

FABRIC SCULPTURE AND THE MANITOBA
ART CURRICULUM

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this studio based thesis is to discover what potential fabrics could offer as a sculptural medium and to examine whether fabric sculpture could be incorporated into the Manitoba Secondary School Art Curriculum.

As an Art teacher, I am aware of the demands that the current art curriculum dictates, and the problems and concerns that art teachers face in trying to adhere to its standards. By reviewing the historical development of Manitoba art curricula and highlighting the major developments that have occurred, one can put the current guide into perspective.

Contemplating the role that fabrics have played as historical and cultural artifacts gives us a better sense of how fabrics have been developed to meet the specific requirements that we as human beings have demanded of them.

The sculptures that were produced for this study attempt to address the principal objectives of the current art curriculum and explore ideas and topics that reflect personal interests. I have endeavoured to create sculptures that not only stand as pieces of art, but which will also serve as examples to show art teachers how different fabrics and techniques can be used in senior high art classrooms.

To support my thesis that fabric sculpture should be included in our art programmes, I have provided short reviews on sculptors who have worked with fabrics. Wherever possible I have tried to indicate how my students have reacted to this work, and where information concerning these artists may be obtained.

I have included a sample unit that already exists in the current curriculum and discuss how fabric sculpture could be introduced through this unit.

The recommendations that conclude this report suggest ways to encourage the teaching of sculpture and the introduction of fabric sculpture into the Manitoba Secondary School Art Curriculum.

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LIST OF SLIDES IN APPENDIX TWO

The Stickers

Slide

1. Making armatures.
2. Armature detail.
3. Armature detail.
4. Padded armature.
5. Padded armature.
6. Pair of padded figures.
7. Preliminary covering.
8. Figure detail.
9. Figure detail.
10. Single figure.
11. Single figure.
12. Preliminary double stringing.
13. Completed pair.
14. Completed pair.

The Parachutes

Slide

15. Basic layout
16. Basting.
17. Layout.
18. Fastening batting.

Parachute #1

Slide

19. Close up.
20. Closer up.
21. Detail.
22. Wall hung completed.

Parachute #2

Slide

23. Close up.
24. Closer up.
25. Detail.
26. Completed.

LIST OF SLIDES (continued)

Headpiece No. 1

Slide

27. Forming glue and fabric.
28. Detail of shape.
29. Filling out form.
30. Wire and padding.
31. Chin strap.
32. Another angle.
33. One angle.
34. Another angle.
35. Still another angle.
36. Last angle
37. Detail

Headpiece No. 2

Slide

38. Basic lay-up.
39. Next stage.
40. Additional material.
41. Lining the bucket.
42. Covering exterior.
43. One angle of completed work.
44. Another angle.
45. Detail.
46. Completed work.

The Climbers

Slide

47. Drying forms.
48. Drying forms.
49. One basic form.
50. Several basic forms.
51. Building up layers.
52. Final layers.
53. Applying colour.
54. Figure placement.
55. Figure placement.
56. Upper panel.
57. Lower panel.
58. Detail.
59. Completed work.
60. Completed work.

LIST OF SLIDES (continued)

Blue Wall Hanging

Slide

61. Coating fabric.
62. Shaping and coating.
63. Drying/Ready for colour.
64. Reverse side.
65. Detail reverse side.
66. Detail front side.
67. Completed work.

Masks

Pink Mask

Slide

68. Wire forms.
69. Wire forms another view.
70. Wire forms aluminum screen cover.
71. Wire forms aluminum screen cover.
72. Preparing fabric mash.
73. Applying mash.
74. Close-up of applying mash.
75. Attaching mask to frame.
76. Detail.
77. Completed work.

Spanish Moss Mask

Slide

78. Preliminary application of lichen.
79. Another angle.
80. Mounting mast on frame.
81. Pair of masks mounted on frame.
82. Completed work, one angle.
83. Another angle.
84. Completed work, head on.

LIST OF SLIDES (continued)

Mobiles

Orange Mobile

Slide

85. Draping treated fabric.
86. Detail.
87. Detail.
88. Removing pail used as form.
89. Adding additional material.
90. Top detail.
91. Progress in adding material.
92. Detail.
93. Completed work.

Wooden Mobile

Slide

94. Laying out the work.
95. Adding fabric panels.
96. Completed work.

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Introduction

Teaching sculpture at the secondary level is a complex undertaking that makes numerous demands upon art teachers. Not only must they be familiar with techniques and materials but they must also ensure that specialized equipment is available and that their facilities meet current safety standards. Any one of these factors can have a profound effect on how well and how often sculpture units may be taught in Manitoba's schools.

As a practicing secondary art teacher I posit that there is a need to develop sculpture units that make fewer demands upon the resources that teachers have access to but will also stimulate aesthetic potential in student work and reinforce the importance of sculpture in the Manitoba Senior High Art Curriculum.

Sculpture in the Classroom - A Problem

To accurately be able to state how and how much sculpture is being taught within the Manitoba school system, would require extensive research and might be a thesis topic in itself. A general view of what is taking place within the province can be estimated by discussing the situation with art educators, reviewing professional literature and attending conferences.

The general consensus among Manitoba's art educators, is that sculpture, when it is taught, consists of mostly clay work and cardboard constructions. To paraphrase a statement by Rae Harris, Visual Arts Coordinator for the Manitoba Department of Education, during the fall of 1990, "There's not much going on out there." Her statement not only reflects what is going on in the classroom, but also indicates what is being printed and discussed in the province's professional journals and conferences. The obvious question becomes: Why is sculpture being overlooked? Art teachers could answer that the reasons are too numerous to list, yet simple to explain.

For example, the cost of sculpture equipment such as hand and power tools, kilns and potters wheels, crimpers and vices, etc. continue to escalate in price. Add to that the cost of materials such as wood, metal, plastics, plaster and clay compounds, stone, resins, glues, finishes, etc. and it becomes easy to see why teaching sculpture can be an expensive endeavour. Moreover, the upgrading of art rooms is often required to facilitate the handling of these supplies and equipment. Storage and ventilation systems become necessities rather than luxuries, since many of the substances used may cause health problems.

There is an appendix attached to the back of the current Manitoba Secondary School Art Curriculum that clearly specifies which materials will

be allowed into the classrooms and how materials such as individual glaze chemicals are to be stored, handled and used in Manitoba's schools. It is not unrealistic to assume that the list will grow as more research is being done in the area of hazardous art materials.

Regretably, many of the materials that we currently use may be banned from our art rooms, not because they are overly hazardous, but simply because it would be too expensive to refit our classrooms to handle them safely. For example the dust that is created as students mix and carve in plaster has caused Winnipeg's largest school division to consider removing it from the list of teaching supplies.

The attitudes of the individual school and divisional administrators is also a factor that must be considered. If members of these administrations do not believe art to be of primary importance in their schools, then they will be reluctant to find the funding necessary to buy sculpture equipment or upgrade facilities. On the other hand administrative support is an asset in encouraging art teachers to offer the most complete courses that they possibly can. This support can be shown through considerations in timetabling art courses to maximize the students' time in the art room and in controlling the number of students admitted into each class, so that problems of overcrowding and dumping do not occur.

The attitude of the teacher towards the teaching of sculpture is critical. If teachers have not had courses in sculpture themselves at the high school, post secondary or teacher training levels, then they may find the prospect of teaching it uncomfortable, messy, difficult and threatening.

Faced with many of these obstacles it is not difficult to understand why teachers back away from teaching studio units in sculpture.

Fabric Sculpture - A Solution

The purpose of this study is to explore and develop a fabric sculpture component for the Senior High art curriculum in Manitoba that will be challenging for students and feasible for art teachers. This study will incorporate the following:

1. The selection and examination of a sample unit from the current Manitoba Secondary School Art Curriculum that can be used to introduce fabric as a sculptural material.
2. A review of Manitoba Secondary School Art Curricula to gain a historical perspective of how the teaching of art as a subject and sculpture as a unit has developed.
3. The production of fabric sculptures that will exemplify how fabrics can be used in the classroom as a sculptural material.
4. The inclusion of studio and reflective notes that explain the technical procedures and decisions that were made in the completion of these fabric sculptures.
5. The production of slides that provide a visual account of the work in progress.
6. A review of fabric sculptures produced by a variety of artists, with comments on how my students react to such work.
7. Comments and reactions from other art teachers about what I have developed.

The studio activities and products reported in this study represent a form of "Action Research" (Best, Kahn 1989). Studio study as a form of research is important but uncomplicated in contrast to other forms of educational research that are often complex. Studio study, as a form of "problem solving" (Ecker, 1966), has value for its particularity, rather than its generalizability. The assumption in this report is that when the particulars of a given concern of inquiry are well described they can be made useful for general application by art teachers in school settings.

