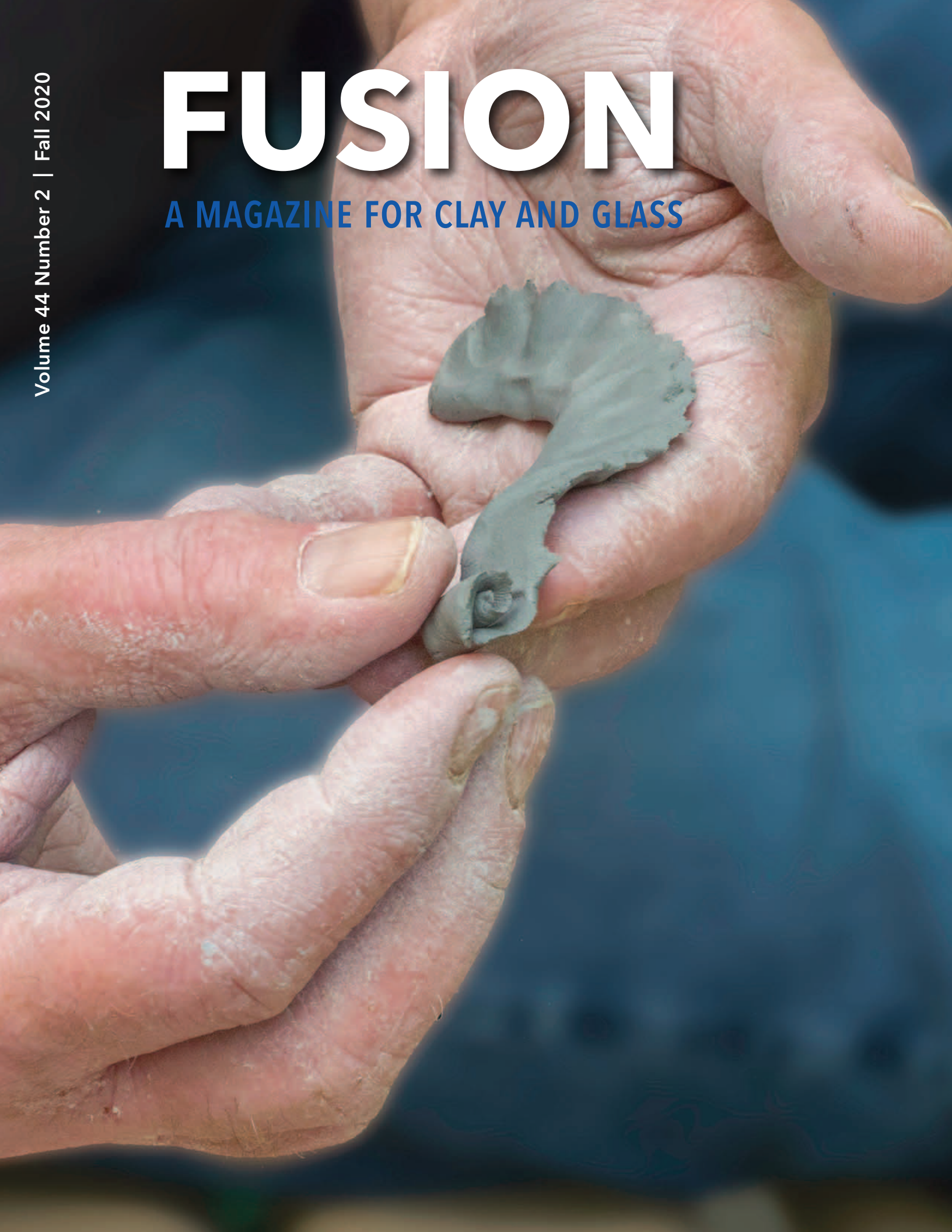


Volume 44 Number 2 | Fall 2020

FUSION

A MAGAZINE FOR CLAY AND GLASS



Dear FUSION members and supporters,

We hope this finds you well, safe, and able to continue your creative endeavours.

As with the 2020 Conference, FUSION regrets that the 2020 Clay & Glass Show will not take place this year.

As we create different ways to engage with you, please join the new FUSION Makers Market and FUSION Makers Meet events.

