum of Modern Art, but its principal sponsor could, and did, call upon the luminaries of the American art world when it presented itself to an international audience. The eagerness of Aileen Osborn Webb to lend our her “authority,” often in face-to-face encounters with Canadian craft audiences and also through private communications with leading organizers, made the American exemplar all that more compelling. There is little wonder that it commanded the attention of significant numbers of craftspeople and craft organizers in Canada who saw themselves, and were frequently made to see themselves by various levels of governments, as disorganized and mired in a pre-professional condition.<sup>2</sup> Webb and the American Craft Council presented themselves as untroubled,

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craftsmen is very clear...I hope that you won't forget me.” “Obituary: Aileen Osborn Webb,” *Craftsman* 4/5 (October 1979): 16.

<sup>2</sup> Thank you to Anne Marie Adams for indicating the growing body of literature on professionalism. See Daniel W. Rossides, *Professions and Disciplines: Function and Conflict* (New York: Perspectives, 1998),

unquestioned agents for the elevation of crafts, and there were only a few in Canada who perceived that negotiation and imagination were required to establish an effective national infrastructure for Canadian craft, one that would address important cultural, social and economic differences between the two countries.

The impact of the American exemplar was not entirely negative. It lent confidence and credibility to Canadian craft organizers in their attempts to break through the epistemological barriers that might otherwise have slowed the move to define a professional sector. Nor is it the only factor which should be considered in a fully developed history of Canadian craft infrastructures during the 1960s and 1970s. Further work needs to be done in terms of the degree to which British, French and Scandinavian ideas may have inflected the development of strategies for organizing crafts in Canada, and the instruction provided by other arts fields in Canada must also be investigated: the involvement of Donald Buchanan in both "industrial design" and "crafts" exhibitions suggests to me that the National Design Council of Canada may be an especially fruitful area to explore. Nevertheless, I suspect a fuller study will uphold the major importance of the American presence, with future theorization of how professionalism proceeded in Canadian craft having, of necessity, to deal with the interventions of Aileen Osborn Webb, both as an individual and as the sponsor of the American Craft Council.

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## EPILOGUE

A brief history of the Canadian Crafts Council, from its formation through its fundamental reorganization in 1998, serves to amplify an understanding of just how optimistic appearances were in 1974. Governmental expectations that a new national body could negotiate within and forcefully represent the bilingual, multicultural mosaic of the Canadian craft community have not been fulfilled. In addition, the emergence in 1974 of Joan Chalmers as a strong, professionally experienced organizer and generous patron of crafts, has not, as some surely must have hoped it would, resulted in the long-term personal engagement with a national craft organization such as that exemplified by Aileen Osborn Webb. As unrealistic as it is to seek such parallels in the latter part of the twentieth century, it is nevertheless worth observing that no one individual in Canada has offered the type of resolutions for problems confronting the national craft community that sometimes can be obtained through immediate or sustained applications of an exceedingly powerful triad of “capitals,” as defined by Bourdieu. Thus neither the cohesive ideology of the American Craft Council nor the specifics of its power base has yet to have been smoothly grafted onto Canadian soil.

Following the June 1974 inaugural meeting of the Canadian Crafts Council, offices for the new organization were established in Ottawa, Ontario. Peter Weinrich, an arts administrator, was made its Executive Director, and was responsible to a board consisting of provincial craft council representatives supported by federal funding which constituted between one-third and one-half of its operating budget, with the donations of

private philanthropists like Joan Chalmers making up much of the rest.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the American Craft Council which was left a financial trust from Aileen Osborn Webb, or the British Crafts Council which receives stable annual funding, federal funding to the Canadian Crafts Council was never guaranteed, and fell under the responsibility of various governmental departments. For a number of years, the Council shifted between the Department of the Secretary of State and the Department of Industry and Commerce. In the early 1990s, the Council was moved under the Department of Canadian Heritage, a damaging change that resulted in the crafts being regarded as outside the definition of “Cultural Industries” as defined in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Rather than being considered an economically viable part of the cultural field, Canadian crafts fell under the rubric of artisanal history.<sup>2</sup>

Despite these shifts, the Canadian Crafts Council operated as the watchdog for national crafts, listing as its activities the monitoring of “government legislation, regulations and policy...advoca[ting] benefits for craftspeople (e.g. the manufacturer’s tax exemption for crafts as small businesses), fight[ing] for artists’ rights (e.g. copyright and design protection), and interpre[ting] complex legislative issues for the national crafts community (e.g. the GST and NAFTA).”<sup>3</sup> Over its twenty-four year history the Council coordinated international exhibitions for the Department of External Affairs, created a touring national craft show *Artisan 78*, organized the annual Saidye Bronfman Awards, and served as the official liaison with the World Crafts Council. From 1975 to 1995

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Weinrich was honoured with an award for “outstanding contributions to Cultural Management in Canada” from ACE in 1992. Following his tenure with the Canadian Crafts Council Weinrich became the Chairman of the Board of the Cultural Human Resources Council.

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Crafts Council, *The CCC Bulletin CCMA*, Special Bulletin, March 1995. Personal Interview, Jan Waldorf, Past President Canadian Crafts Council, 28 October 1999.

<sup>3</sup> The Canadian Crafts Council, *History and Mandate*, (Ottawa: Canadian Crafts Council: 1995), 5.

provincial craft councils were even more active, and soon they began questioning the role the Canadian Crafts Council played in uniting the provinces. Shortly after the moving under the Department of Cultural Heritage, the federal government of Canada withdrew its funding from the Canadian Crafts Council, citing federal cutbacks to arts organizations as the rationale.<sup>4</sup>

Following the withdrawal of funding, the newly re-organized Canadian Crafts Federation was approached by the national Canadian arts representation group CARFAC which wanted to develop a sector representing the crafts within its art organization. In February 1999 Robert Jekyll and Jan Waldorf attended a CARFAC tribunal meeting in Toronto where they officially represented the concerns of craftspeople regarding incorporation into CARFAC. The craft community had reacted negatively to the proposal, fearing that CARFAC would “raise the traditional flags between art and craft again, with the visual arts steamrolling craft.”<sup>5</sup> Jekyll and Waldorf cited poor communications between the sectors over the years and the lack of knowledge CARFAC possessed on craft as major concerns. According to Jekyll, at the end of the tribunal CARFAC representatives stated that all they wanted to do was represent the visual arts community as a whole; therefore only craftspeople who self-define themselves as visual artists would be included. “What happens to all the craftspeople that do not consider themselves to be artists?” was the question that remained unanswered at the end of the meeting.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Jan Waldorf, personal interview, 28 October 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Jekyll, personal interview, October 29, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> For a record of Jan Waldorf and Robert Jekylls’ presentation to the February 1999 CARFAC tribunal, see [reliant.ic.gc.ca/capptr/decisions/decisiontribunal/decisiontribunal20/decision\\_29.html](http://reliant.ic.gc.ca/capptr/decisions/decisiontribunal/decisiontribunal20/decision_29.html)



Provincial groups, including the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec, the Alberta Crafts Council and some of the Maritime craft councils, which had previously questioned the ability of the Council to unite crafts threatened to terminate their memberships within the organization.<sup>7</sup> Jan Waldorf, the President of the Canadian Crafts Council during its difficulties in 1995, worked hard to keep the group alive despite the complete loss of funding. From 1995 to 1998 Waldorf volunteered to run the Council from her Oakville home on a \$6000 budget with no staff, convinced that the complete loss of the Council would be impossible to repair and that, despite provincial objections, the organization was invaluable in facilitating national unity and lobbying the federal government. Difficult hurdles like the costs of publishing in English and French, the bureaucracy that prevented easy export of crafts into the United States, and the lack of Native participation in the Council were cited by Waldorf as factors contributing to the loss of support. Native craftspeople were reluctant to join the Council, as they were supported under a variety of separate federal funding programmes which did not make the distinction between craft and art. Although the American Craft Council itself was struggling with developing economic strategies to cope with financial difficulties, the generous tax benefits to private individuals and corporations who assisted in their funding were not applicable to the Canadian Crafts Council.<sup>8</sup>

By 1998 Waldorf had succeeded in convincing provincial representatives to meet to discuss the future possibilities for the Canadian Crafts Council, which found itself in a holding pattern without the financial support to develop or make changes. A meeting

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Jekyll, President, Canadian Craft Federation, personal interview, 29 October 1999.

<sup>8</sup> Lois Moran, Editor, *American Craft*, Personal Interview, 9 December 1999.

was held in May 1998 in Montreal, with seven provinces represented.<sup>9</sup> Representatives agreed that it was important to maintain federal representation in the form of a national craft organization, but the Council's name was changed to the Canadian Craft Federation, signaling a heightened role for provincial craft organizations. Of the provinces represented, only Ontario had formulated a proposal for dealing with the federal organization. Ontario Crafts Council President Robert Jekyll proposed that Ontario could be responsible for coordinating the provinces, and for developing a web-site for the Canadian Craft Federation. This strategy met with resistance. "Vexed discussions occurred around Ontario's proposal," Jekyll states, "the subtext of the resistance being that 'it will become just another project of Central Canada.'"<sup>10</sup> Jekyll was not wrong in his description of this opposition for in my interviews with the executive directors of the Crafts Association of British Columbia and the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec, the overpowering presence of Central English Canada in the national organization remained a strong theme. Additionally, Yvan Gauthier, Executive Director of the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec, objected to the tradition of "partly elected, partly private club," that dominated the Canadian Crafts Council. Although the new Canadian Craft Federation representatives must be elected, Gauthier believes that the Federation will be unable to overcome the differences between Quebec and the other provinces because Quebec has developed an independent, aggressive marketing strategy for crafts that is unafraid of money and professionalism. The Federation, he argues, still romanticizes

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<sup>9</sup> Cheryl Master, Executive Director, Crafts Association of British Columbia, personal interview, 6 July 1999. The provinces not attending were Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Jekyll, personal interview, 29 October 1999.

craft in Canada, forcing professionals to operate alongside amateurs.<sup>11</sup> The generous provincial funding that is given to the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec supports Gauthier's strong views on professionalism, entirely consistent with the history of his organization.

Cheryl Masters, Executive Director of the Crafts Association of British Columbia, worries that British Columbia is isolated from the cultural field of Canadian craft, both geographically and politically; "There is a feeling of all craft activity being located in Central Canada, with its loud voice."<sup>12</sup> British Columbia does not have much contact with the Maritimes, and feels far apart from Quebec, despite its admiration for the active international trade undertaken by the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec.

Notwithstanding, Masters stresses the support of her colleagues for a national craft organization, which she perceives as essential for bringing the voices of craftspeople to national bodies and national sources of funding.