As positive justification for presenting an analysis of studio activities, one has only to consider that in a virtually unstudied area of art curriculum and instruction, some personal testimony and advocacy is helpful when trying to convince practicing teachers to adopt new practices or adapt old approaches in the matter of teaching sculpture using fabrics.

This study is of value because it provides art teachers with examples of completed works, technical information, curriculum implementation strategies and suggested teaching resource materials, that could be used to introduce fabric sculpture to students. I hope art teachers will find my approach to this study practical and that they will be encouraged to include fabric as a sculptural material in their art classes.

This studio study commenced in September 1990 and was concluded in June 1991. The students referred to in this paper were from eight individual Grade 9-12 classes in a Metropolitan Technical School in Winnipeg.

Manitoba Curriculum

The Growth and Development of the Manitoba Art Curriculum- The Historical Perspective

In order to understand how the Manitoba Secondary School Art Curriculum has developed to the present, it is important to review how it has changed over time. An in-depth study of the Manitoba Secondary School Art Curriculum would be a thesis in itself, therefore what follows is an abbreviated look at the significant changes that have occurred as the curriculum has grown in scope and developed in character.

The first reference to an Art Education Programme found in the Provincial Curriculum Guide Programme of Studies for the Secondary Schools in Manitoba appeared in 1912. Under the heading of Drawing - Applied Art Series. NOS. 39 and 40 it specified that grade nine and ten students would study:

1. Sight Drawing - from direct observation of natural forms and objects.
2. Constructive Drawing - basic perspective in freehand and with the use of mathematical instruments.
3. Decorative ornamentation - the use of colour, patterns and forms to decorate personal and household objects.

Teachers were expected to use the Applied Art Series not as a resource, but as a guide to direct them in lesson planning.

The first major development in the Art Education Curriculum can be seen in the 1929-1930 Programme of Studies where the art course is sequenced to be instructed on a monthly timetable, with the course content, reflecting the seasons.

In the months of September and October the students' were to work in the Naturalistic Design unit doing pencil, pen and ink and painted

representations of local plants, landscapes and common objects. The Decorative Design unit was scheduled for November and December. The students were asked to brighten their science notebook covers and; using a decorative treatment, advertise Manitoba products by drawing still life objects and landscapes reflecting the province's rural economy.

In January and February, students were to do basic perspective drawing lessons.

In March and April the Constructive Design unit concentrated the students' efforts on designing patterns for lamp shade covers, baskets and boxes. Students were also asked to design a floor plan for a bungalow house showing front and side views.

The months of May and June were to be spent in review, but it was suggested that students may take advantage of the opportunity to do more Naturalistic Designs, and attempt outdoor sketches of plants and trees.

The Programme of Studies for Grades VII - XII for 1931 followed its predecessor quite closely in content, except for the months of May and June. This guide specifies the month of May for the review work and under the month of June it suggests "Do not drop Art work entirely; let it be respite occupation when the daily assigned work is completed." (p. 18) This statement is an indication of how the study of art was to be treated in reference to the other subjects being taught.

The Programme of Studies for 1946 indicates a partial change. The 1929-1930 curriculum remains intact for grades seven to nine students, but there is a new two year course of study offered for the grade ten and eleven students. These new courses were not sequenced on a monthly basis. The grade ten course covers units in representation, lettering, design and colour study. The grade eleven course includes units in representation, alphabets, design theory and advanced colour theory. Although most of the

assignments are similar to those found in the previous guide, the 1946 courses do include a wider range of assignments introducing calligraphy, advertising art, print-making and colour theory into the curriculum.

The Programme of Study for 1949-1950 is the first senior high curriculum that resembles our modern guides. In this guide Art, Music and British History are designated as option courses. The introduction of the art curriculum begins with "Our purpose in teaching art is not to produce artists but to develop citizens who enjoy art and are conscious of its importance in our lives." (p.100)

The curriculum lists its objectives as:

1. To augment the pupil's enjoyment of Art.
2. To provide opportunity for original expression.
3. To stimulate further appreciation of Art.
4. To increase the pupil's understanding of art materials and techniques.

Standards for evaluation were established with the following guidelines:

1. Observing the students interest and involvement.
2. The students' willingness to expand and explore various forms and means of expression.
3. The development of a maturity in the student's creative ideas and attitude.

The evaluation outline goes on to state that the process of producing art is as valuable as the product itself and that consideration should be given to the students who learn from their efforts, whether a successful piece of art was produced or not.

The studio section of the curriculum falls under the title, "Creative Arts". Sub-titled under this section are:

1. Making Pictures - illustration.

2. Cartooning.
3. Sketching.
4. Still Life.

The media suggested for the Creative Art section includes pencils, crayons, pens, coloured chalk, coloured pencils, poster paints, water colours, oils, tempera, charcoal and graphite.

The Art Appreciation section is subdivided into:

1. Indian Arts and crafts.
2. French Canadian Arts and Crafts.
3. Development of Canadian Painting.
4. Characteristics of Canadian Painting.
5. Sculpture.
6. Print-making.
7. Personalities in Canadian Art.
8. Handicrafts in Canada today.
9. Canada's contribution to Art Materials and Motifs.
10. Aids to Development of Interest in Art and Handicrafts.

The Art Appreciation section is followed by units on Lettering, Colour and Crafts.

The Crafts section incorporates print-making, textile dying and printing, stitchery, cut paper, leather, weaving, basketry, pottery, paper mache', marionettes, cardboard, metal and plastic jewellery and stage scenery.

The Art History section is chronologically divided into the following topics:

1. Prehistoric Art (to recorded history).
2. Ancient Art (to 6th century).
3. Mediaeval Art (to 15th century).
4. The Renaissance in Italy (15th century on).
5. Art Development in other countries.

The importance of this guide in the development of the senior high art curriculum in Manitoba is significant. First, it acknowledges that the study of art includes art history, art appreciation and studio work, making art an academic endeavour as well as a creative experience. It provided a sequential framework for each grade, and reference materials to aid the teacher in planning lessons.

It was interesting to note that the history of sculpture was included in the Art History section, but the studio section made no reference to the making of sculpture in the classroom. The materials most commonly used in the making of sculpture such as wood, clay, plaster, and paper were relegated to the Crafts section, where they would generally be used to produce useful personal and household goods such as serving trays, bowls and jewellery. This suggests that sculpture in its purest form was still not being taught in the Manitoba school system.

The Programme of Studies Guide for the 60s are very general in their reference to the art programmes. This change of style reflects a change in the format of the Programme of Studies Guide, not a change in the art programme per se.

For the most part the 60s guides reflect the 50s guides and include: picture making, drawing and painting, lettering, design, ceramics, printmaking, mosaics, murals, textiles and for the first time, sculpture. A note at the bottom of the 1960 Programme of Studies Guide states:

A separate detailed outline is available to teachers from the Curriculum Branch.

These courses are designed to provide opportunity for original expression in painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, etc. Included is a sequence of art appreciation and history which should not dominate the course, rather should enhance the student's experiences in art. (p. 62)

The last statement reflects the predominance that the studio component would have during the 60s.

Many of the outlines previously referred to seem to have been photocopied or mimeographed booklets. The Curriculum Branch no longer has copies of these documents. The Manitoba Department of Education Curriculum Branch moved out of their 60s office and most of the duplicate copies must have been discarded.

Neither the Library Archives at the current Curriculum Branch office, nor the Faculty of Education Library at the University of Manitoba have the 60s curriculum guides out on their shelves. What they do have are two technical manuals; one for grades 1-6 published in 1955, reprinted 1967, and one for the grades 7-12. There was no published date given, but one must assume this was published in the early 60s. These manuals were designed to help teachers implement the technical aspects of the art programmes but were never intended to replace the curriculum guides.

When I phoned Winnipeg art teachers who had been teaching art at that time to ask about the missing 60s guides, I was told that the guides had been circulated throughout the province, but that most teachers referred to the technical manuals as the "guides" that they taught from.

I believe this to be the case and can support this belief with my own experience.

When I started teaching art in the mid 70s I asked the curriculum branch to send me copies of both the junior and senior high art curriculum guides, and it was only after I called again and explicitly requested the guides, that I received them. Unfortunately I left my copies of the guides at that school, when I moved out of province.