While this year has been difficult and distressing, it's also brought people together near and far, and we hope that these two Makers events will support and inspire you in your work.

Wishing everyone a safe and healthy Fall.

Wendy Hutchinson
Chair, Clay & Glass Show
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FUSION

A MAGAZINE FOR CLAY AND GLASS

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ON THE COVER

Clay curl. Image: Peter Shepherd, 2020. See " 'Genius Where People Don't Look': A Conversation with Bruce Brown," Peter Shepherd and Bruce Brown, page 6.

Please note that, as required by Canadian government and public health directives to prevent transmission of COVID-19, advertisers in this Fall 2020 issue of FUSION Magazine may have changed their retail shopping practices, course and workshop dates, or travel offerings. Please check directly with our advertisers for updates.



FUSION remembers Ed Roman, known to many as the grandfather of Canadian glass artists, who passed away March 2, 2020.

With his life-partner, textile artist Wren (Jude) Crossland, Ed lived and worked at their Windy Ridge Studios near Brudenell ON for many years.

A fuller appreciation will follow.

Image courtesy of the artist's estate and Community Resource Centre, Killaloe ON.

On a lovely early summer day in June 2018, I made a long-awaited visit to The Garden Museum in London UK in search of the Tradescants, their legendary 17th century nursery and plant trade, the history of Enlightenment botany and English gardening and, of course, the Garden Café.

There were surprises: pots of Cedric Morris' long-lost and rare Benton End iris for sale; Graham Stuart Thomas' wellies. Then, while rummaging the bookshop, I discovered the [Museum's Clay For Dementia Program](#) for people affected by early stage dementia and their companions:

"Led by ceramic artist Katie Spragg and supported by our friendly volunteers, these relaxing weekly sessions ... provide an introduction to working with clay ... inspired by nature and the museum collection. The pieces created will be fired in a kiln ready to take home at the end of the workshops."

It made me realize that ceramics can be more than pots and glaze.

I thought it would be heartfelt and wise to have FUSION Magazine look at art-in-community, to explore how and why and where art is meaningful to people who might not be formally trained artists, or who aren't often even seen as creative.

So ... Why is there a story about fabric, fibre, and thread?

In "Sum of Our Parts," Madderhouse Textile Studios meets the New Canadians Centre (NCC) of Peterborough ON. Founded by cloth wrangler Leslie Menagh in 2018, Madderhouse is a community-based studio and teaching space for textile and fibre art, a 500-square foot studio with all the tools of the trades. Reem Ali is NCC's Workplace Integration Liaison and manages its sewing program. Their newest project? Reusable cotton masks, caps, and gowns designed by Leslie, made by newcomer women who are skilled sewists, supported by the NCC, and sold locally.

Peter Shepherd and sculptor Bruce Brown talk about Bruce's twenty years of work in community

art in and around neighbourhoods in Toronto ON, introduced by Bruce's brilliant observation that "I'm finding genius where people don't look." Peter, himself a sculptor, community activist and now Board member at The Acorn Arts Project initiated by Bruce, Naomi Chorney and Masha Gruntovskaya, brings an empathic sensibility to their conversation.

Lera Kotysuba returns to FUSION Magazine with a review of *Atautsikut/Leaving None Behind*, the 2019 film collaboration by Inuit knowledge keepers, artists and community members, with John Houston. Many of us know about Kinngait Studios (Cape Dorset) and its pivotal role in establishing and marketing print collections by Inuit artists. *Atautsikut* goes deeper: witnessing the history yet continuing engagement of Inuit-owned co-ops across Inuit Nunangat, speaking their empowerment.

In putting together this Fall 2020 issue, we came across so many inspirations, imaginations, and adventures that embody community through art, empowerment through art making. While the issue is the work of five fine writers, nothing would be possible without the many others who gave in kind: who made the effort, made the space, and made the art.

The genius of expression is latent in everyone. "What's often missing," as Peter Shepherd wrote in a note to me, "is the social framework that encourages the 'unlocking,' that releases a power of creative expression that is both a dimension of communication amongst us (building community), and a channel for personal comfort and healing."

And that's why there's a story about fabric, fibre, and thread. About print making and carving. About clay work. Whatever the media, the message is there.