Jekyll, Gauthier and Masters all listed as a main concern the improvement of the international marketing of Canadian crafts, and agreed on the important possibilities introduced through the use of the World Wide Web; "Our saving grace is the Internet."<sup>13</sup> The Ontario Crafts Council's "Looking Forward Project," a multi-venue approach to exhibiting craft that incorporates electronic and print media within both virtual and real galleries, was introduced at the *One-of-a-Kind* craft show and sale in Toronto, Ontario, in November 2000. The design of the exhibit featured computer terminals showing crafts in their "virtual" space ([www.craft.on.ca](http://www.craft.on.ca)) alongside several of the featured objects in their

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<sup>11</sup> Yvan Gauthier, Executive Director, the Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec, personal interview, 21 January 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Cheryl Masters, Executive Director, Crafts Association of British Columbia, personal interview, 6 July 1999.

<sup>13</sup> Masters, personal interview, 6 July 1999.

“real” space. The Ontario Crafts Council’s promotional material for the project emphasized the global opportunities for craft made possible through electronic communications, including new audiences, fresh ideas about the significance of craft, and, most importantly, access to the global marketplace.

The sense that the craft world remains divided both nationally and internationally despite the advantages of new global technologies is predicated upon two binaries that figure prominently in the world of contemporary crafts. First, adherents of traditional and production craft techniques often oppose the one-off objects of artist-craftspeople. Second, the conception of a global craft community remains unable to bridge the gap between western arguments over the art/craft split and traditional non-western craft production. The excitement over the possibilities of new markets and audiences generated by cyberspace sound international in scale, but as the internet is increasingly critiqued along social, cultural, political and economic lines, it becomes clear that virtual reality technologies are mediated spaces, operating largely within boundaries prescribed by western culture. The expense of ensuring that web-sites are bilingual, and the selection of the craftspeople that are represented on the site remain restrictive. The excitement over the possibilities of new markets and audiences generated by cyberspace sound international in scale, but as the internet is increasingly critiqued along social, cultural, political and economic lines, it becomes clear that virtual reality technologies are mediated spaces, operating largely within boundaries prescribed by western culture. While over 400 million people are connected to the Internet, the majority of these users are from advanced industrial societies, and middle-class western households.<sup>14</sup> This

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<sup>14</sup> Rob Kitchin, *Cyberspace* (Chichester, New York, Weinheim, Brisbane, Singapore, Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, 1998), ix.

raises fundamental questions over the purported democracy of the virtual world and the ability of the Internet to create a unified culture of craft, whether in a single geo-political entity or globally.

The issues faced by the Canadian organizers during the *In Praise of Hands* conference and exhibition, specifically the ideological separations between traditional and conceptual craft, as well as tensions between western and non-western craftspeople, have never been resolved. The hegemony of the western jury and officials is not limited to the international stage. Within the cultural field of Canadian craft the geographic distances between craftspeople, the independence of Quebec, and the separate funding bodies for Native craft remain problematic. Although the internet does offer the potential for improved communications between Canadian craftspeople, exploring the issues surrounding the development of several “national” craft organizations in Canada allows us to remain aware that the same problems may occur within the idealized space of the internet. Just as the “global village” of international craft and a homogenous national Canadian craft organization, guided by American principles, proved to be illusionary concepts, the promotion of the internet as being automatically capable of removing the political, cultural, economic and social constraints surrounding contemporary craft production means that we still are not fully aware of the potential dangers within the digital realm. By undertaking an exploration of issues that developed from the American influences on professional Canadian craft from 1964 to 1974, it is my hope that it can be clearly understood that simple solutions rarely attend to complex situations.

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Figure 1. Margaret Patch and Aileen Osborn Webb  
from Jacqueline Rice Ed. *The First World Congress of Craftsmen, June 8 – 19, 1964*  
(New York: American Craftsmen's Educational Council) 175. American Craft Council  
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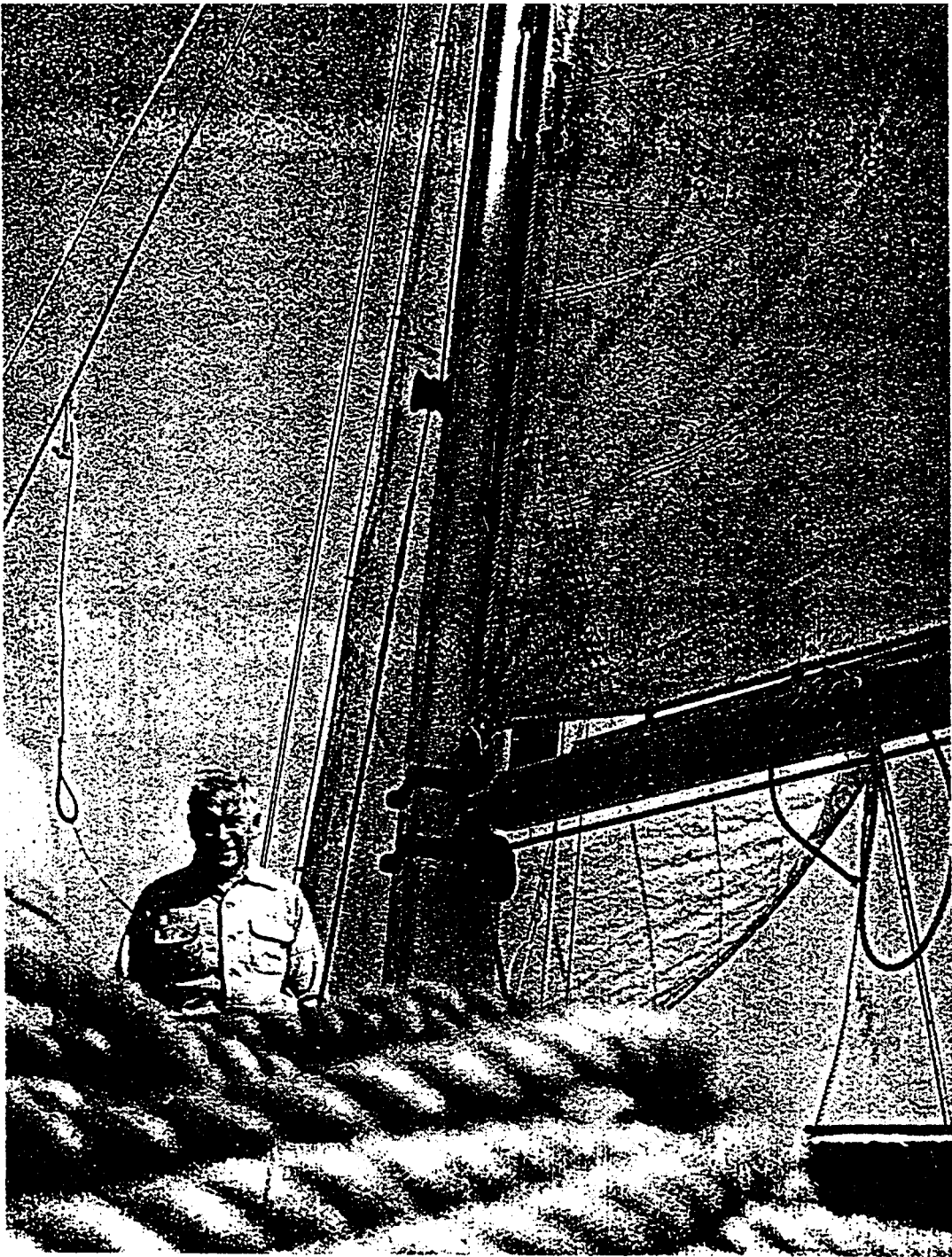


Figure 2. David Campbell aboard his sailboat, Blue Jay, circa 1961. New York.  
From Rose Slivka. "Aileen Osborn Webb, David Campbell: a reminiscence." *American Craft* 53/4 (August/September 1993): 134.



Figure 3. America House at 44 West 53<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York, circa 1965  
from "American Craft Council 1943 – 1993: A Chronology," *American Craft* 53/4  
(August/September 1993): 140.

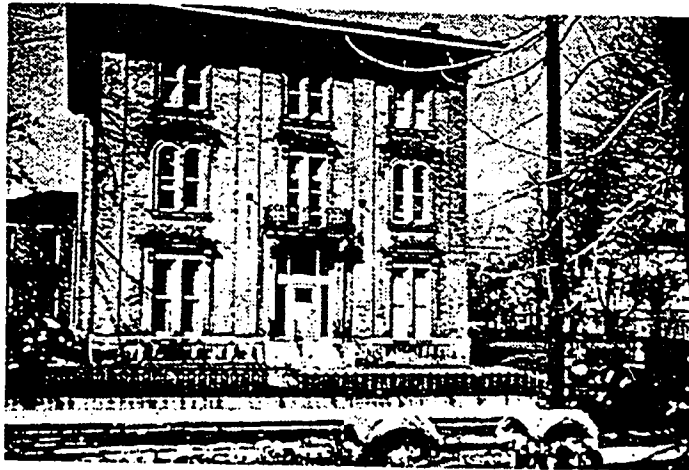
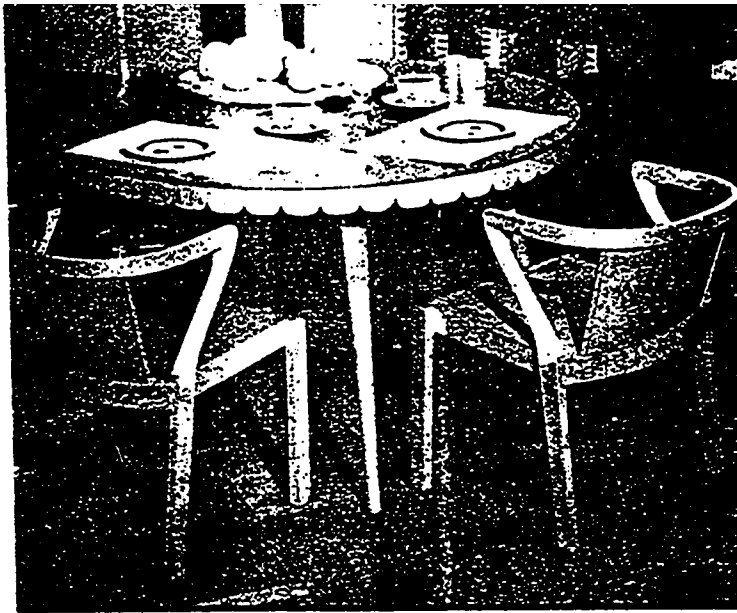


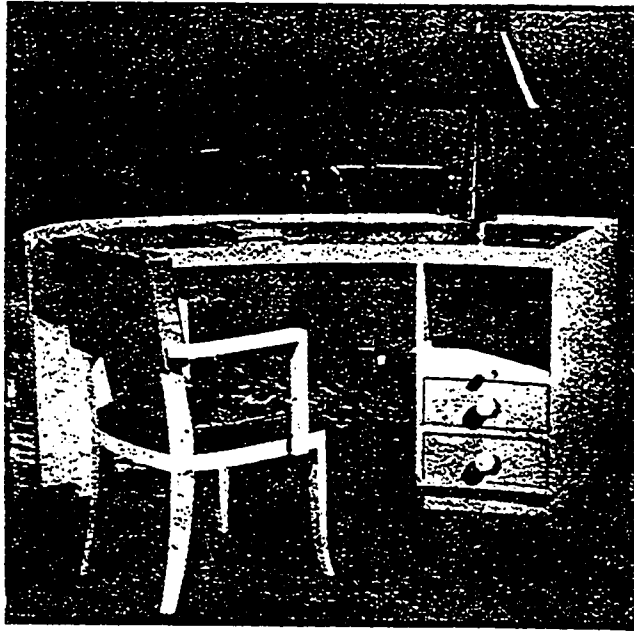
Figure 4. School for American Craftsmen. Rochester, New York. circa 1950.  
From "American Craft Council 1943 – 1993: A Chronology." *American Craft* 53:4  
(August/September 1993): 137.