The senior high technical manual presently being used Art Media and Techniques - A Resource Book For Secondary Schools consists of practical information covering the curriculum expectations in the studio areas of: design, ceramics, drawing, lettering, mosaics, murals, painting, printmaking, textiles and sculpture. Under the sculpture heading teachers are given "how to" information and suggested projects in ceramics, relief, puppetry, masks, wire, mobiles, armatures, castings, toothpick and plane construction. Many of the techniques described in the sculpture section include the use of materials that we now know to be hazardous, such as contact cements, asbestos, and various forms of lead compounds used in ceramic glazes. Most of the suggested projects have easy-to-follow instructions, creating unimaginative, non threatening, predictable projects. This manual like its elementary counterpart was created to give all teachers a basic grounding in studio art techniques. In many respects the Manitoba Art Media and Techniques manual resembles the Art Resource Book published by the 1973 Art Education Students under the direction of Professor Sam Black at the University of British Columbia.

The only significant shift in the 1973 art curriculum was that it attempted to move teachers away from the predominantly studio based courses, by encouraging them to teach more art history and art appreciation. This guide was philosophical in nature and was therefore not as well

accepted as it might have been. Inexperienced art teachers and non-art specialists found it threatening because it specified what was to be taught, but did not clearly dictate how the fundamental philosophies were to be put into practice.

While the experienced and knowledgeable art teachers accepted this guide as a philosophical foundation and expanded their course content to reflect its intent, inexperienced art teachers avoided it and continued to teach studio based courses out of the old technical manual.

The current senior high art curriculum for Manitoba was published in 1988. The new direction that this guide takes is in its concept of an "Idea Centered Approach."

The organizing principal of this curriculum is a series of ideas, topics or problems around which media, design and art appreciation concepts are taught. This approach assumes that meaning is the center of artistic expression. Consequently, what this curriculum guide proposes is that visual meaning should become the focus of art studies at the senior high level.

It is hoped that this approach is more in keeping with the "essence" of art and will extend the studio experience beyond the mere making of things and the learning of related skills. (p. 5)

The authors of this guide go on to stipulate that the idea centered approach should not be confused with the thematic approach.

The latter tends to imply that a set of prescribed themes forms the organizational structure of the

program, whereas the idea-centered approach begins with discovery, not the prescription, of ideas or themes. This guide emphasizes that ideas/themes which students express, while initially structured by the teacher, should increasingly be selected by the students themselves. The attempt, therefore, of the guide is to outline a number of strategies in as much detail as possible so that teachers and students may have rich resources from which to draw in identifying ideas, concerns or problems for self expression. (p. 6)

The approach to teaching art that this guide recommends is one of inquiry:

The purpose of the inquiry approach is to help students learn how to think creatively, how to define their own problems and how to solve them. Inquiry is similar to 'problem solving' yet goes beyond it. Problem solving begins with defining a problem; then thinking of possible solutions; and, finally, testing or evaluating the solutions. Inquiry begins with the identification of a relevant personal problem that needs to be solved. (p. 7)

The role of the teacher in this process is as follows.

The teacher must supply information and resources as students demonstrate a need for and inquire about task-relevant information. Skills, concepts and program content need to be taught, not for their own sake, but to facilitate learning by the students involved in the inquiry process. (p. 7)

Under the heading of goals this guide states that:

The overall goal of the art program is to develop visual art literacy of young people in such a way that they will be able to express themselves visually and also continue to engage in understanding visual communication and meaningful artistic self-expression.

Program Goals

The program goals are organized into three major categories.

1. Visual Awareness Goals

- in-depth exploration of visual ideas
- critical and analytical approach to understanding of the visual environment.

2. Art Appreciation

- understanding of the historical and cultural context of art
- development of a personal vision within the context of culture

3. Art Production Goals

- understanding of the visual communication process
- development of strategies of artistic inquiry for formulating and solving problems in art
- individual artistic expression of feeling and ideas. (p. 8,9)

For the purpose of evaluating student progress, teachers are given a checklist which is subdivided under the following headings.

1. idea development and expansion
2. media facility
3. design
4. inquiry process
5. presentation

Teachers are to evaluate students' progress in two stages. The first stage is "Formative Evaluation" which takes into account the student's preliminary efforts in planning, researching, experimenting, attitude, etc. The second stage is the "Summative Evaluation" where the student's success in achieving the goals or specific objectives, is evaluated in relation to the knowledge and experience gained as it pertains to the completed work. At the end of this paper I have included the "Evaluation Checklist" that accompanies this guide. See Appendix I.

In order to help teachers devise unit plans in the inquiry method the following seven step process has been included.

1. establishing the area of inquiry
2. finding facts

3. stating the problem
4. searching for ideas
5. defining the solution
6. implementing and evaluating the process
7. critiquing

Sample units are enclosed to help the teacher understand how the seven step process is sequenced into each grade level.

The studio component listed in the guide includes drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics, photography, sculpture and fiber arts. Listed under sculpture, are the following categories: subtractive, additive, assemblage, casting, modeling, and linear sculpture. Under the heading of fiber arts, are the categories: weaving, creative sewing, and dyeing. Very little explanation is given to clarify what is meant by any of these terms. It is assumed that the art teacher will have experience or knowledge about all facets, techniques, and materials involved in teaching the studio components of the art curriculum.

Under the heading "Skill Chart" teachers are given a list of abilities or qualities that students will attempt to acquire in the categories of:

1. media and techniques
2. design
3. criticism
4. history and culture

This is in many respects a very good curriculum guide. The philosophical approach that it presents is as current with art education theories as any "implemented" and functioning guide can expect to be. It provides the teacher with a well justified rationale, teaching strategies and evaluation techniques. It incorporates a balanced programme involving studio work, art history, culture, art appreciation and criticism, in a

sequential format. Specific attention is paid to the area of hazardous art materials with information on which materials can be used safely, and instructions on how to handle materials that can cause health concerns.

This guide appears to fail in its organizational structure. A recent student teacher of mine complained that she could not sort out exactly what she was supposed to do, without continually flipping back and forth through the guide. As an analogy, we compared this guide to an instruction booklet which one might receive for a sophisticated piece of electronic equipment. Most people want easy to follow instructions at the front of the booklet, that they may refer to quickly, while they are getting to know the equipment's capabilities.

Like its predecessor, this guide assumes that the art teacher using it will be knowledgeable and skillful enough to handle its philosophical foundation, with the minimum of explanation and the barest of charts and outlines to follow.

I believe that the brevity of the Manitoba Secondary School Art Curriculum is costly. I believe that research would support the notion that this guide is not being implemented to the degree that it could be. Teachers will fall back on what they have done in the past, if the new curricula that they receive are either too radical in the changes that they purport, or too vague to follow.

It would be comforting to be able to convince oneself that all art teachers possess the background necessary to implement this curriculum to its fullest potential. Common sense and observation would suggest the opposite.

Justification for making Fabric Sculpture a part of the Curriculum

After reviewing the Manitoba Senior High Art Curriculum Guide for this study, it became apparent that fitting fabric sculpture into this guide would be a very easy and rewarding process. Getting fabric sculpture into the art classroom is the real challenge.

If we agree that all art teachers should be using the guide as a basis for their art programmes, then we must use the features and strategies that the guide recommends. With that in mind, I reviewed the sample units that are provided in the guide for direction. Fortunately one of the sample grade ten units in this guide is: Psychological Expressions Through the Sculptured Human Form (p. 55-57)

I will use this sample unit to illustrate how easily this guide, can be used to help incorporate sculpture into the art programme.

The objectives for this unit are listed as;

1. To explore expressiveness in the sculptured human form.
2. To understand universal psychological conditions of human beings as expressed in sculpture.
3. To create a personally meaningful sculpture. (p.55)

Under the heading "Establishing the Area of Inquiry," the teacher is to brainstorm ideas with their students, provide examples of related sculptures and discuss the technical qualities and methodologies connected with various materials and techniques.

The student is to select two sculptural works that express different psychological states of mind. Then the student is to analyze verbally, how the artist expressed these feelings and follow that by making a small, non-representational model, which would suggest feelings of anger, fear, hope,

etc. It is suggested that the students use clay or modeling paste for this preliminary project.

Under the heading "Stating The Problem," teachers are to present the problem of conveying an inner feeling, attitude or emotion, through the sculpture of a human form. They are also asked to explain that emotional qualities, not physical likeness, is to be the focus of the problem. Students at this point are to discuss and form a statement about this area of concern, using their own words.

In the section "Searching for Ideas," teachers are to encourage students in formulating attribute lists. The unit plan does not specify what is meant by "attribute lists," so one must draw one's own conclusions. This is a perfect example of the weakness, inherent in this guide, it frightens inexperienced art teachers who complain that it is hard to follow and sometimes difficult to interpret.