Margot Lettner
Editor

"Genius Where People Don't Look"

A Conversation with Bruce Brown

Bruce Brown teaching, Acorn Arts Studio.
Image: Jesse Pajuaar, 2018



Community arts projects, practiced worldwide in many forms, engage professional artists with people where they live. They catalyze an uplifting and empowering creativity that may be expressed in an individual's own art, collaborative artwork, or social action, depending on the time, the place, and the social, cultural and political context. In Toronto ON, the Toronto Arts Foundation Neighbourhood Network² has over 1,900 members including artists, arts organizations, cultural workers, and community agencies.

Bruce Brown, a Toronto sculptor, has led and worked in more than twenty community arts programs since the early 2000's. An animated conversationalist, Bruce talked with me about this work, as well as the interesting connection between his martial arts experience and his teaching practice. I've edited our conversation gently for clarity in print but hope to have retained Bruce's voice.

How did you get into art and teaching?

I've been doing art since I was a child. It was just something I always did, play; I had a knack for it. In my teens I started looking at anatomy and at other artists, Norman Rockwell, Frank Frazetta. I wanted to get it right – form, proportion, all the fundamentals.

At nineteen, I was given a year's membership to Wong's karate club. That changed the way I looked at art, because now I'm a practitioner of an art I'm not familiar with. You see the process and start understanding it: very disciplined, focused on staying true to form. The more you practice the more fluid you become, which is what art is about.

It helps me when I'm teaching: the discipline, respect, the idea of apprenticeship I was taught in martial arts. Because karate is an art it works with sculpture, too. You start at the beginning; you develop skills, go to the next level, and the next level, and you don't even realize you're getting good until there's a moment you step away from it and see.

So, when I teach, these are influences that I bring. You respect everybody; for example, the number one rule is:

"Everything on the table you share. Don't take a tool from somebody else, ask." That includes me. I have to set the tone.

What drew you into teaching in community arts projects?

I was looking for a way to make a living. Doing art fulltime and working jobs fulltime, I thought, "What am I doing? I'm skilled, I have a lot of knowledge about art; how do I use this to make a living?" I ended up volunteering with a friend of mine, Sistah Loyce Jacobs, a singer I've known for years.

Sometimes called community-engaged art or community-based art, every community art project is unique in terms of who the participants are, the goal of the project, the character of the collaboration it's not easy (or even possible?) to summarize with one definition.¹



Art show, Acorn Arts Studio.
Image: Masha Gruntovskaya, 2019

She'd been working with kids, and in the first session I thought, "This is really cool." Through that I started a little program of my own, six kids in the Cabbagetown community centre, my first clay program. I thought, "I want to do this; I like it, I enjoy this." So that was a big part of it.

I do well teaching because it's the clay. Clay is my secret, makes teaching easy. Something about it makes people comfortable. Put it in front of people and they start playing. It's tactile and not as technical to start with as painting or drawing.

You start with something they can do; you make sure you're always focused in on the fundamentals; you never knock an idea down; you never tell them it's wrong. You *do* tell them it's not good – be honest with people and show them how to make it better. And as you do that, they build confidence in themselves.

Something I'm fascinated by – how people physically change in front of you. For example, people who are new to a program may be scared, fragile, getting back into real life. I'm going to get a piece of clay and I'm going to sit down with them and we're going to talk and make something small, usually it's a flower or a duck, or something else that interests them. These are simple forms, easy

to put together and they look good. Anyone who's new can do them. They've made it on their own. Their eyes light up, they sit a little taller and there's a grin on their face that's going, "This is cool." Then they put it down and they continue. I've just hooked them.

I know you started a program using clay and a kiln in a public housing building a few years ago called Acorn Arts Project³. How's that going?



Clay works, Acorn Arts Studio. Image: Masha Gruntovskaya, 2019

I was looking for a kiln for another program and found one at 220 Oak Street, a Toronto Housing building, in a crafts room that wasn't being used. With the help of Cota⁴, an agency working in the building, I started a clay program. After about a year we got our first grant and we [Naomi Chorney and Masha Gruntovskaya, two other artists] were able to add other mediums and it just took off.

Looking at the work we've done over the last couple of years, there's some serious talent that came out of people who were written off. That building was written off. And now it's being praised.