Figure 5. Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb, President, American Craftsmen's Council, 1956  
from American Craft Council Archives, American Craft Council, Box 1.



Plywood, used in Mosquito construction in Canada's war effort fashions this table by Ridpath's Ltd. and the Finnish chairs.



Designed and made by The T. Eaton Co., Ltd., this desk is painted oyster-gray with an inlay of brown leather.

Figure 6. *Design in Industry*

From Anthony Adamson. "Exhibit Sets New Goal for Industrial Design." *Saturday Night* (2 June 1945): 4. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Design in Industry, RG 107, Box 1, File 5.

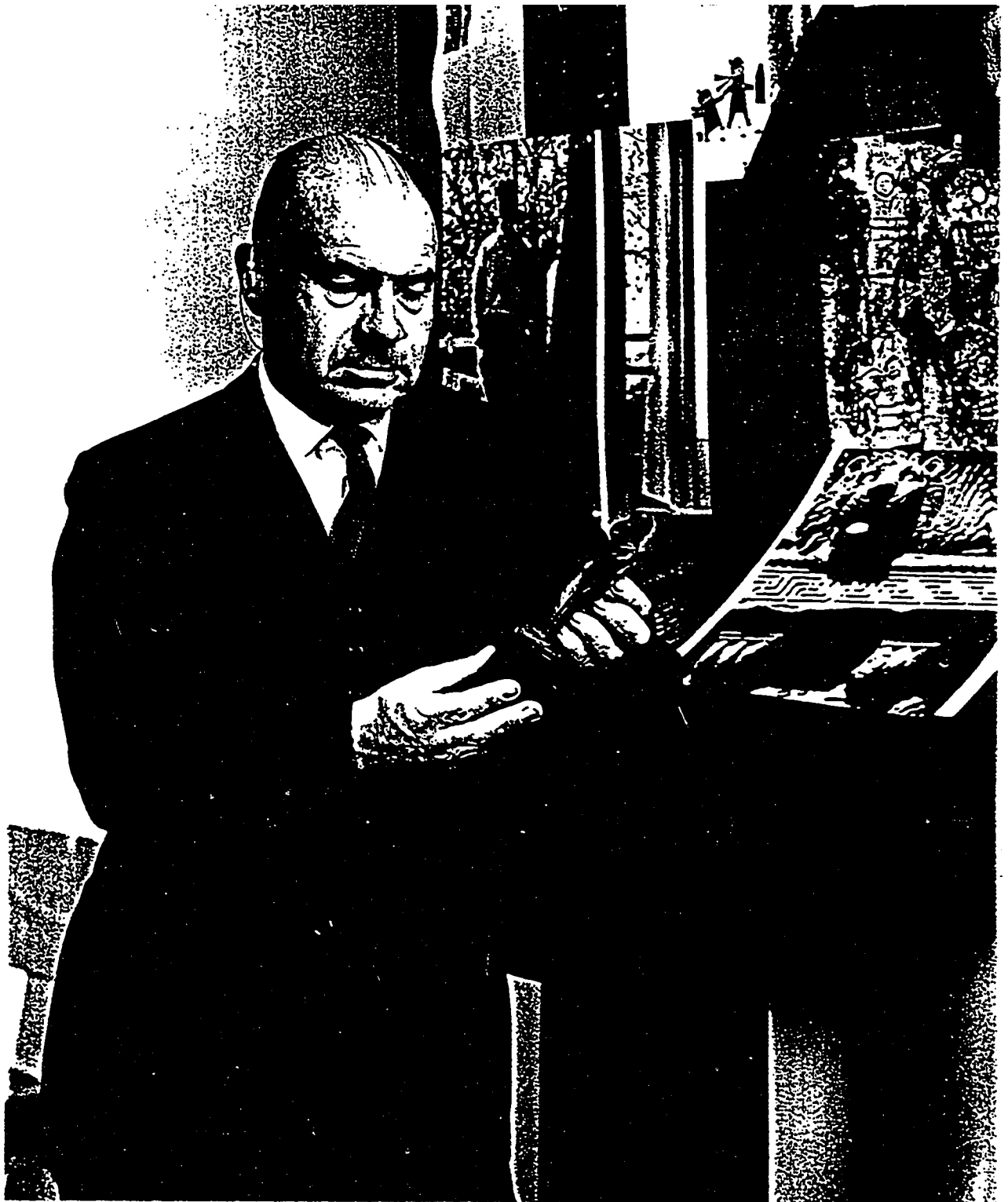


Figure 7. Donald Buchanan, June 1960. Photo: Rapid Grip and Batten  
From National Gallery of Canada Archives. *Buchanan, Donald William*, DOC/CLWT.



**Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb** who opened the exhibition of Designer Craftsmen USA at the Royal Ontario Museum this week holds part of an earthenware wine set, one of the exhibits.

Figure 8. Aileen Osborn Webb at *Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A.*, Royal Ontario Museum 1955 from Margaret Cragg. "About the House: Homemakers will enjoy Craft Show at Museum." *Globe and Mail* 19 May 1955. Royal Ontario Museum Archives. Designer-Craftsmen, RG 107, Box 1, File 14.





Figure 9. Norah McCullough  
From National Gallery of Canada Archives. *McCullough, Norah* DOC/CLWT.

# GUILD AT THE CROSS RO'S

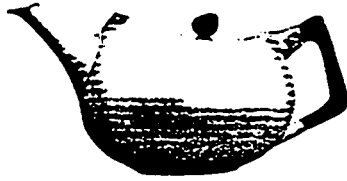


Figure 10. "Guild at the Crossroads"  
From Sandra Gwyn, "Guild at the Crossroads." *Canadian Art* 20/5 (September/October 1963): 276.

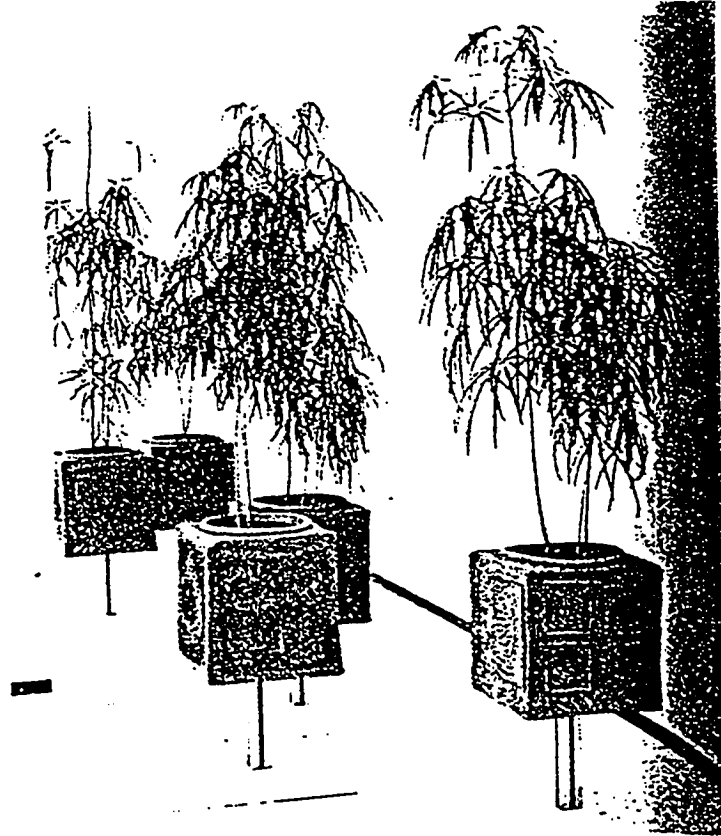


Figure 11. Merton Chambers, ceramic planters, National Trust Building, Toronto 1965  
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Institute of Canada Journal* 476, 42/5 (May 1965): 17.



Figure 12. Artisanat du Québec at Expo 67.  
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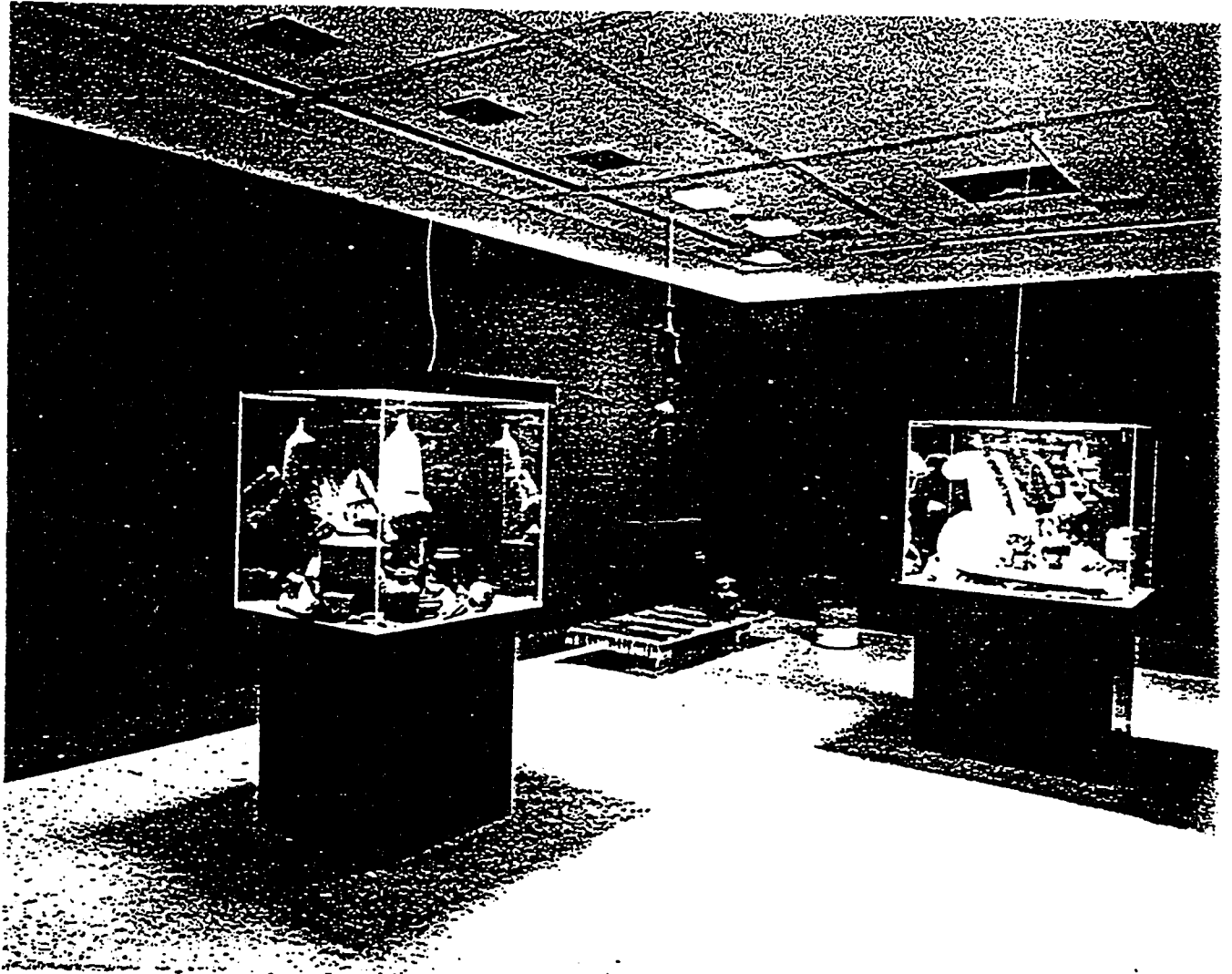