The sample unit goes on to suggest that teachers help the student, through the use of visuals, to consider the possibilities of manipulating their sculptures using simplification, distortion and abstraction. At this point the students are asked to choose a known personality and identify a range of emotions or attitudes that can be associated with the personality that they have studied. Through the use of sketches students are asked to explore various ways of portraying the selected idea in sculptural form.

With the section "Defining the Solution," teachers are to assist students in determining the best solution for their particular problem and review the technical aspects that are relevant to the medium that they have chosen. Students are to select the most appropriate solution for producing an expressive and meaningful sculpture.

The section on "Implementing and Evaluating the Process," suggests that the art teacher act as a resource person, advising the student of decisions that might need to be made, and offering alternatives.

Students are expected to create "A sculpture portraying a personal idea, working through considerations of media, design and expression" (p. 57)

Under the heading "Critiquing," teachers are to organize small groups of students to critically analyze each work. Students are to state the intent of the sculpture, present their work to these small groups and involve themselves in the discussion and the analytical process.

The foregoing sample unit illustrates how easily the use of fabrics can be incorporated into the Manitoba Secondary School Art Curriculum. If teachers were to make a conscious effort to enthusiastically introduce the works of fabric sculptors, discuss and review the technical aspects and potential possibilities of working with fabrics as a sculptural material, it is reasonable to conclude that some if not all of their students would respond favorably to fabric sculpture in a very positive and creative way.

Fabric as a Sculptural Material

If we believe that sculpture is not adequately being taught in our school system and if we can identify the problems that teaching sculpture can create, then we must make the effort to look for viable solutions. Since the costs of sculptural materials and equipment are a problem, we must find materials that are inexpensive and can be worked on, without an investment in specialized tools or machinery. The introduction of fabrics as a major sculptural material is one practical alternative.

Fabrics are inexpensive because much of what is used in the classroom can be recycled clothing, drapery, and bedding articles, which students can bring from home. Natural or neutral coloured cotton and cotton/polyester broadcloth, which are ideal for sculpture because they are easy to handle and light in colour, can often be found in fabric store clearance bins for one or two dollars per meter. Remnant material bundles can be purchased for a fraction of their original prices. Scrap material from local garment, furniture and upholstery manufacturers often can be collected without cost. Home economics classrooms and individuals who sew for their own work or personal enjoyment, will often give away the scrap materials that clutter their work areas. An energetic art teacher with a scavenger's instinct, can collect a variety of fabrics for a minimum financial investment. This would give them the advantage of being able to spend the money that they have on extra or special fabrics which they may want, but otherwise could not afford.

Fabric is easy to handle as it can be worked by hand or machine. All methods of handling fabrics can be done in the art classroom without the acquisition of major equipment. Although a few sewing machines for selected projects would be an asset to the art room classroom, they are not essential, because most high school students have access to a home economics sewing lab, and many students have sewing machines in their

homes. Furthermore, anything that can be machine sewn, can be hand sewn if access to a sewing machine is unavailable.

The only health hazard listed for fabric in the current Manitoba Secondary School Art Curriculum relates to the occasional use of fungicides, which manufacturers use in the preparation of some fabrics. These fungicides may cause mild skin irritation for a few students, but the problem can be easily resolved by simply washing and drying the fabric before the students handle it. The dust or lint that is created by the use of fabrics can be controlled by regular classroom cleaning.

The use of different glues with fabrics can cause health concerns, especially if a lot of it is being used at one time. Careful planning on the part of the art teacher to control how much glue is being used and in what location, is necessary. The fumes given off by drying glue can cause eye and skin irritation, nausea and headaches. All of the glues used in the Manitoba school system must be labeled, indicating their health hazards. The more potent epoxy and contact cement type glues are not allowed in the schools, so they are not of concern here. The most common type of glue used in Manitoba schools are white - all purpose glues and P.V.A. (polyvinyl acetate) which are water soluble. When these glues are used in large quantities in the art classroom, it is advisable to remove the drying sculptures to a separate room. This might be a vacant classroom, a janitorial storage closet for cleaning supplies, or a book storage room. The fumes will dissipate as the glue dries, leaving the sculpture relatively odor free.

The use of plastic or rubber gloves to cut down on the amount of contact between the skin of students' hands and the glue, should be considered, since there are students who have skin allergies which can be irritated easily. If art teachers handle the use of glues with these

recommendations in mind, fabric sculpture that makes use of glues should not create a health concern.

As a sculptural material, fabrics offer a variety of aesthetic opportunities for art students and unlike many traditional sculptural materials, fabrics offer variety. The fibers used to make fabrics include natural elements such as cotton, flax and silk, and human made or synthetic components such as plastic, metal and glass, etc. The methods used to create fabrics range from traditional handwoven broadcloths to chemically fused reinforced fiberglass matt.

Fabrics come in a variety of colours, patterns, textures, weights, weaves, thicknesses, shapes and sizes. They can be soft, warm, and comfortable in appearance, cool sleek and silky, or sized to create hard rough appearing molded forms. To enhance their inherent qualities fabrics can be dyed, bleached, painted, appliquéd and drawn on.

If handled with respect, fabrics can be worked and reworked this quality allows students to correct mistakes, alter ideas and explore while their sculpture is in progress. Fabrics may be hand or machine sewn, glued, tied, felted, torn, tattered and stapled together. Sculpture made of fabric may be free standing, suspended, or built up in relief form. Fabrics can be used in conjunction with other sculptural materials such as wood, wire, plastics, and clay or plaster compounds.

Because the variety of options that fabrics provide as a sculptural material are almost limitless one could encourage all art teachers to adopt the use of fabrics as a sculptural material for their senior high art classes.

The Significance of Living With Fabric Artifacts

How the first fabrics were created, when, and where, are questions for anthropologists and archeologists to speculate upon. To simply state that fabrics have been a part of human existence for thousands of years, suggests that the history of fabrics and the history of human beings are "interwoven".

Praised and valued for their historical significance, fabric artifacts fill our museums and galleries, providing us with visual evidence that documents our development as a species, our cultures and religions. A retrospective look at the history of fabrics would show how each culture and era has used them for the protection and adornment of the human body. This would also include interior and exterior living environments.

The use of fabric clothing as a statement of status, occupation or fashion, has also been part of the history of fabrics. We "dress for the occasion(s)" that mark the significant dates, rights and ceremonies that designate who we are as individuals and what we value as societies. We use fabrics to dress the interiors of our living spaces and shelter us from the outside environment. Comfortable and safe in these interiors we created more durable fabrics which we put to practical and decorative uses, for the world outside.

The choices that we make in selecting which fabrics we use not only reflect the particular qualities of each fabric, but also suggest the status, culture and personal tastes of the individual who chooses them. From the new born baby who enters the world soon to be wrapped in swaddling clothes, to the corpse attired in a burial suit, ready for the trip to the world beyond. As human beings we surround ourselves with fabrics.

With this "history" in mind, a class field trip to any museum or gallery that houses fabric artifacts can provide a multitude of educational opportunities, for art teachers to take advantage of. As we begin to explore

fabric artifacts from both the past and present, we have to deal with other considerations beyond those which are uniquely historical, cultural or religious. We must also tackle the philosophical and aesthetic aspects of fabric artifacts as pieces of art. The inevitable questions; what is art, what is craft, what are aesthetic qualities and which artifacts possess them, will come to the forefront in any discussions.

To be able to say that any of us had all of the answers to these questions would be gratifying but plainly we do not, and probably never will have, definitive answers. What we do have and hopefully will have, is a consensus based on the emotional responses, observations, intellectual reasonings, values and beliefs of the individuals and cultural respondents, present at the time of viewing. Whether a piece of art "stands the test of time" and continues to be valued as an aesthetic object or artifact, is solely dependent upon the individuals and societies who inherit it from the previous generations. Since aesthetic qualities, in essence, are so value laden, the best that we can do is profess our personal, cultural and societal judgements and justify our claims with rational explanation and emotional commitment. Comfort may be found in the saying that "everything old will become new again", hoping that sooner or later our views and attitudes will be vindicated. It is because of this inability to point our finger and state categorically "this has 'x' amount of value", that the speculator who acquires pieces of art for investment purposes must rely on his/her, or our aesthetic judgements, in the hopes for financial prosperity.

So an important question remains: what is art, what is craft and what are aesthetic qualities? The distinction between art and craft is exceptionally difficult to make when one is considering fabric pieces because the range of fabric artifacts stretches from antiquity to the present and is so varied in treatment. We must look at both the quality of the

craftsmanship found in the technical construction of each piece and at the visual impact that each piece can evoke from its audience. Surely what is art and what is craft becomes another aesthetic judgement based on personal and cultural values and beliefs. The discussion and arguments that arise with these types of observations and questions are valuable exercises and lay the foundation for student development in critical analysis.