We recently incorporated as a non-profit – and boom, COVID-19! So, we distributed art kits to the people who'd been coming and are working on follow-up, but it's hard.

Community art isn't out in the mainstream at all. With Acorn Arts, we're starting to get noticed because the community was a crisis community – that's why we're noticed. But you see the difference it makes to the people who come. That stands out.

What makes a successful community arts project?

The number one thing is the art: I'm there because of the art and so is everyone else in the room. That's the first thing. It's also the staff and volunteers. Some people just have a natural way with others; they're always asking themselves, "Am I connecting? Am I engaging the students?"

Then you see the difference it makes to the people who come. And that's the unique thing about community arts: I'm finding genius where people don't look, and I believe that. It's so unbelievable that people have natural gifts that weren't unlocked until we gave them a piece of clay or showed them how to do this or that. It's the power of art and what it does to people.

So what do you feel is your place in all this?

I feel that practicing art brings the best out of me; and when I started teaching and working

with people, I started to see that art – being creative – affected most people the same way. It puts them at their best. So, when I'm working with a group of people or a community, and they're at their best and I'm at my best, it's always an amazing place to be. When you can focus and harness that energy, the possibilities are endless.

Peter Shepherd is a photographer, sculptor and sometime writer in Toronto ON watershed96@icloud.com.

Bruce Brown is a sculptor, community arts teacher, and co-founder of the artist collective, the Acorn Arts Project. You can reach Bruce at browndragonstudio@gmail.com.



Work by Bruce Brown, courtesy of the artist

¹ *Inspire Art* webzine is dedicated to increasing awareness about community and activist art initiatives in Montreal QC as well as the surrounding region <http://inspireart.org/en/resources/communityart/>, accessed July 2, 2020.

² <https://neighbourhoodartsnetwork.org/about-us/>, accessed July 2, 2020.

³ <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Nonprofit-Organization/Acorn-Arts-Project-2277178199227492/> and <https://www.instagram.com/acornartsproject/>, accessed July 2, 2020.

⁴ <https://www.cotainspires.ca/> and <https://www.cotainspires.ca/cotas-health-home-and-community-program-acorn-arts-project/>, accessed July 2, 2020. Cota is a community-based organization that offers a wide range of services to adults living with serious mental illness, geriatric mental health conditions, acquired brain injuries, developmental disabilities, and dual diagnoses.



Atautsikut/Leaving None Behind: La Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec





John Houston with Alicie Kasudluak Nivixie and “First Caribou,” Inukjuak, Nunavik, August, 2017. Image: John Houston.

Grocery store, community centre, gallery, ship centre, artist workspace: the co-op is a center of cultural, social, and economic life in Canadian Arctic communities.

Many in Southern Canada know the co-ops through their support of Inuit art: from famous works such as Kenojuak Ashevak’s *Enchanted Owl* (1960), that so captured the artistic eye and imagination, or the Ookpik that symbolized Canada during Expo ‘67; to the stylized Inukshuk used as an emblem of the 2010 Winter Olympics; to the Kinngait Studios (Cape Dorset) Annual Print Collection still sought after by art collectors worldwide. Or the instantly recognizable Igloo Tag: originally an initiative of the Canadian federal government to mark authentic works of Inuit art, now a trademark and source of pride in Inuit hands under the purview of the Inuit Art Foundation.¹

Yet while many households may be graced by a dancing bear carving or a sculpture of a languorous loon, few know the history of the North – particularly the co-operatives – that first empowered and continue to make Inuit art thrive.

The colonization of Canada’s Arctic remains within the living memory of Elders in Inuit communities across Inuit Nunangat, which, for 5,000 years, stretched from the shores of the Chukotka Peninsula of Russia,

east across Alaska and Canada, to the southeastern coast of Greenland.² Today Inuit Nunangat has four regions: the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (northern Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (northern Québec) and Nunatsiavut (northern Labrador). It includes 53 communities across roughly 35% of Canada’s land mass and 50% of its coastline. Co-operatives remain the foundation of each community, with Kinngait Studios being the most recognizable and most famous for its print collection.

