

THE CANADIANA COLLECTION

The first of this collection, **Canadiana #1** was sketched in the winter of 2003, with several other concepts, following a visit to a local museum in Northern Ontario. The exhibition included many objects with which I was familiar. My parent's families were farming/logging pioneers at the turn of the last century and aged tools and equipment were old family friends. The prized objects in the gallery renewed my awareness of the quest for 'civilisation' in this new and remote place and the daily demand for physical labour. Definitions of strength were clarified. Primary roles for men and women were dictated by mental and physical capacity.

Creating with the tension of thread, the resistance of clay, the drape of bias fabric or the grain in wood, creates a personal record of time. Unlike electronic engagement, where perfect sequences equal perfect results, materials and methods must be honoured; coaxing and care are fundamental. Physical wisdom can be learned but not transferred. E-gaming may be stimulating momentarily but I suggest it results in an enormous appetite for genuine physical engagement.

CANADIANA #1 is an edgy pairing of ideas and is purposefully proportioned as a hatchet, a tool for cutting small wood for home fires. Axe heads exist from prehistory, a perfect symbol for the creation of civilisation around fire, treasured moments of exchange and respite from labour.

NUPTIALS #1 examines the creation of lace in truly feminine form and salutes this craft as an expression personal wealth; prosperity as embellishment. Perhaps an effective salute to an effective partnership, this traditional white lace bride *is* having the desired effect upon the spike.....

Re CANT HOOK and **NUPTIALS #2** are realigned symbols for the partnerships of those 'Hewers of Wood'. The former draws a parallel with individuals who held power over the lives of many, the latter honours a finely tuned duo whose success lie in beautiful balance and cooperation.

Showing partnership as a strong connection, **COPE** is derived from a woodworker's term for seamlessly fitting corner molding. One axis must assume the profile of the other to create a strong juncture. Coping here is not just the wearing down, nor a simile for endurance, rather it's the creation of strength in combination, applicable to interpersonal or cultural adaptation.

GPS presents a familiar format but replaces an obviously missing symbol with my Grandfather's plumbbob. Using gravity, this weight was used to establish or transfer a point from one level to another. *En pointe*, it is clad in a tutu. If society lacks cultural commonality, classical forms of art and performance are pressured to validate their historic, artistic and ritual values. When are traditions vital and when do they become obsolete and ridiculous in their stylization?

Comparative values are given gentle salute with **OUTLET**. Reflecting on the assertion that individual expression is found through being 'plugged in', I point out that the toque is warm and invitingly, 'unplugged', in honour of those who maintained their dignity and individualism in a rural solitude now difficult to imagine.

Great expanses of space, secured through an extended connection, **NETWORK** focuses on the commonality of handwork and the sharing of stitches as a basis for women's exchanges. The title is certainly tongue-in-cheek for the communications network and the contemporary web on which we all rely. The flag is worked from a binary stitch, having only two simple reversed knots set in pairs. Its apparent lack of structure is a perfect metaphor for lace being created in the moments between other tasks; while a child sleeps, pies bake or before workmen appear from the fields for a meal. Such painstaking, methodical work offers the mind an escape from other concerns. This lace drapes softly like an antimacassar waiting for some prized artifact to be placed upon it! A mason jar sealer ring is fitting punctuation in a comment on surviving a northern winter.

PRESERVANCE arose in consideration of conviction though I do not suggest that salvation is to be had by reaching for the lifeline of Christianity. The strength of personal conviction is a mighty survival tool which bypasses the unresolved doubts that accompany scrutiny and science. Fate falls in line after other assumptions.

In complete contrast to the refined formality of lace and craftsmanship, **HOME** is crudely shaped but suggestive of nurturance, safety and collectivity. No handbook is available to guarantee sleek efficiency on the home front. 'Home' is derived from an ancient French word for village and homes are crafted daily with whatever skills and materials parents find at hand.

SCALE plays on three meanings; Canada's geographic immensity, music as a life-saving encounter after months of silence, and the act of tackling a vertical ascent. A suggested violin disintegrates into rugged landscape, divided, or perhaps connected by bridges that are power towers, and cabling that streams past a tiny climber at the edge of the 'falls'.

**"IF YOU LOOK CAREFULLY, YOU WILL SEE IT IS NOT THE CLOWN
WHO IS LAUGHING!"
Marcelle Marceau**