The Sculptures Completed for this Study

Introduction

My relationship with fabrics started when I was a child, with a traditional introduction to the making of clothing provided for me by my mother and grandmother. My mother concentrated most of her sewing on the construction and repair of clothing for the family, while my grandmother concerned herself with the ornamentation and decoration of personal and household fabric pieces. I grew up in a house full of hand-made clothing, embroidered linens, quilts, smocked dresses, tatted doilies, needlepoint pictures, hand knit sweaters and floor mats.

Working with fabric was a natural "labour of love" for both my mother and grandmother. The "making" process was one that usually bridged the practical aspects of creating something usable, with the decorative efforts of creating something visually pleasing. Growing up in that environment, gave me a wide exposure to many of the traditional methods used in working with fabrics. Over the years I have continued to explore other techniques such as weaving, natural dyes and dying methods, fabric painting etc.

Unfortunately many of the traditional methods for working with fabrics are not practical for classroom use because they require a great deal of time and quiet concentration to complete. In each of the sculptures completed for this study I have tried to experiment with different techniques and materials that I believe can be used in the art classroom.

Since there is a component in the current Manitoba curriculum that encourages students to develop a number of pieces based on an original idea, I have chosen to make most of these sculptural pieces as pairs.

As a method of introducing each sculpture I have provided information regarding its size, the materials that were used and its approximate cost to produce. This information combined with the write-ups that follow it

should provide teachers with an accurate account of how each fabric sculpture was created. The slide reference numbers coincide with the "List of Slides" offered at the beginning of this paper and will provide a visual account and description of each work in progress.

These slides, presented in Appendix Two, and the written material that has been provided can be used to encourage teachers to accept fabrics as a sculptural material and reinforce my contention that fabric sculpture can be cost efficient, safe, challenging and manageable.

The Stitchers 1990-1991

The Stitchers 1990-1991

A two piece Sculpture

41 $\frac{1}{2}$ " H x 30" W x 30" D

wood, wire, polyester stuffing, cotton polyester

broadcloth, embroidery cotton

Approximate cost to produce: \$20.00

Slide reference #1 - #14

The original idea for "The Stitchers" came about very slowly. I wanted to tie the idea of plastic surgery for reconstructive and cosmetic purposes, with the ever increasing potential of genetic engineering, without producing a sculpture that would look like a medical monster. I wanted a simple form, that would be non-threatening and open for discussion, interpretation and response.

The making of fabric dolls is a tradition that spans all nationalities, ages and time periods. These fabric representations of human beings, can be used to trace cultural histories and attitudes. They may be given distinct characteristics suggesting personalities, sexuality, backgrounds and beliefs. I wanted a pair of dolls that would have neutral personalities, no sexuality, no apparent backgrounds and represent no definite beliefs. I did not want newborn figures who would appear helpless, but developed figures who would appear to be "helping themselves" literally and figuratively to all that self creation had to offer. So "The Stitchers", like the surgeons and scientists of today, sit across from each other, tangled in their threads, in their relationship with each other and in their creation(s).

"The Stitchers" have a wooden frame which consists of a kidney shaped piece of plywood for the base and a 2" x 4" piece of lumber for the backbone. The arms, legs and heads are formed out of galvanized wire which has been stapled to the wooden frame for stability. Polyester stuffing in the form of "quilt batting", has been cut into strips and wrapped around the frame like bandages and tied into place with button hole thread. The outer fabric is cotton polyester broadcloth, which is sewn into place with embroidery cotton.

I felt that if I wanted to make the point that it was not necessary to have access to a sewing machine, in order to be able to sew fabric sculptures, I should produce at least one that was hand sewn. I would not expect my students to produce hand sewn work on this scale because of the time that it requires, but the process is quite simple and could be easily used in the art classroom to produce smaller sculptures.

The wood and wire that was used was scavenged, so there was no cost involved in making the frame. The quilt batting was purchased, but it can be found on sale at fabric stores for reasonable prices. I would suggest that my students scavenge foam mattresses or stuffing from old comforters etc. if money for quilt batting or polyester stuffing was unavailable. The cotton polyester broadcloth was also purchased for these sculptures, but suitable material such as old sheets, curtains, tablecloths etc. could be recycled for student work. The size of "The Stitchers" dictated the necessity to purchase both the quilt batting and the broadcloth.

The application of the outer fabric became an important consideration with regards to how the sculpture would look upon completion. I wanted the outer fabric to be stitched on the surface and to serve as both skin and costume, so I specifically chose to use a soft beige coloured fabric that was both plain and durable in appearance.

I started by wrapping pieces of fabric around the arms and legs. As I pinned it in place, it became evident that I would have to make one of two choices. Either I make a covering that is stitched separately and then dress the bodies in it, or I apply the fabric directly onto the forms, piecing the body sections as I proceed. Making a clothing-like covering for the forms, with the stitching on the outside would be easy, but attempting to dress the forms, with their solid wood and wire framework, would be impossible. Stitching the fabric onto their bodies would be time consuming but it did offer other possibilities. It would give me the opportunity to control where the gathers in the outer fabric would be placed, and it would allow me to selectively stitch into the quilt batting for extra strength and thickness.

Since the act of stitching was what 'The Stitchers' was all about I wanted the stitching to appear calculated and controlled but with a hand-made appearance. Piecing the body sections together accentuated the hazards implied in "piece work" construction. In retrospect I am very glad that I chose this second option.

The decision as to which type of thread or twine to use for the stitching was another concern. I felt that regular thread would be too light weight and too fine to accentuate the stitches. Button hole thread is substantially heavier and stronger, but it also appeared to be too fine for the purpose intended. The choice of embroidery cotton was a good one, for it suited the fabric, was strong and heavy enough to stand out and enhance the stitches, but it was difficult to pull six strands of it through three and four layers of fabric at a time. I had to use pliers to push the needle into the fabric and then use them again to pull the needle out the other side. This procedure was time consuming and hard on the hands. I would not, of course, recommend the use of embroidery cotton in this fashion for student

work. In smaller scale projects of this nature, button hole thread would be ideal for strength and appearance.

Since all of the stitching has been done on the outside of the bodies, it is easy to see how the sections were put together. The only hidden stitching is behind the eyes. I wanted to pull the eye sockets in, to give the faces more shape, so I used an old doll-making practice. I put eight strands of button hole thread through a curved needle. I passed the needle through the centre location of one eye, into the quilt batting and brought it out through the centre location of the other eye. A button was placed where each eye would be, the button hole thread was drawn through both buttons, tightened and tied off. The eye shape pieces were then placed over the buttons and stitched in place.

I have been living with 'The Stitchers' for a number of months and I am pleased with their whimsical yet concentrated expressions. The business that surrounds their endeavours is captured in their poised manner. I have arranged their bodies to suit the space that they occupy, but they may be turned around to stitch in different positions.

Time will tell whether they are ever complete, or are ever completely satisfied, with what/who they have created.

The Parachutes

1. Parachute #1 1990-1991
 $36 \frac{1}{2}$ " H x $48 \frac{1}{2}$ " W x 8" D
 wood, canvas, cotton, silk parachute, silk thread,
 synthetic threads, wire, parachute rope, polyester
 stuffing
 Approximate cost to produce: \$10.00
 Slide reference #15 - #22

2. Parachute #2 1990-1991
 $45 \frac{1}{2}$ " H x $36 \frac{1}{2}$ " W x 8" D
 wood, canvas, cotton, silk parachute, silk thread,
 synthetic threads, wire, parachute rope, polyester
 stuffing
 Approximate cost to produce: \$10.00
 Slide reference #15 - #18, #23 - #26

About ten years ago I inherited an unused World War II silk parachute. It was packed in its original bag and appeared to be in excellent shape, except that it had mildew. I pulled the parachute out of its bag and hung it from the ceiling of our summer cottage for the winter, hoping that months of cold dry air and daylight would remedy the problem, but it did not.

I was not quite sure how I wanted to use the parachute but could not live with the smell of it. In desperation I cut the parachute in half and put it through the washing machine with lingerie soap and cold water on a gentle cycle. I tumble dried it briefly in the dryer and then hung it to air dry. The silk seemed to have survived its ordeals with the mildew and the subsequent

washing and drying. Still unable to decide what to do with it, I packed it up in boxes and forgot about it.