This is a story about *La Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec* (FCNQ) who, in 1967, broke from the hegemony of the Hudson’s Bay Company to create a model for Inuit-owned co-ops.³ Owned by its 14 member co-ops in Inuit communities of the Hudson and Ungava coasts of Nunavik, FCNQ is more than “just a store”: it operates retail merchandise shops; provides banking, mail and IT services; runs hotels, travel agencies, hunting and fishing camps; stores and distributes fuel; manages construction projects; offers business support such as human resources and auditing; and markets Inuit art worldwide. Managed by Inuit and Cree staff, FCNQ embodies a founding vision of its community: *Atautsikut*, or “Together, leaving none behind.”

Art history buffs may know the story of James Houston’s 1948 drawing journey to the Canadian Arctic and the caribou carving by Conlucy Nayoumealook that sparked an idea;

Page 10, top: Puvirnituq, Nunavik Community Screening of *Atautsikut / Leaving None Behind*, December 13, 2019. Image: John Houston.

Page 10, bottom: Nunavik Cooperative Map, film still from *Atautsikut / Leaving None Behind*, December 13, 2019.

Mattiusi Iyaituk, John Houston and Shaman, Ivujivik, 2017.
Image: John Houston.



his work, with Peter Murdoch, to bring Inuit art to the South and to international audiences; and his establishment, co-founded with his wife Alma Huston, of the powerhouse that today is Kinngait Studios.⁴

Yet *Atautsikut/Leaving None Behind*, the 2019 film collaboration by Inuit knowledge keepers, artists and community members, with John Houston, witnesses that FCNQ was the first co-operative federation established in the Arctic by an Inuit community coming together.⁵ The film tells the intimate history of establishing, first, a single co-op at Kangiqsualujuaq (George River) and then a federation, a story of success and the power of community.

The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) held a stranglehold over economic production and life in the North, profiting from the devastating consequences of European colonization on Inuit self-reliance.⁶ Government assimilation and forced relocation policies, food insecurity, fur trade economics and politics: all positioned HBC

stores, as a monopoly business, to extort Inuit communities through predatory credit and loans for basic necessities and supplies that Inuit had once, not long ago, provided for themselves.

In 1959, Inuit came together in Kangiqsualujuaq to create the first Inuit-owned co-operative.⁷ After a fiercely negotiated \$12,500 loan from the Canadian federal government to buy fishing equipment, this was the start of Inuit communities' return to self-governance. The film captures these times and learnings through the Oral Tradition of Aliva Tulugaq and Willie Etok, among others; as well as through family reminiscence, as when Harry Surusila shares the story of his mother's *qulliq* (oil lamp), taken piece by piece and turned into carvings. Working from their traditional hunting, sewing and carving skills, Inuit first invested in themselves to establish a co-op that, in turn, reinvested in their community by saving 5% from sales into a mutual fund.⁸

The Kangiqsualujuaq co-op was also a spiritual return to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, Inuit traditional knowledge, meaning “that which Inuit have always known to be true.”⁹

That truth was working together as a community: to uplift each other, share knowledge and experience. Through self-governance, Inuit advocated for themselves rather than through government representatives; led their own initiatives; and produced and marketed their own work. Within two years co-ops were springing up all over the Arctic;¹⁰ and, in 1967, Inuit and Cree delegates incorporated *La Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec* (FCNQ) to represent Nunavik co-ops and drafted its by-laws.¹¹ And eventually, Inuit became mentors of their practice: *Atautsikut/Leaving None Behind* follows an Inuit delegation to Chile, where they share their experience with emerging Indigenous co-ops.

What began, then, as an investment in stone carvings that remain a symbol of Inuit art all over the world, was founded on traditional skills – from life on the land – adapted for a non-Inuit economy, beginning with the market for art and craft. Hunters transferred their skills to carving, making art as well as tools. Seamstresses still sewed clothing and wall hangings but also made dolls for play or display.

Grocery store, community centre, gallery, ship centre, artist workspace: “What the Inuit need, the co-op will eventually build.”¹² In Nunavik, co-operatives have always helped each other; if one was struggling, the others stepped in. Collaboration was, and continues to be, the true spirit and power. In all media – sculpture, printmaking, carving, textile arts, graphic design, jewelry, pottery – Inuit art is vibrant and flourishing. As Aliva Tulugaq says, “Making by hand has value”.¹³ in the communal hands that create the space for the making, as well as in the maker’s hands.