Figure 13. *Canadian Fine Crafts*. National Gallery of Canada, December 1966  
From National Gallery of Canada Archives. National Gallery Canada Installation Photo  
Ex 1233, *Canadian Fine Crafts*. 12-4-296. Volume 3.

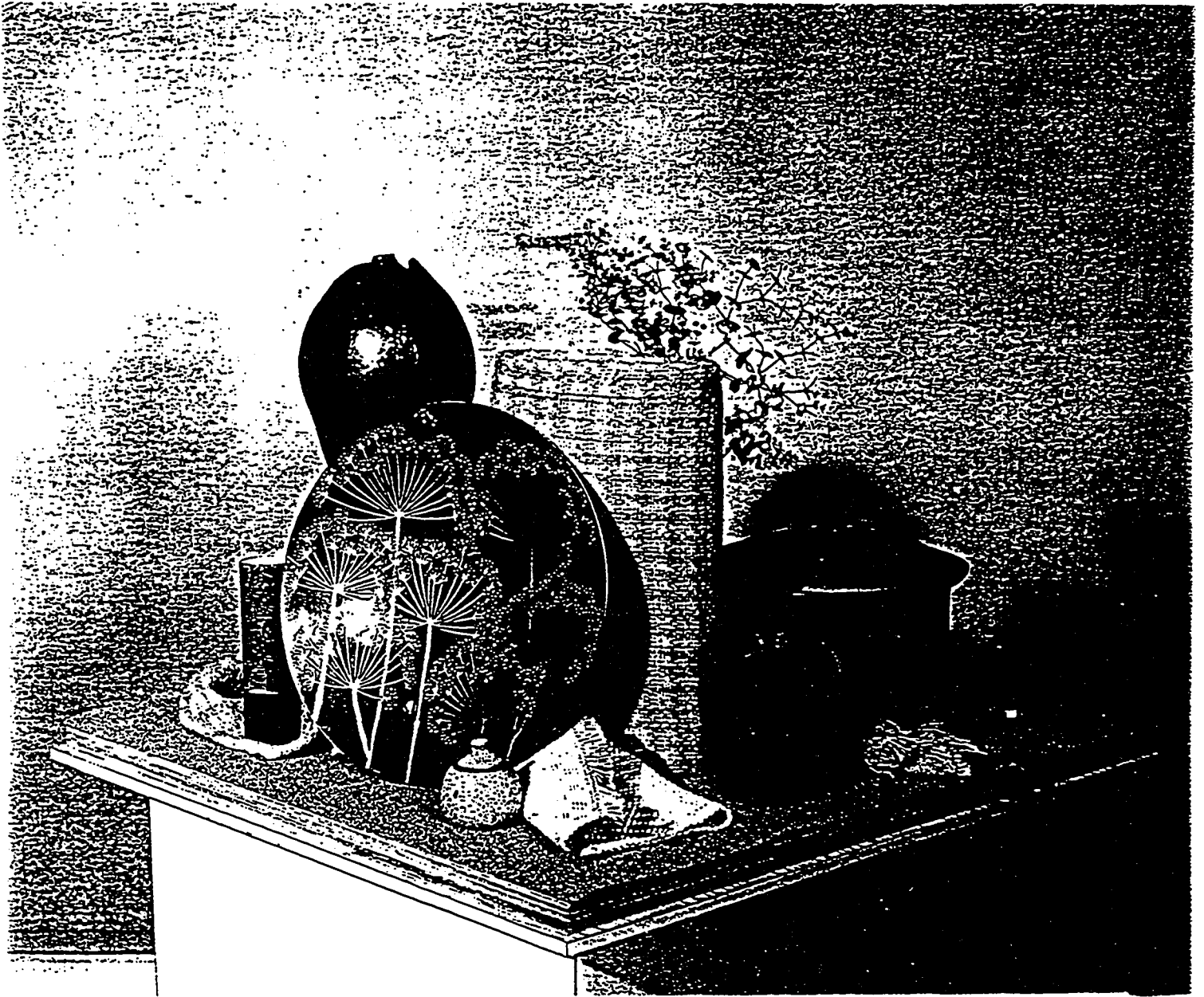


Figure 14. *Canadian Fine Crafts* Exhibition 1966/1967 (showing arrangements in show-cases) Section B. Cases 1 and 2 from National Gallery of Canada Archives, *Canadian Fine Crafts* 12-4-296, Volume 3.

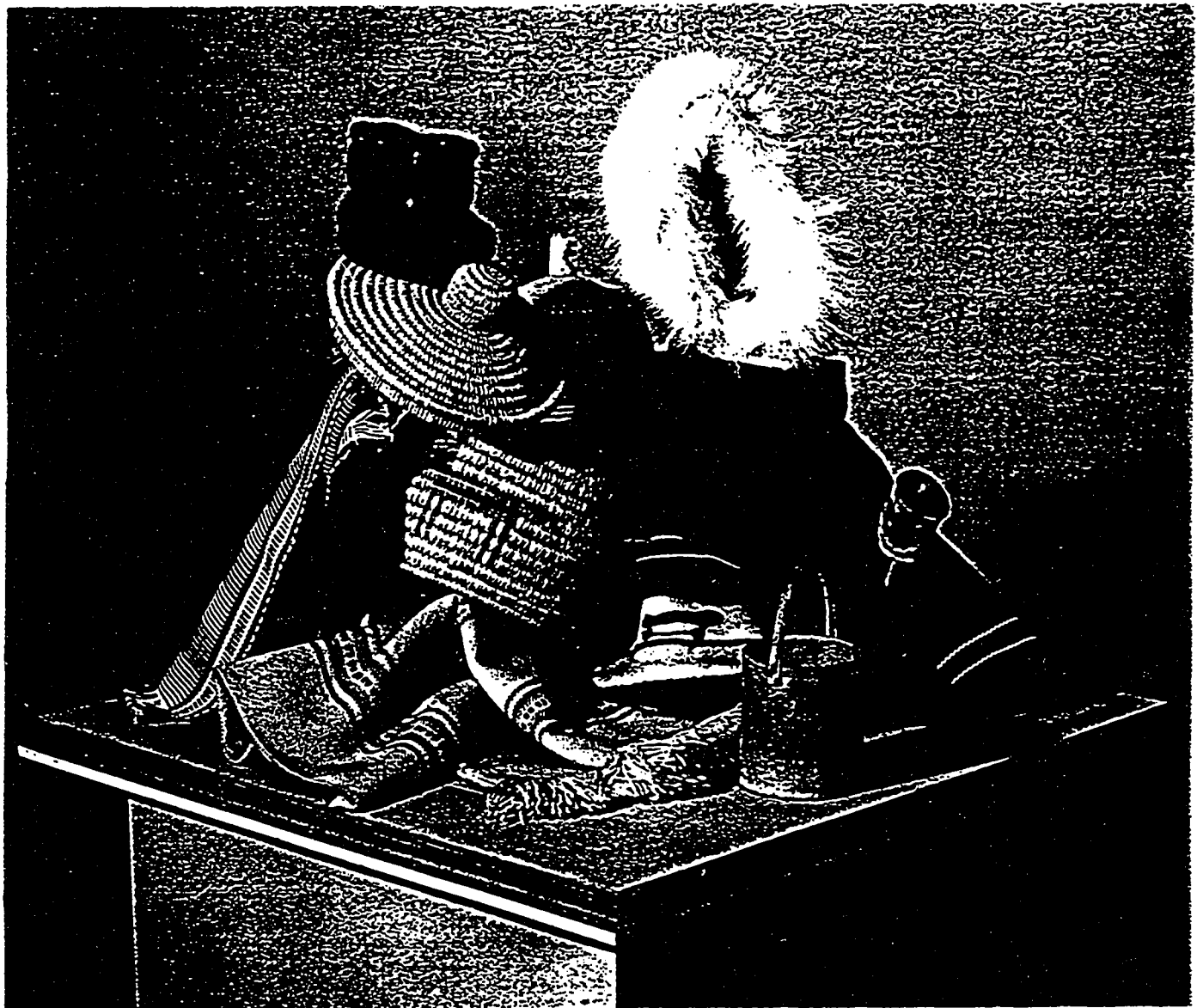


Figure 15. *Canadian Fine Crafts 1966 – 1967*, “Eskimo and Indian examples” on S.A. Zielinski’s wool cushion cover, R.B. Sandin’s linen runner and G.K. Gonnason’s placemat from Canadian Fine Crafts Section A. Case 4. National Gallery of Canada Archives, Canadian Fine Crafts 12-4-296, Volume 3.