Since one of the premises behind this thesis is that fabric sculptures can be economical, because we can use found materials, I decided to pull out my parachute and put it to use. The silk in the parachute is pieced together in sections which are reinforced with heavy seams and numerous rope casings. This forces one to decide to; work with the silk in small sections, piece the small silk sections together, or respect the integrity of the parachute as an object and use the silk sections, the heavy seams and the rope casings as they present themselves. I have chosen to do the latter.

As I looked at the parachute I decided that the silk might not be strong enough to withstand excessive handling. If this were the case, then a backing material would have to be used and with that in mind, I decided that wall pieces, that would be supported with a frame, might be the best option.

Searching around through back closets I found two old stretcher frames and decided to put them to good use. I wanted strong fabric to stretch over the frames, but I did not want to use good canvas or denim, so I went to a fabric store that sells upholstery material, hoping to find a bargain. What I found was half a bolt of slightly flawed upholstery canvas, on sale for a dollar a meter. With the upholstery canvas stretched I looked for a material that would give the silk a soft cushioned backing. I ended up cutting an old flannelette bed sheet into sections and using three layers behind the silk panels. I thought about ironing the silk to get rid of the creases that had resulted from the fabric being packed in boxes, but felt that the parachute itself would have had permanent creases from being packed in the parachute bag, so I left the creases alone. I hand basted the flannelette to

the silk along the rope casing and seam lines, then stitched it on firmly, with the sewing machine.

With all of these materials in place I had to start thinking about what I was going to create. I began by thinking about the shape and purpose of a parachute as a canopy designed for safety and transportation. I played with the ropes and considered their importance in the function of the parachute.

I came to the conclusion that I needed something that was a least partly canopy shaped, and ended up with two wire baskets. These baskets were being sold in a craft store as pine cone baskets, but they had not sold well, so I purchased them for next to nothing. I painted the baskets white to prevent them from tarnishing, then wrapped them in parachute silk.

As I played with the positioning of the baskets on the silk, the concept for these two sculptures started to fall into place. I outlined areas on the silk that I would work as backgrounds or textured landscapes. Since I had already hand sewn one pair of sculptures, I decided to use the sewing machine to fill in these areas. I stitched the background textures through the silk and the flannelette backing. I feel that the background stitching is very effective in these pieces but the size of the sculptures made the process a very monotonous and time consuming endeavour.

With the textured background stitching completed, I started to make seed pods for "Parachute #2". I stuffed the pods with polyester stuffing and stitched them onto the flannelette backed silk, adding frayed rayon cording, for colour and texture to resemble hair or roots.

Once all of the machine stitching on both sculptures was complete, I hand sewed the flannelette backing onto the canvas wherever possible using button hole thread. Then I stapled the silk over the edges of the stretcher frame. The baskets were then attached to the front of each sculpture with button hole thread, anchored with buttons on the backside. This prevents

the weight of the baskets from pulling the threads through the weave of the fabric.

With the baskets in place on both sculptures and the pods in place on "Parachute #2", I started to experiment with the parachute ropes. The fine woven casings that formed the outside of the rope, and the soft slippery strands inside the casing allowed me to easily pull the inner threads, through the casing, creating a gathered appearance at the factory finished end, and a tasseled effect at the other. I secured the gathered ends in place by wrapping and tying off silk threads tightly around the location where I wanted the casing to remain. These gathered ropes were then attached to the sculptures with button hole thread.

Even though "Parachute #1" and "Parachute #2" are made of the same materials, they counter-balance each other in their appearance. "Parachute #1" with its ribs of gathered ropes and exposed wire frame is cold and austere looking. Even the addition of the soft fluffy tassel at the bottom right corner cannot soften the visual appearance of this piece. "Parachute #2" with its seed pods, hiding under the protection of the covered wire canopy, and growing in clusters under its shadow, has the effect of being soft, warm and protective. In both of these sculptures the purpose and design of the parachute as an object, suggested creative possibilities.

Head Pieces

I have always been intrigued by the use of draped fabrics as headpieces, whether it be in the form of hats, helmets, or crown-like symbols of distinction. To study a specific culture by examining how its head apparel has developed over time, would offer a unique perspective reflecting tastes in adornment and protection.

The production of head pieces as sculptural forms has been a part of the school art experience and has included old time favorites such as paper bag head coverings and the always popular, spring time parade of hand-made Easter bonnets for the elementary school levels. At the senior high level the production of head pieces as sculptural forms can take on a more intrinsic value because the head pieces can be created to stand for themselves as pieces of art and need not be worn as functioning head dresses.

Head Piece #1 1991

Head Piece #1 1991

54" H x 18" W x 18" D

polyester lining fabric, white all purpose glue,
poultry wire fencing, polyester stuffing, broom
handle, wood, lace, acrylic paint

Approximate cost to produce: \$2.00

Slide reference #27-#37

With my preference for draped fabric in mind, I began to search around for materials that I could put together for this sculpture. I discovered that I had a few yards of white lining material that had been given to me as a remnant. This fabric had yellowed a bit with age but was clean and unflawed. I knew right from the beginning that I would either have to support or suspend this fabric, to create the draped effect that I wanted. Considering my options, I chose to support the fabric by reinforcing it with white glue.

I decided to drape some of the lining material over the up turned legs of an old stool. Since I was going to be working with glue, I knew that I had to put a barrier between the glue soaked fabric and the stool legs, or the stool would quickly become part of the sculpture. Light weight clear plastic creates an ideal barrier because it can easily be torn away from the glued surface. Any plastic that cannot be removed, can be coated in glue and fused onto the inside of the sculpture.

The gluing process itself was quite easy to handle. I put a couple of cups of white glue into a shallow baking dish lined with plastic for easy clean up, put the fabric in and smeared the glue onto it with my hands. Once all of the fabric was completely saturated with glue, I draped it over the stool legs

and left it to air dry. Most of the fabric was dry within an hour, but the areas where the glue collected took quite a lot longer. I could have skimmed off the excess glue, but I wanted the drips, so I waited patiently. In retrospect, I could have saved myself some time and money if I had watered down the glue. I do not believe that it is necessary to use the glue at full strength for this type of light weight fabric.

With the lining material dry and removed from the stool legs, I could begin to work making the head mount, keeping in mind that it would have to fit the molded fabric. I took a small piece of poultry fencing from my classroom and formed a head shape that would fit inside the molded form. I found an old broom handle and mounted it with a support strip, into a piece of scrap plywood, which I had cut into a circle. It was my intention to pack the head form with polyester stuffing, but I was afraid that the top of the broom handle might poke through the stuffing and fencing. I resolved this problem by sticking a large cube of scrap styrofoam onto the broom handle. I then carefully packed the head working my way all around the styrofoam.

With the head form securely mounted, I began to work on positioning the molded fabric in place. I realized that the bright white colour of the stuffing was making the glue saturated fabric appear discoloured. I considered painting the fabric, but I did not want to lose or hide the surface features that the glue had created, so I chose to paint the stuffing instead.

I know from past experience that polyester stuffing will not accept common fabric dyes like the ones that we use in school, so painting it was my only option. With the aid of a spray pump bottle, I dusted the head form two or three times with watered down acrylic paint, until I got the coverage that I wanted.

While I waited for the paint to dry, I rummaged through some of my sewing notions and discovered that I had a couple of yards of silver lace. When applied to the head form, it created a bandage effect, which I thought worked well. I attached the lace to the outside of the poultry fencing with thread and glue.

With the paint applied and the lace attached, I once again went back to work trying to fit the molded fabric onto the head form. I had no difficulty in getting a secure fit, but I reinforced their position by gluing them together wherever possible.

Although I was very pleased with how this piece had gone together, I still felt like it needed something. After a few weeks of staring at it, I decided that I needed to create some extra tension in the piece and focus more attention on the face or front of the sculpture. With that in mind, I settled on the idea of making a chin strap.

I took another small piece of the fabric, soaked it in glue and suspended it from a clothes hanger with clothes pins, remembering to use clear plastic as a barrier. Once the chin strap was dry, I attached it to the head frame with glue.

The addition of the chin strap gives the head an accentuated upward thrust, suggesting a regal "look at me" attitude which I feel gives this piece character.

Head Piece #2 1991

Head Piece #2 1991

52" H x 12" W x 16" D

heavy fiberglass matt, white all purpose glue,
polyvinyl acetate (P.V.A.), plastic bucket, mop
handle, wood, felt, synthetic netting, paper, cord,
acrylic paint

Approximate cost to produce: \$3.00

Slide reference #38 - #46

Where the first head piece was planned, this second one came into being because of an experiment. Since we are not allowed to use epoxy type glues and compounds or resins in our schools, I wanted to see if heavy fiberglass, saturated with white glue or polyvinyl acetate (P.V.A.) would dry into a hard material. The fiberglass that I experimented with, consisted of remnant pieces which I collected from my parent's garage. I believe that this fiberglass was originally bought to repair a fiberglass boat, so it had to be one of the heaviest fiberglass matts available.