Learn more about the film *Atautsikut/Leaving None Behind* <https://leavingnonebehind.com/the-film/> and about FCNQ <http://www.fcq.ca/en/histoire/>.



Crew of *Atautsikut / Leaving None Behind* filming Mattiusi Iyaituk, Iuvjivik, 2017. Image: John Houston.

Lera Kotsyuba is an art critic, historian and curator based in Toronto. Working across disciplines in architectural history and craft, Lera has written for *Ceramics Art + Perception*, *GLASHAUS*, and *Urban Glass*, and convened a session at the 2017 Canadian Craft Biennale on Craft and Public Art. She is currently the managing editor of *Studio* magazine. www.lerakotsyuba.com

¹ <https://www.inuitartfoundation.org/igloo-tag-trademark/about-igloo-tag>, accessed July 5, 2020.

² All references to Inuit Nunangat this paragraph <https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/article/inuit-nunangat/>, accessed July 7, 2020.

³ All FCNQ references this paragraph <https://leavingnonebehind.com/>, accessed July 5, 2020.

⁴ Formerly the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative.

⁵ *Atautsikut/Leaving None Behind*, 2019, a film by John Houston with Bobby Barron, Willie Etok, Aliva Tulugaq, Noah Sheshamush, Zebedee Nungak, Harry Surusila, Sarollie Weetaluktuk, Lucassie Napaluk, Sarah Grey, Lucy Grey, Elijah Grey, Peter Qumaluk “Peter Boy” Ittukallak, Bobby “Snowball” Aputiarjuk, Mary Johannes, and The Revd Aibelie Napartuk.

⁶ All HBC references this paragraph *Atautsikut/Leaving None Behind*, 2019.

⁷ <http://www.fcq.ca/en/histoire/>, accessed July 5, 2020.

⁸ Idea credited to Peter Murdoch, *Atautsikut/Leaving None Behind*, 2019.

⁹ <https://www.cnsa-nccah.ca/docs/health/FS-InuitQaujimajatuqangitWellnessNunavut-Tagalik-EN.pdf>, accessed July 5, 2020.

¹⁰ <http://www.fcq.ca/en/histoire/>, accessed July 5, 2020.

¹¹ <http://www.fcq.ca/en/histoire/>, accessed July 5, 2020.

¹² Sokchiveneath Taing Chhoan, Senior Manager, Socio-Economic Development, FCNQ, in conversation with John Houston following a screening of *Atautsikut/Leaving None Behind*, July 6, 2020.

¹³ Aliva Tulugaq, *Atautsikut/Leaving None Behind*, 2019.



Fabiola Contreras screen printing fabric for Fleming College masks, Madderhouse Textile Studios, June 2020. Image: Glenn Davidson



Suhair Jajouk measuring fabric for printing, Madderhouse Textile Studios, June 2020. Image: Glenn Davidson

Sum of Our Parts



As it turns out, a global pandemic is not all bad news. The accompanying economic, political, and social maelstrom that it's churning does mean some silver linings, not least of which is a re-popularizing of craft skills like sewing.

In a massive, coordinated, home-sewing campaign aptly compared to "a war effort," people have swung into action these past months to provide hospitals and clinics, organizations and individuals in need, neighbours and families and friends, with handmade cloth masks. In my own microcosm, I've focussed my efforts as an organizer of just over 130 volunteers who, together, have sewn and donated thousands of items of personal protective gear (reusable medical caps, isolation gowns, and masks). These are 130+ volunteers who, because they know how to sew, have exponentially grown their capacity to support their community in defending itself against an insidious virus.

Indeed, the arts are a lifeline in the midst of school cancelations, business closures, and epidemic boredom. Minds need stimulating, hands need busying, careers need reinventing – but perhaps most importantly, social isolation needs remedying. People

Page 14. "We Belong" repeat pattern on the print table prior to being cut and sewn into baby blankets, Madderhouse Textile Studios, November, 2019. Image: Leslie Menagh

need connection and belonging. And no one knows this more intimately than someone who's fled their home country to make a new life in a new country.