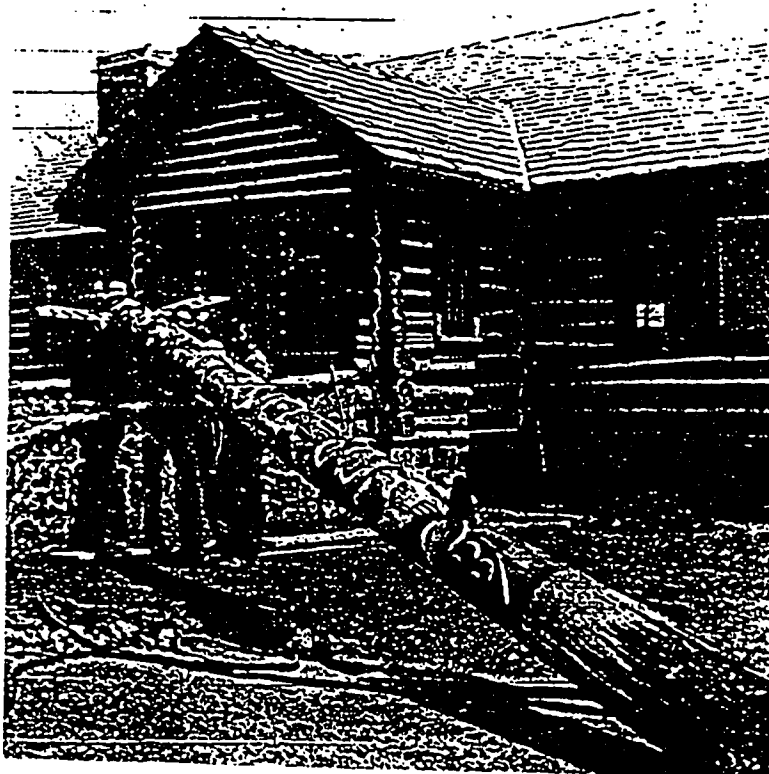


Figure 16. Ojibwacraft. Curve Lake – Setting up totem poles at entrance  
From “Ojibway Progress Marked by new \$50,000 Building – Craft House Built for  
Booming Business.” *The Indian News* 9/3 (October 1966):3.



BY UNA ABRAHAMSON

# of consuming interest

INDIAN AND ESKIMO ART IS FOR REAL, BRACELETS THAT TELL, PLUS PACKAGING NEWS

LOOK FOR THIS SEAL  
IT'S YOUR GUIDE TO  
GOOD SHOPPING



**INDIAN AND ESKIMO ART: TRUE AND FALSE.** Genuine Indian and Eskimo art and crafts are the cultural expression of a rapidly disappearing way of life, with the demand frequently outstripping supply as more buyers become aware of the charm and increasing value of these carvings, prints and handicrafts. Unfortunately, their popularity has encouraged increased manufacturing and selling of fakes, to the point where government, reputable dealers, buyers, and of course, the artists are beginning to feel grave concern.

The problem is complex because the fakes are labeled in ways such that no legal action can be taken. (At the same time, some shops sell both genuine and fake with price no longer an indication of authenticity, particularly when it comes to items costing under \$40.) Moreover, most fakes are Canadian-made. From time to time there have been spurious imports, but in most cases, Canadian diplomatic representatives have halted sales. Native artists, who depend on the income received from sales, live so far from the retail markets that other Canadians must protect them from exploitation. Of course, the buyer is also a loser when a so-called "authentic" piece turns out to be high-price junk.

No parallel situation exists with other Canadian artists because no manufacturer would dare to duplicate an artist's work without risking a lawsuit.

The authentication of genuine arts and crafts is the responsibility of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa. The department does not sell, but affixes registered labels before sale. The Indian label shows a stylized beaver pelt (this animal symbolizes industry) stretched on a wooden frame; Eskimo arts and crafts, an igloo. The department also encourages high standards of work among the artists, and at the same time, keeps the buying public informed through exhibitions, publications and news reports. Identification doesn't certify that the item is top-notch art (it could be a low-cost souvenir), but it does infer that the article was made by a Canadian Indian or Eskimo. It is not mass-produced or counterfeit. In addition to the official tags, some co-operatives and artists use marks, labels

Tool hatchings help to authenticate



and symbols to indicate place of origin and other information.

Skilled Indian craftsmen produce a wide variety of products, but the most sought after include the carved, brightly painted cedar masks of the West Coast Indians, the "false face" masks of the Mohawks, bead and porcupine-quill work from the Plains and Cree and baskets made by the Nootka, Micmacs and Ojibwas.

The marketing of these skills is so recent that imitations are generally confined to such items as totems, masks and beadwork. Generally, the carved fakes are just too perfect: lighter in weight, having incisions without depth or dimension and an overall smoothness without the desirable telltale tool marks. Fine carvings are works of art and comparatively few are available, so beware of stores filled with so-called Haida carvings. Authentic beadwork is handmade from irregular-shaped beads and includes pattern variations comparable to the tension changes in hand knits, producing a three-dimensional quality, whereas fakes are perfect and flat in appearance. Most fakes are labeled with tags reading "Authentic imitation" or "After an Indian original," while imports should be stamped with the country of origin.

Because Eskimos have produced arts and crafts commercially for a longer time than the Indians, they are plagued by imitations. Stone carvings are the most copied and some are actually soapstone, as are some of the originals, while others are plastic copies. Many false Eskimo pieces are weighted to feel as heavy as the originals, but they have a too-high polish, show finicky detail (Eskimos appreciate understatement, shown by bold approach with an absence of detail), and some have mold marks. Imitations have stickers marked "This is a genuine reproduction" or "Reproduced from an Eskimo carving in a private collection," and some have tags with pseudo-Arctic legends.

Apart from looking for official tags and buying from reputable handicraft markets, the buyer's best protection is to know and recognize these native arts by visits to museums and the many books available. On view at all times is the superb Toronto-Dominion Bank collection of Eskimo art, displayed in the Observation Gallery, Toronto-Dominion Bank Tower, Toronto, and major Indian and Eskimo collections at the

National Museum, in Ottawa, the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the Royal Ontario Museum, in Toronto. Among the many books, two recent publications are outstanding. Both are well illustrated and bilingual. *Eskimo Sculpture* (by George Swinton, McClelland and Stewart, \$12.50) and *Eskimo Prints* (Burns and MacEachern, \$15), by James A. Houston, the man who brought the first modern carvings south in 1948.

**VEGETABLES: WHITER THAN WHITE** Sometimes the white vegetables (potatoes, cauliflower, white cabbage, celery and onions) have a tendency to yellow, especially when cooked in hard water. A pinch of cream of tartar, a dash of lemon juice or white vinegar added to the cooking water will help overcome discoloration without altering flavor. (Don't try to fix color with that old-time dollop of baking soda. It won't. It will, however, destroy any vitamin C present!)

Overcooking, allowing cooked vegetables to remain in hot water or rest at the back of the stove also result in poor color and taste, as well as a loss in food value.

#### A PROBLEM SOLVED?

Following my recent peeve about fragile grocery bags that split and spill contents (December 1967), I was pleased when Mr. Dean Gowland, design consultant for Kruger Pulp and Paper, Montreal, walked into my office with his newest invention in tow. To overcome the spill-bag problem, Mr. Gowland showed me a pop-up handgrip cardboard carton, about 11 by 15 by 9 inches, with a capacity equal to approximately two conventional grocery bags. The box springs into shape with the weight of the groceries, and when empty, collapses for disposal. (As a shopper's bonus, it makes excellent storage for books, toys and out-of-season rubbers.) The box is currently being tested in a Montreal supermarket, but the problem, of course, is to offer this added service without increasing shopping costs. If you are interested in this solution to grocery toting, let your supermarket manager know.

#### CLEANING VINYL UPHOLSTERY

Recently there have been many requests for tips on cleaning and removing stains from  
*Continued on page 20*

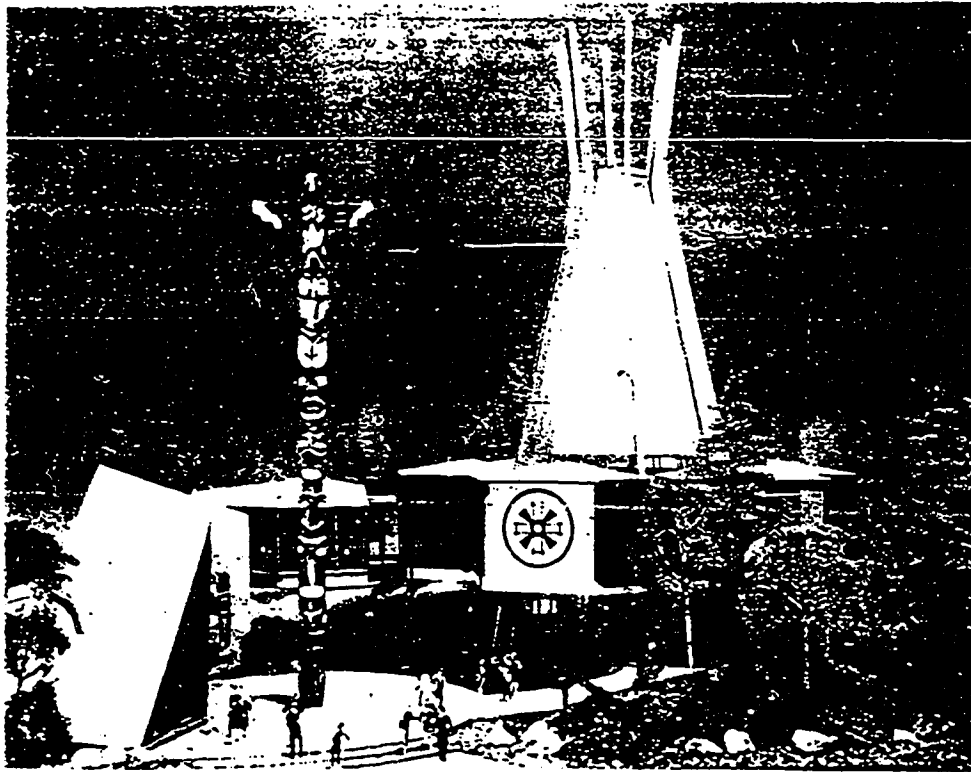
Registered Eskimo art and ...