Since I had been successful with the gluing process in the first head piece, I repeated the process, but this time I molded the fiberglass matt over a protective hat and visor, that looked like a welder's helmet. Once again I placed a layer of clear plastic over the helmet to protect it from the glue and P.V.A. The process worked well with both the glue and the P.V.A., except that the weight of the soaked fiberglass sometimes forced the remnant pieces to slide off the helmet, but as the glue and P.V.A. started to dry and become tacky, it was easy to shift the pieces back into place. The thickness of the fiberglass matt and the amount of glue that it soaked up,

meant that the time required to completely dry the piece, had to be extended to a full twenty four hours.

When I removed the dried form, I was surprised to see how pliable it was. Although it held its shape, it was still soft enough to bend. I had a few extra scraps of fiberglass matt left, so I decided to add them onto the top of the form, to create loops. I used glue on the loops to give them extra strength.

I liked the shape of the molded fiberglass and the rough texture of the matt, so I decided to work with it. Since the form was in a semi-soft state, I knew that I would have to support its shape or it might collapse. I could not leave it on the safety hat that I had used as a form, so I looked around for an alternative object and found an old plastic bucket. The fiberglass form fit onto the bucket as if it had been formed over it, I could not have asked for a better fit.

I scrounged around and found another mop handle and put together a second upright, to hold this headpiece. The mop handle that I used had a wire attachment on it, so I punctured a few holes into the bottom of the bucket and tied the wire attachment to the inside of the bucket to stabilize its movement. Once I had it all nicely tied into place, I decided that I did not like the look of the bright orange plastic pail, so I untied it all and wrapped the bucket in felt. As usual I did not have enough felt scraps of any one colour to cover the whole pail, so I used up some dirty white pieces on the inside and some remnant pink pieces on the outside. The felt glued to the plastic bucket quickly and easily with white glue. As soon as the glue was dry, I re-tied the bucket into position onto the mop handle and placed the fiberglass in position.

Although I liked the texture of the fiberglass matt, the colour of it against the pink felt was unattractive to say the least. While searching

around though my acrylic paints I found an old tube of iridescent copper, which I had purchased many years ago. The opportunity of being able to put iridescent copper coloured paint, on a fiberglass form which had been mounted on a plastic bucket covered in pink felt and secured on a mop handle, was just too much to resist, so I tried it. The paint was so old that it had started to separate, so I squirted some out onto a palette and applied the best of it with a sponge, wiping the paint into the texture of the matt. The metallic paint gave the fiberglass a harder, rougher looking appearance and covered up the yellowish colour of the dried glue and P.V.A., so I was very pleased with how well it worked.

Unfortunately the colour of the paint did not work well with the pink felt. I was stuck at this point for quite some time. I did not want to change the colour of the paint any more than I wanted to recover the bucket. This little dilemma forced me to look for an alternative solution. In desperation I started to go through my collection of fabrics and craft supplies and turned up a bag full of synthetic netting, which I had purchased to make a clown costume. Sorting through the pieces I found that I had two different beige colours and one large piece of dark brown. I lifted the fiberglass off the bucket, draped the netting in layers over the bucket and pinned it in place at the top. As I replaced the form, I was careful that I did not tear the netting with the rough edges of the fiberglass. I cut off a few of the longer pieces of netting and used the remnants to accentuate the loops that I had worked onto the top of the form. I added a few strands of bright pink paper cording to highlight the pink felt on the bucket, and tied the netting at the neck. For an experimental piece that cost me one to two cups of P.V.A. and glue, and a few paper cords it has worked out quite effectively.

The Climbers 1991

The Climbers 1991

30" H x 24" W x 2" D per panel

newspaper, cotton, polyvinyl acetate (P.V.A.), denim,
wood, fishing line, acrylic paint

Approximate cost to produce: \$10.00

Slide reference #47 - #60

I came up with the idea for "The Climbers", while I was working on "The Stitches". Unlike "The Stitches"; who remain stationary in their occupation, the climbers appear to have the freedom and mobility to move around and through their living surface. "The ties that bind" these mannequins together represent relationships. Life, existence and growth, should not be a solitary process. Human beings like these mannequins, reach out to each other for the biological and emotional ties of friendship, support and safety.

Over the years I have completed numerous classroom projects that included the making of mannequins. With this sculpture I wanted to see if fabric coated in P.V.A. wrapped around newspaper forms, would create hard, durable bodies. I have used plaster and plaster tape as an outer skin for this purpose, but the cost of plaster tape and the mess that working with plaster creates, can be considerable when one is dealing with large classes.

Rolling newspaper up and taping it into position, is the cheapest and quickest method of forming the body for a mannequin that I have encountered. The amount of care and attention that the students put into the process, will often determine how anatomically proportioned their mannequins will be.

The application of the P.V.A. soaked cotton to the newspaper forms is a simple process. For these mannequins I chose to use a rough textured Indian cotton, which I cut into small 1" x 2" strips and 1" squares. I put the P.V.A. in a tin foil cup and immersed each piece, squeezed out the excess and applied it onto the form. The P.V.A. acts as a glue binding the fabric and the paper together. If numerous layers of fabric have to be applied, it is wise to allow the form to dry in between applications, as the P.V.A. will soak into the newspaper causing the body to become mushy and weak. The stretcher frames that I used were made of scrap lumber cut to size, with extra support struts put into position to accept the weight of the floating mannequins.

I had trouble finding suitable black denim at a reasonable price but I managed to find a bolt of flawed material in a discount bin at a local fabric store. I was able to position the frames around the flaws and stretch the fabric without any problems. For student work I would suggest that they consider using a hard background of wood or cardboard if money for background fabrics was not available.

Since the mannequins were to be attached to the background panels in a variety of positions, I had to consider how this was to be accomplished. For the figures who were going to be emerging from the black denim, I tied fishing line around their bodies and glued it into position, leaving long ends that could be used as ties. Then I wrapped extra P.V.A. soaked cotton, around the areas where the fishing line was attached to the bodies, to hide their existence and to provide extra strength. I painted the mannequins and their climbing ropes in bright coloured acrylic paints, so that they would contrast the blackness of their support panels.

With the use of a darning needle, I passed the fishing lines from the emerging figures through the denim and tied them off on the backside of the support struts. I used a little bit of glue to attach the other figures who

sit on the denim surface, but this was just to hold them in position until their climbing ropes were tied in place. The climbing ropes that tie all of these characters together are tacked into the back of the panels and are responsible for supporting each figure in its position.

This sculpture can be reorganized to fit any location that is available. I positioned the mannequins to best suit the confines of my wall space. I like the tension that is created, as the mannequins pull on the lines and struggle with their existence on the surface of the panels.

Blue Wall Hanging 1991

Blue Wall Hanging 1991

53" H x 26" W x 1" D

polyester lining material, polyvinyl acetate (P.V.A.),
cold water, fabric dye, wood, cord

Approximate cost to produce: \$2.00

Slide reference #61 - #67

While I was experimenting with soaking fabric in P.V.A. to create draped sculptural forms, I put this extra piece of fabric into the pan to collect the excess P.V.A., and then hung it to dry. Unlike the fabric used for Headpiece #1, this remnant was a bright white colour. Since it was going to harden into a molded form as it dried, I thought I might as well work with it.

I stretched the top corners of the fabric out, tied them off with string and then proceeded to fold one bottom corner up over the top edge. I carefully adjusted the fabric to highlight the naturally occurring folds that the suspension dictated, and left it to dry.

I had a good look at it once it was dry and decided that I liked its form, but that it needed something to give it colour and to accentuate its folds. I knew that acrylic or latex paint would hold onto the P.V.A. soaked fabric but I wondered if cold water dyes would be as effective. These dyes are inexpensive and can be mixed in large quantities, so if they could be used to colour P.V.A. coated surfaces, it would provide teachers with an alternative to expensive acrylic and latex paints. I did not have a container that was large enough to immerse the sculpture in the dye, so I simply put a

tray underneath the form to collect and recycle the extra run off dye and proceeded to pour the dye over the fabric.

At first the colour appeared faint, but as the dye collected in the folds of the fabric I thought it might have possibilities. Since cold water dyes take a long time to set into fabrics, I knew that I would probably have to pour the entire quart of dye over the fabric many times, in order to get the results that I wanted. Over the space of two or three weeks I must have soaked the sculpture twenty or thirty times, until I ran out of dye. I cut a small piece of dowelling to create a support strut across the top of the form and found a piece of blue cord that matched the colour of the dye.