My work with The New Canadians Centre (NCC) of Peterborough ON began around the same time I opened Madderhouse Textile Studios. In the fall of 2018, I set up a screen-printing and sewing production studio with a

20' x 5' wool-felted work table for printing yardage. The NCC already had a sewing training program led by Reem Ali, Workplace Integration Liaison, and our partnership allowed for the opportunity to supplement this program with

screen-printing instruction. What promptly followed was product design and creative entrepreneurship for newcomers; and all the while, meaningful dialogue was being exchanged about newcomers' experiences.

Together, a working collective was forming that designed throw cushions and dinner napkins with textual repeating patterns on the topic of belonging (<https://nccpeterborough.ca/sewing-collective-madderhouse-partnership/>), and tea towels about our shared olfactory experience of living in a town with an oatmeal factory (<https://nccpeterborough.ca/empowering-newcomer-women-through-creative-entrepreneurship/>). This cast of newcomers, women with their unique brand of hand-printed and



Printing tea towels at Madderhouse Textile Studios, February 2020. Pictured left to right: Myriam Aguirre, Dianely Hernandez, Bahar Akbari, Suhair Jajouk, Amina Toloh. Image: Reem Ali.



Oatmeal Capital Tea Towel Launch, March 6, 2020. Pictured left to right: Olga Zelenskaya, Suhair Jajouk, Leslie Menagh, Zakia Al-Haddad, Forough Zareian, Amina Toloh, Bahar Akbari, Myriam Aguirre, Dianely Hernandez, Fabiola Contreras, Reem Ali. Image: Roy Menagh

sewn wares, were gaining attention, curiosity, and confidence.

Program participant and sewist Amina Toloh recalls that “We all came with individual ideas, and when we put those ideas together it ended up being better for everyone. When we work together, we end up wanting to produce something better.”

I’m struck by this sentiment: that not only is the whole/the collective greater than the sum of its parts, but that there’s a longing to serve and a pride in being a part of the whole. When I think about the massive impact that work imbued with this ethic can have – on individual, familial, community wellbeing – I’m baffled once again that we otherwise toil away in ways that prize individualism and reinforce social distance.

While our hope was to start design and production on a small line of clothing this summer, The Newcomer Sewing Crew (<https://www.madderhouse.com/newcomer-sewing-crew>), as it’s now known, has emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic with a different plan. Grappling with the threat of becoming more housebound and socially isolated than ever, Crew members are sewing masks and serving their community’s needs while earning a respectable wage. Most Crew members are working from home on machines donated by community members

through the NCC, contracted to produce physical distancing masks for wholesale purchase by a local retailer and two other local organizations so far, including Fleming College.

During a time of crisis – emerging when there’s already a hunger for healthier business practices and economies – could it be that our collaborative and collective model holds a key?

As has been our hope and vision all along, Reem and I are seeing the emergence of a social enterprise that our community is eager to support. As Reem observes, the Crew “work best when we partner with community members who are invested in our story and our mission.” The truth is, our products are more expensive – and our customers expect this. They know the higher cost for a tea towel, or a baby blanket, or a mask, means healthier wages for our team as well as a higher-quality product from concept to materialization.

The NCC Peterborough (<https://nccpeterborough.ca/>) was first established in 1979, when a group of community members came together to sponsor refugees fleeing the communist regime in Vietnam. Since then, the organization has expanded to offer a variety of settlement services to immigrants and refugees and, as of 2008, launched the Peterborough Immigration Partnership, a community-based partnership of individuals and organizations that work together to achieve meaningful integration for newcomers. In 2019-2020, the NCC served 1,147 clients from 78 different countries, nearly 100 of whom participated in economic integration training such as that offered through the NCC sewing program. Reem describes the learnings from this work, and what The Newcomer Sewing Crew really means:

“Newcomer women who face barriers to integration, whether social or economic, often experience isolation and a sense of disempowerment. They are often skilled and educated, but they don’t have the know-how or the connections to develop these further into opportunities, particularly in terms of employment.

Many of them yearn for a sense of community – to be seen and heard and surrounded by other women who have similar experiences. They also desire better economic security for themselves and their families, whether through employment or entrepreneurship.