Indian craft tags

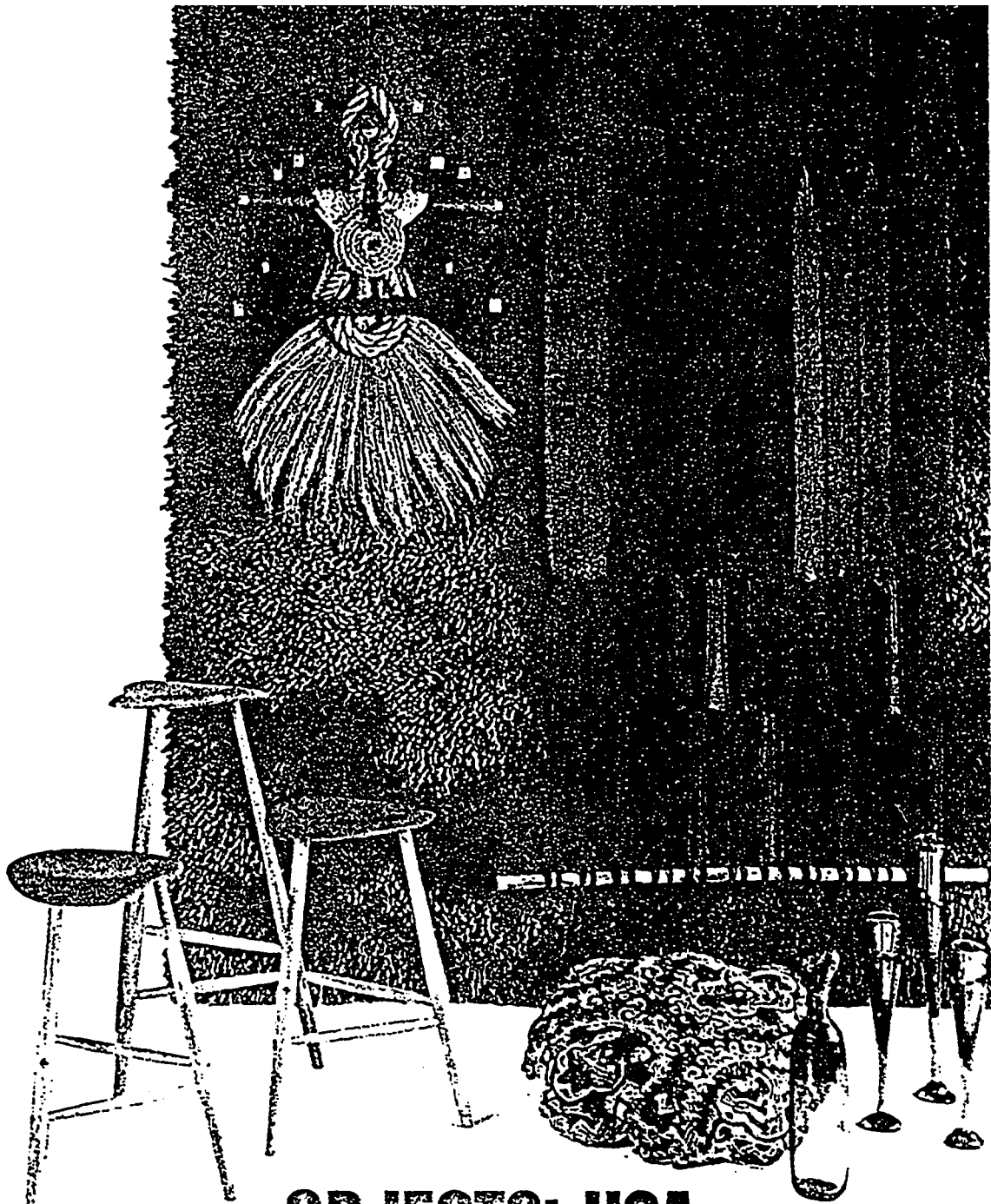


Figure 17. Una Abrahamson, "Of Consuming Interest: Indian and Eskimo Art: True and False." *Chatelaine* 41/6 (June 1968): 18.



THE INDIANS OF CANADA PAVILION AT EXPO '67.

Figure 18. "Indians of Canada Pavilion." Expo 67  
From Robert Marjoribanks. "Work Starts on Expo Indian Pavilion." *The Indian News* 9/2  
(July 1966): 1.



## **OBJECTS: USA**

**Tomorrow's Heirlooms from Today's American Craftsmen**

Figure 19. *Objects U.S.A.*

From "Connoisseurs of Crafts." *Woman's Day* 11 (August 1969): 47.

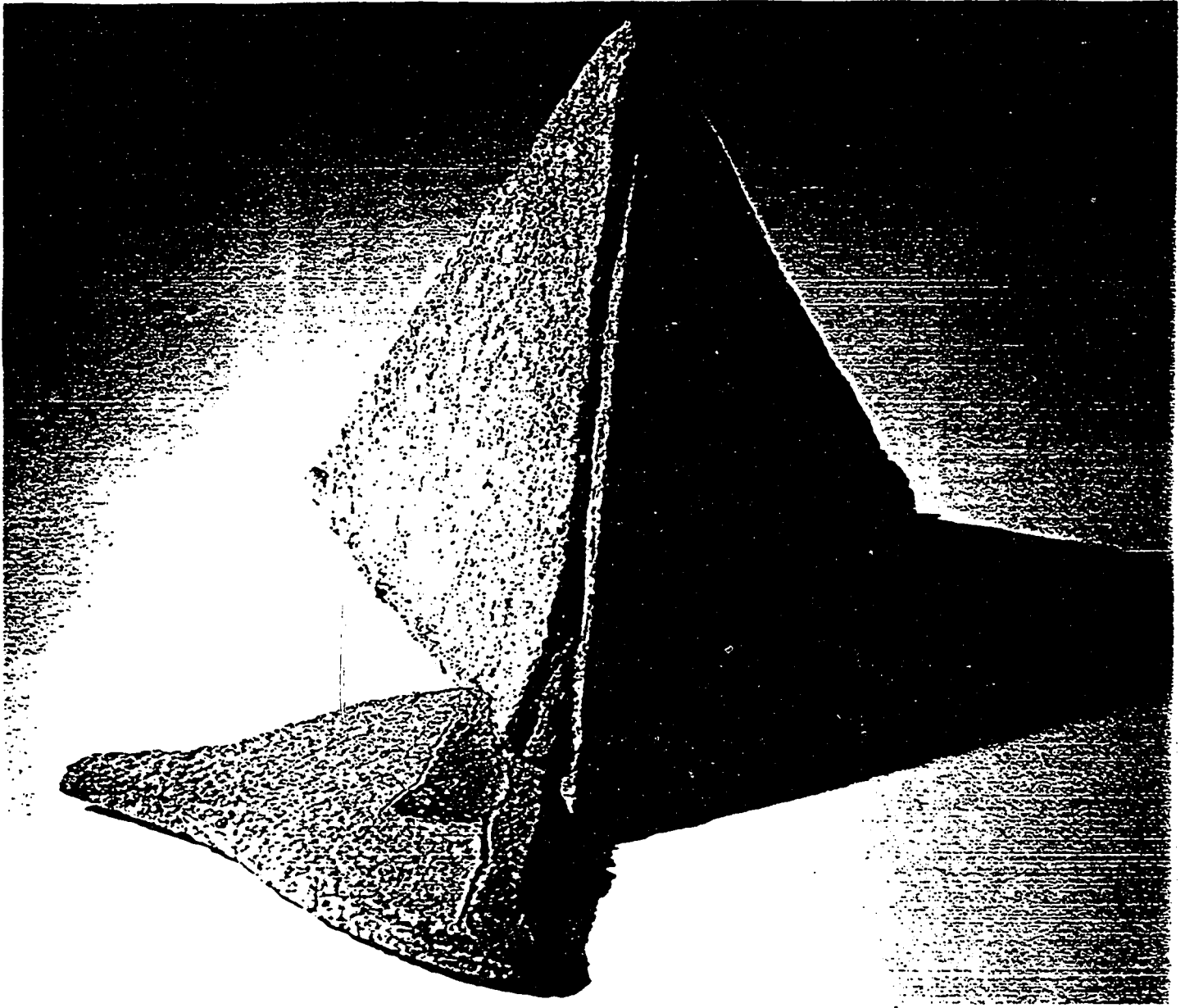


Figure 20. Ricardo Gomez. from series "Christmas Boxes" 1964. made for Marilyn and Syd Levine. 4.75" x 5.5" x 6" photo collection of the artist.



Figure 21. Jack Sures and Karen Lessard in University of Saskatchewan, Regina, ceramic studio.

From *Craftsman/L'Artisan* 1/2 (November 1968): 14.

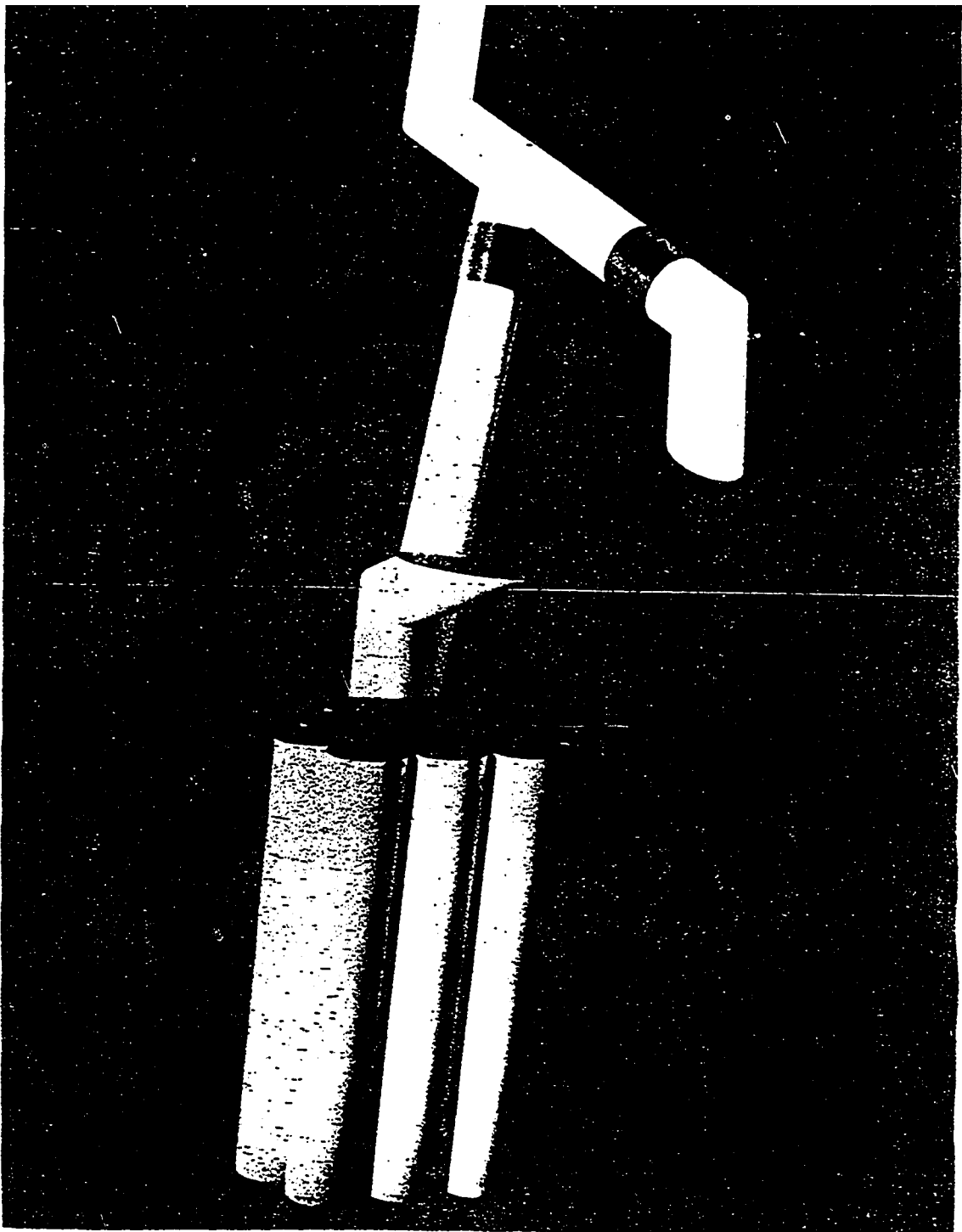


Figure 22. Donald Lloyd McKinley, Table and Lamp.  
From *Craft Dimensions Canada* catalogue. 131. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, RG  
107. Box 5. No. 20a.

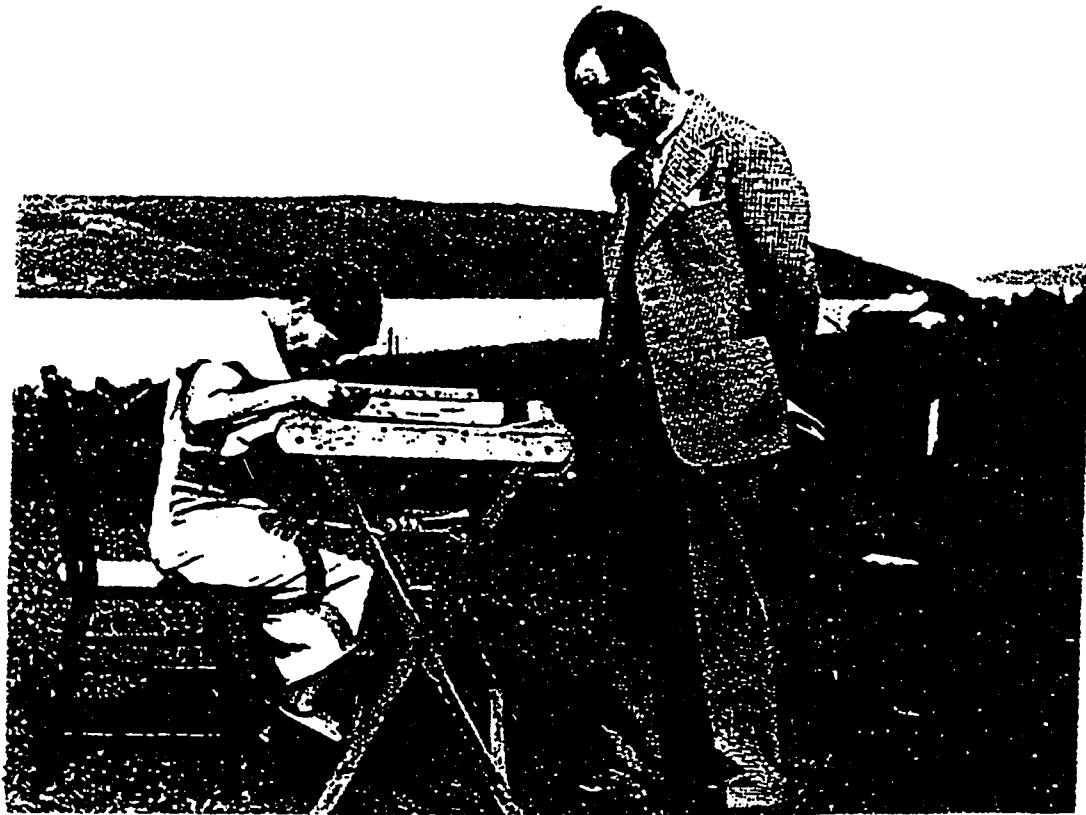


Figure 23. Jean-Marie Gauvreau observing Berthe Desjardins at work, circa 1937-1942. From Andrée-Anne de Sève. *Hommage à Jean-Marie Gauvreau* (Montréal: Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec, 1995): 18.

# ✿ CRAFT BOOM ✿

Right now we're in the biggest craft explosion in Canadian history. Crafts have been with us as a splendid record of the taste and skills of each generation for three hundred years. And today we're more interested in getting in touch with our roots than ever before. Somehow in this fascination with tradition, the skills of the old are combined with the inventiveness and energy of the young. Everybody's doing crafts — men and women of

all ages. Some carry on with ancient designs. But many more are re-creating the old methods, inventing their own designs in totally new ways, as indicated by the various examples displayed below. We gathered together work from expert craft artists across the country. You may be seen next year in the first International Craft Exhibition at Ontario Science Centre, Toronto, from June 15 to Labor Day, 1974.

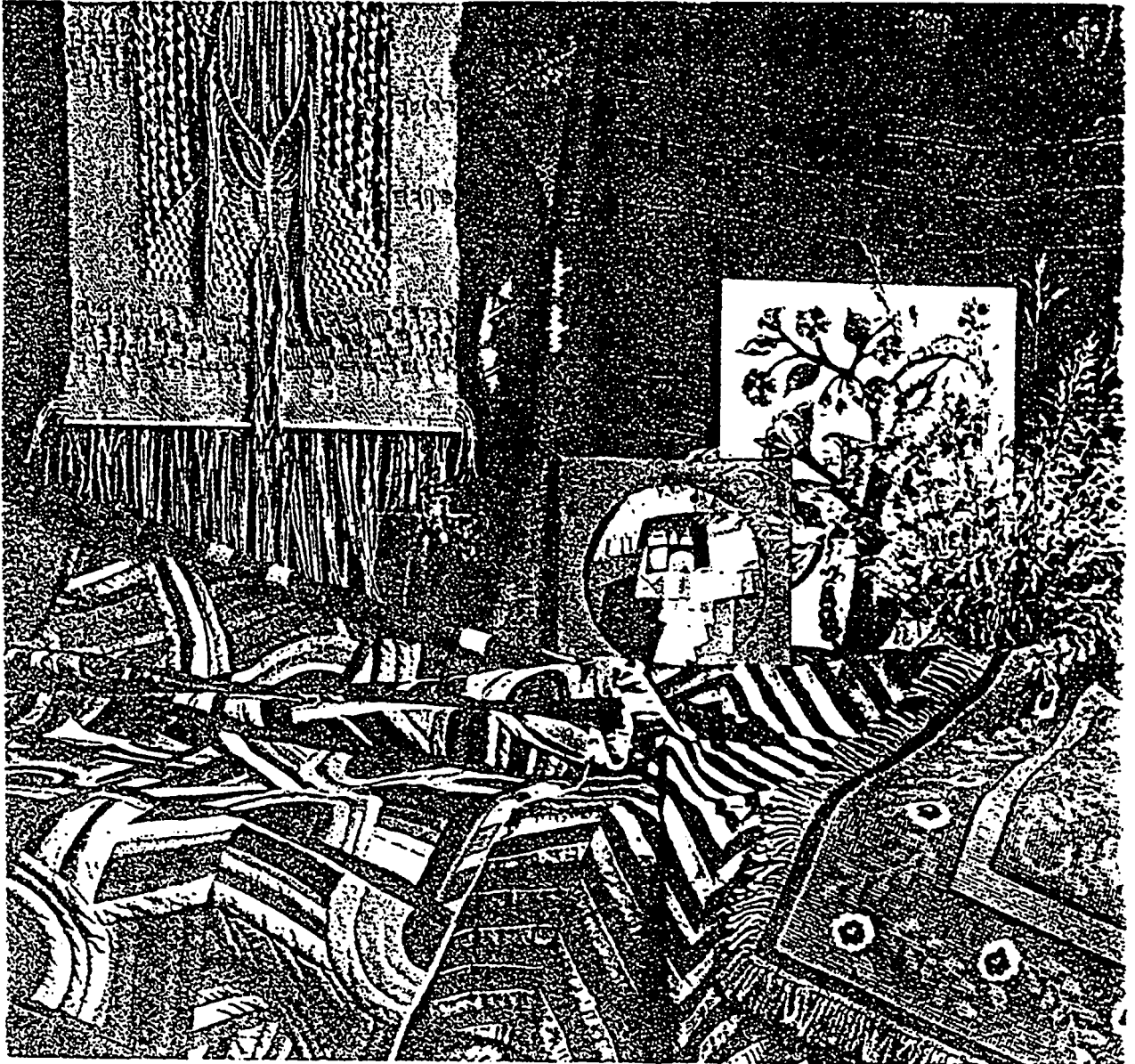


Figure 24. "Craft Boom"

From "Craft Boom." *Chatelaine*, 46/6 (June 1973): 48.



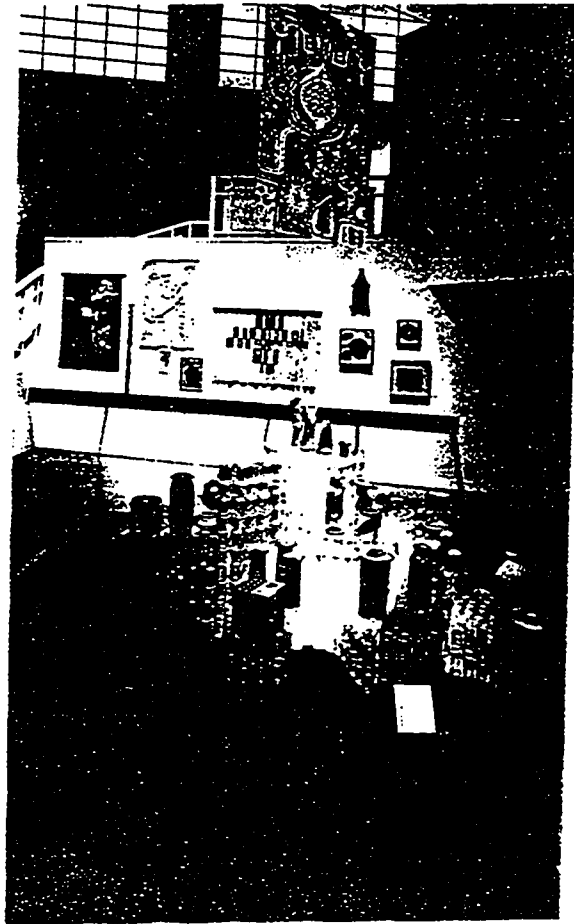


Figure 25. *Craft Dimensions Canada* installation view  
From Royal Ontario Museum Archives, RG 107, Box 5, File 20a.



Figure 26. *Craft Dimensions Canada* jury – from left, Glen Kaufman, Ronald Pearson, Robert Turner.  
From “*Craft Dimensions Canada*,” *Kunst-Handwerk*, Royal Ontario Museum Archive, *Craft Dimensions Canada*. RG 107, Box 5, No. 20a.