The goal of the NCC's sewing program has always been to expand program participants' knowledge and skills in the textile industry; and provide them with the space and opportunity to express themselves through their artistic and technical abilities. It is through our partnership with Madderhouse that this was possible, where The Newcomer Sewing Crew came to life – a place where the work produced is a true reflection of what these women are now capable of, and where an opportunity exists for enhancing and strengthening their capabilities. Here, they are able to see and experience first-hand how their collective work is valued; and, as a result, dare to dream of something bigger that's yet to come."

The silver lining for me, personally,

throughout this work, has been a deeply altered sense of my own belonging, my own community connection and worth. So, if it's been that transformative for me, I can only imagine its potential for others. As Bahar Akbari, program participant and sewist, describes the group's collective discovery, "We found out ... how supportive the community is of our work. I now know how much faster and more fun it is to work in a group than to work alone."

And she's right. We discovered this together.

Leslie Menagh lives in Peterborough ON where she wrangles cloth, teaches, and creates at Madderhouse Textile Studios <http://www.madderhouse.com/>. Her current passion project is a freshly launched social enterprise called The Newcomer Sewing Crew with newcomer women and the New Canadians Centre (NCC) Peterborough ON. She is a frequent contributor to FUSION Magazine. For more information about The Newcomer Sewing Crew and The New Canadians Centre, go to <https://nccpeterborough.ca/>.

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FUSION MAGAZINE SPOTLIGHT
FEATURED EMERGING ARTIST, CLAY

Toni Losey

toni.losey@hotmail.com www.toniloseypottery.com

My current work approaches the subtleties of living as defined by form, movement, colour, and texture. This exploration of complexity and uniqueness of movement, within my forms, fuels my momentum and motivation to create.

Each work, through the contours of the body and the placement of the appendages, captures movements that compel in their peculiarity. I use highly textural and seemingly organic surfaces to suggest that we experience a kind of mimicry of life. In my attempt to fix a moment or movement in time, I am interested in how our perception of life affects, in turn, how we understand and assign qualities of both the object and the organic to the work.

I have found influence in the living world around me, in emulating the patterns of growth in the natural world and exploring the inherent movement found within these systems. What makes a form seem alive drives my contemplation of the changes found throughout a life cycle.





FUSION MAGAZINE SPOTLIGHT FEATURED EMERGING ARTIST, GLASS

Priscilla Kar Yee Lo

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www.priscillakaryeeloglass.com

After a decade as a health care professional, I returned to school to pursue my passion in glass. Upon graduating from Sheridan College with a degree in Craft and Design, with a specialty in Glass, I was offered the opportunity to study under John Miller and Slate Grove in the MFA Glass program at Illinois State University, where I currently reside.

My work strives to tell a story of my experiences and to engage viewers in a dialogue about the constructions of identity. As a Chinese immigrant living in North America, I'm deeply connected to both my eastern heritage and my western upbringing. Thus, my identity is naturally full of dichotomies. These contradictions highlight the complex way in which patriarchal society has subtly affected the female's position within its structure; and how it maintains control through cultural/ social expectations and normalized gender roles.

In response to these expectations and hegemonic constraints, my work narrates this misguided history and biography. Using cute and colourful, universally recognizable symbols of pop culture, like Hello Kitty, I hope to spark conversations about where women – particularly immigrant women – are placed and held within this socially prescribed racial framework.





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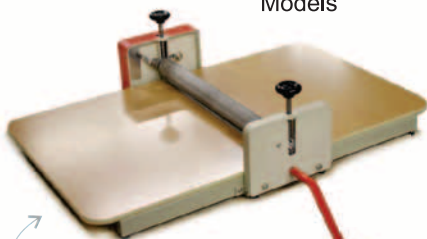
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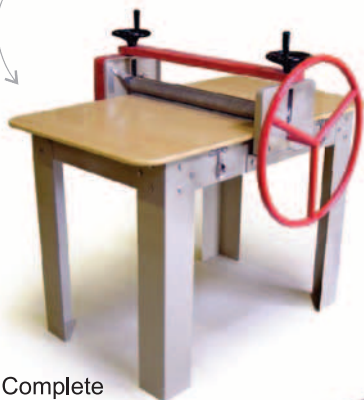
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