# CRAFTS

## YOURS FOR THE MAKING

Creation is a beautiful process: to make whole what was once many parts . . . to conceive and bring to completion. Beautiful because it is the sum total of your own energy and imagination. In essence, a part of you in a bright, new form for all to behold.

This Sunday marks the start of CRAFT WEEK in Toronto, so called in honor of the World Crafts Council's Summer exhibition "In Praise of Hands" being held at the Ontario Science Centre. On display will be some of the finest craft pieces from around the world, bringing a high level of craft consciousness to one and all.

So come on . . . you too can get crafty. Simpsons has a great collection of craft kits just waiting to be taken in hand!

**JEWEL WORK**  
Simpsons Hobby Craft Centre offers a great selection of craft kits for creative fun:  
- Uncle Milton's Dwarf Tree Kit, Grow 9 tin trees with this exciting kit, Complete - Uncle Milton's selected seeds, soil mixture & plant food! Plus 9 easy growing pots, Horn and Dwarf Tree Growing Manual. \$7.99  
- For Flowers Kit, Make furry acrylic glass men from pre-cut, ready-to-use materials. \$4.99  
- Beilieu Eggery Kit, Decorative accent made in pre-cut plastic glass egg and frame, available in many colorful designs. \$6.99  
- 3-Dimensional Decoupage, The look of 1 World art by affixing pieces on wood, metal, clothing and various material. \$6.49  
- Denim Painting Kit, Fun for all ages! Variety of combinations to choose from using a variety of stencils and washable pigments. \$6.99  
- "Magic Memory" Casting Kit, Realistic images cast safely and easily with our "Magic Mix." Kit contains all you need. \$10.99

**ONE AND MAIL ORDERS FILLED**  
18111 Sheppard Avenue East, Downsview, Ontario M3J 2K9, Canada, Simpsons Hobby Craft Centre  
© Simpsons Hobby Craft Centre 1974

Figure 27. Simpsons advertisement, "Crafts: Yours for the Making"  
From *The Globe and Mail* 9 June 1974: 1/74.

ar

a quarterly journal of the visual arts in Canada

# 18 In Praise of Hands

Summer 1974 \$2.00



Figure 28. Harold Town, *In Praise of Hands* poster  
From "Cover," *Art Magazine* 5/18 (Summer 1974)



Figure 29. International Jury, *In Praise of Hands*, from left to right: Paul Smith, Erika Billeter, Sori Yanagi, Taizo Miake (exhibition designer, not on jury)  
From *World Crafts Council News*, Autumn 1973. Archives of Ontario, MU5783, Box 38, GD-GG4.

...for myself, my sympathy to the essential spirit of the American people, their customs, then everything, grows every time I come into contact with them, and my thankfulness that there is still such an essential difference between them and the Canadians—how any Canadian with a grain of common sense or self-respect can even consider the possibility of his country throwing in its lot with the United States is as much a mystery to me as the craze young Englishmen seem to have for marrying American girls.

LADY ABERDEEN, 1895 (*Journal of Lady Aberdeen*)

Right: "6 Orange Bregues," clay shoes with orange glaze in glass and wood case with orange varnish, from *Single Right Men's Shoes* series, life-size shoes, case 26" high, by Cathie Falk.

Below: Killer whale headdress carved of birch and yellow cedar, 56" long, by Walter Harris, collection British Columbia Provincial Museum.

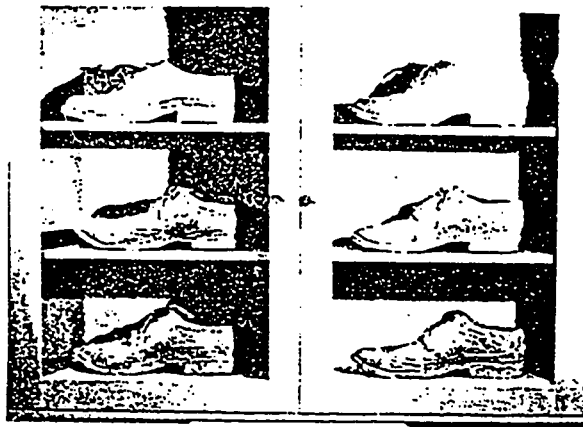


Figure 30. "Special Section: The Crafts in Canada," *Craft Horizons* 34/3 (June 1974): 17.



Figure 31. *In Praise of Hands* installation. Taizo Miake designer.  
From Ontario Science Centre Archives. *In Praise of Hands*. Installation photos.

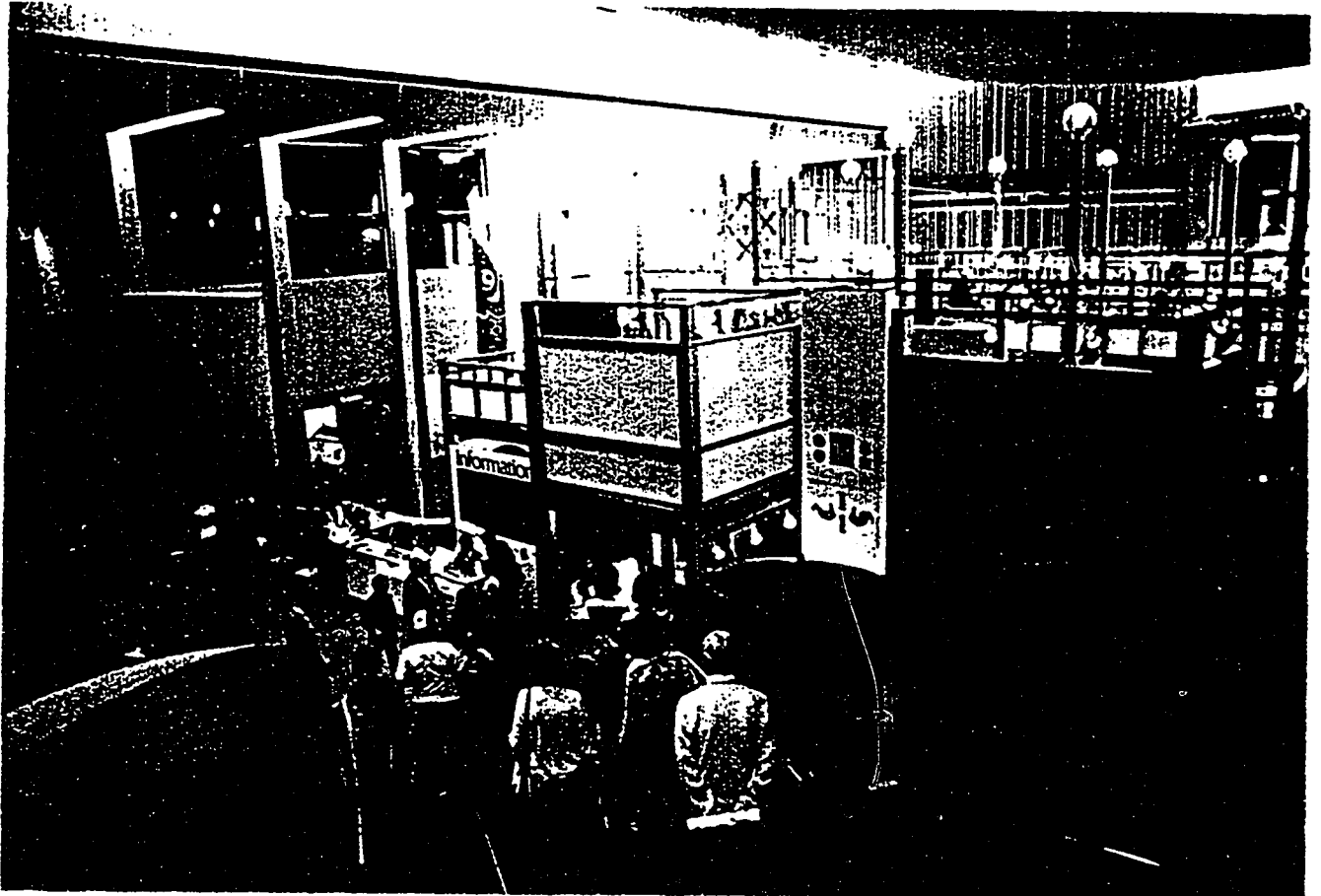


Figure 32. *In Praise of Hands*. View of Exhibition  
From Ontario Science Centre Archives. *In Praise of Hands* Exhibition photos.



Canadian  
Indian Art 74

An exhibition of contemporary art  
and traditional crafts

June 4 to July 14  
Royal Ontario Museum

L'art des Indiens  
du Canada 74

Une exposition d'art contemporain  
et des traditions de l'artisanat

Le 4 juin au 14 juillet  
Royal Ontario Museum



Figure 33. *Canadian Indian Art 74* catalogue  
From Royal Ontario Museum Archives, RG 107, Box 9, No. 12.

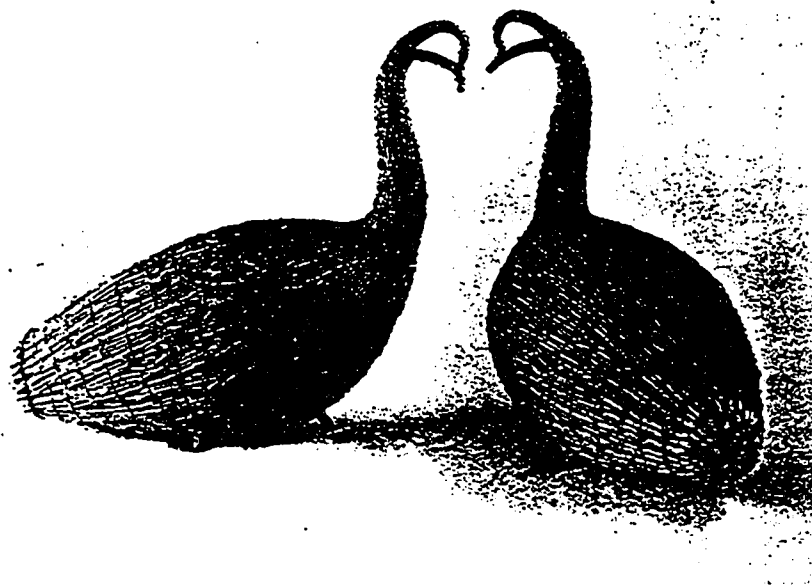


Figure 34. John Blueboy. Twig Decoys  
From *Canadian Indian Art 74* catalogue, 72. Royal Ontario Museum Archives, RG 107,  
Box 9, No. 12.



Figure 35. Bailey Leslie presenting Aileen Osborn Webb with her "porcelain compote"  
From *1974 Diary of a Conference*. American Craft Council Archives, World Crafts  
Council, Box 2.



Figure 36. Aileen Osborn Webb with the Jimmy Skye Dancers  
From *1974 Diary of a Conference*, American Craft Council Archives. World Crafts  
Council. Box 2.