As an experiment this sculpture was effective. With the use of a large container, students would be able to immerse their work for extended periods of time. This technique would not produce the same effects that pouring dye over their sculptures would, but it would be easier to handle in the classroom.

I like the way that the dye has collected to highlight the folds in the fabric, and the way that the light passes through the plastic saturated fabric making it translucent in appearance. I prefer to suspend this sculpture with a light source behind it, but practicality forced me to make slides of it in a more traditional manner.

The Masks

The history that surrounds the making of masks, like the history of doll making, crosses all cultures, religions, theatrical traditions and time periods. The mask has represented and evoked images of power, myth, ceremony and emotions, ranging from frivolity to fear.

Masks have served as vehicles for artistic expression throughout all levels of our school systems, providing students with a form of creative representation which is both personal and impersonal. Whether it is worn, and the individual assumes the role that the expression suggests, or hung on a wall as a piece of art, the mask with its empty eyes, draws the viewer into its character.

Pink Mask 1991

Pink Mask 1991

15" H x 20" W x 11" D

cotton, corn starch, wire, metal screen, wood,
feathers, sequins

Approximate cost to produce: \$8.00

Slide reference #68 - #77

When I was doing my undergraduate degree in fine arts, one of my studio majors was printmaking. Part of the introduction to this course dealt with the making of paper. While most of the other students concentrated on the technical aspects of print etching plates and lithography stones, I spent two months learning how to make paper. I visited a small hand-made paper workshop/company and tried numerous experiments, both in the making of paper and in the manipulation of paper as a sculptural vehicle for printmaking. With a few successes in this area to my credit, I expanded my experimentation to include using paper as a sculptural vehicle for Cyanotype and Gum Arabic prints in photography.

The paper making process has been successfully adopted by many sculptors, and a number of workshops demonstrating various techniques, have been offered at the community college level. I do not think that many art classrooms would have the space that would be required to handle paper making, especially the drying process, in its traditional manner, but there is always room for variations.

I wanted to work on at least one mask and thought that I would mash cotton fabric in a kitchen blender with corn starch, to make the pulp. I

hoped that this would create a heavy fibrous mass that would appear to be partly paper and partly fabric.

The first step however was to create the form for the mask, I used heavy galvanized wire to create the outside shape of the mask, then I added the facial features. It was obvious that if I was going to use a heavy pulp, I would have to put in some extra backing material to support the surface area. I searched around and found some remnant window screening. I cut the screen to fit the wire form and tied it into position with snare wire.

I did not want to get involved with dying or colouring the pulp, as I wanted to keep this process simple enough for a school project, but this might be an extra step that some teachers would be interested in pursuing. I chose a piece of pink coloured Egyptian cotton for the pulp. When you are making fine paper, you attempt to get your pulp as evenly consistent as possible. With this pulp I wanted the mash to contain broken fibers, threads and large pieces of fabric all fused and matted together. To accomplish this I cut the fabric into irregular sized pieces, with the largest ones being one half inch square.

I borrowed a blender and got to work. As I put one or two handfuls of fabric into the blender, I added two cups of water. At this point I decided to add a tablespoon of corn starch into the mix, to act as a binder during the drying process.

The sound of the fabric being mashed in the blender was nerve racking, but well worth the effort. The excess water in the pulp helped the blender to break up the fibers, but it was obvious that I was going to have to drain off some of the extra water. I poured the pulp into a bowl, then placed the mask frame in a shallow pan. As I picked up the pulp I would squeeze out some, but not all, of the excess water. Pressing the pulp onto the screen

removed the remaining excess water and helped to secure a stronger bond between it and the screen.

Blending the fabric into a pulp and applying it to the screen took less than an hour, but the amount of time necessary to dry the mask was lengthy. In desperation I put it in the oven, on the lowest possible setting for a few hours, with positive results. Although the pulp appeared unstable as it lay as a wet mass on the surface of the mask, it dried into a hard matted shell. I liked the heavy matted surface texture the fabric pulp created.

Now that I had the mask covered, I looked around for something to mount it on, and decided to use a large embroidery hoop. I tied the mask into the hoop with snare wire. The mask looked bare inside the hoop with the snare wire exposed. I mixed up more pulp, added a piece of screen between the snare wire ties at the bottom right hand side and extended the covered surface, from the mask out past the hoop, applying the extra pulp with white glue.

To give the mask some theatrical glitter and extra character I added pink sequins and feathers.

Spanish Moss Mask 1991

Spanish Moss Mask 1991

15" H x 20" W x 8" D

cotton, flour, Spanish moss, wire, metal screen,
wood, white all purpose glue

Approximate cost to produce: \$5.00

Slide reference #78 - #84

Since the Manitoba curriculum encourages students to expand upon original ideas, I had taken the time to make a second wire and screen mask frame immediately after I completed the frame for the first mask. With this second mask I was interested in seeing how substances like Spanish moss, which is native to this region, would fuse into a fabric pulp. Since Spanish moss grows in a wide range of green and yellow tones, I thought that a plain, natural off-white coloured cotton might highlight the moss and make an ideal pulp.

I proceeded to mash the fabric into a pulp using the same technique as on the previous mask. The only change I made, was that I substituted flour for the corn starch as a binder, because I wanted to see if it would work as effectively. Once I had put each batch of fabric through the blender, I put small handfuls of Spanish moss into the mix and processed it, just enough to blend it in.

I applied the pulp to the mask using the same procedure as before and put this mask into the oven to dry at the same temperature and for the same length of time. I am not sure whether substituting the flour for the corn starch, or using a lighter coloured fabric instead of a darker one made a difference, but this mask came out of the oven "baked." Instead of just

turning out hard and dry, this one also came out with a light brownish-yellowish, "look at me I'm toasted", appearance. I was surprised to notice that the Spanish moss had retained its colour, which leads me to believe that it was probably the flour on the light coloured fabric that caused it to burn brown.

I thought about painting the mask, but decided that since I had already put some Spanish moss into the pulp, I might just as well continue working with it and use it with some white glue to cover up the worst of the brown spots. I do like the hairy look of this "fried face". Although it was never my intention to use as much moss as I ended up with, sometimes you just have to deal with the unexpected and make the best of it.

The Mobiles

Mobiles have been accepted as a form of sculpture, where movement replaces the traditional stationary format. Through the making of mobiles, students have the opportunity to experience how critical a component "balance" can be in the creation of a suspended free floating sculpture.

For the art teacher the only difference in terms of classroom management between the making of a mobile and a sculpture that rests on its base, is that the mobile ideally, should be suspended occasionally during its production. This can be a problem in classrooms with false ceilings and closely hung lighting fixtures. I avoid suspending work from my classroom ceiling. I ask students to put their chairs on top of their tables, I then place scrap lumber across from chair to chair, between the tables. This gives students a working area of about four feet between the cross board and the floor.

I must admit that I have not been able to find a suitable location to display this type of work in my classroom or in the school, but that is no reason to discourage students from producing it. The mobile can be a challenging form of sculpture that all students can learn from and should be encouraged to experiment with.

Orange Mobile 1991

Orange Mobile 1991

68" H x 11" W x 11" D

polyester lining material, polyvinyl acetate (P.V.A.),

plywood, rope

Approximate cost to produce: \$2.00

Slide Reference #85 - #93

Since I had experienced success with P.V.A. soaked fabric forms in some of my other sculptures, I decided to try one last experiment. This time I wanted to see if the plastic coated fabric, would withstand being hung outdoors during the summer. I followed the same procedures that I had used in "Headpiece #1" and in the "Blue Wall Hanging". For this sculpture I chose to use a remnant of orange coloured polyester lining material. I soaked the fabric in P.V.A. then draped it over an upside down bucket, which was protected with clear plastic. I suspended this from my basement ceiling which allowed the heavy folds to gather around the top of the form. The drying process took quite a few hours, but once again the plastic gave the fabric a translucent quality which highlighted the draped folds.

Once the drying was complete I removed the clear plastic protective layer with the bucket and then placed a plywood disc with a hole in its centre, up into the top of the form. I liked the draped effect of the fabric, but felt that as a sculpture it still needed something.

I thought about putting a light source up inside of it, to accentuate the translucent quality of the plastic coated fabric, but decided it would look like a poorly made lamp shade or a patio lantern. Finally I decided to suspend

rope from the inside of the form, knowing that at least this would provide me with a contrasting surface texture.

The rope that I ended up using was ideal for this project. I found five pieces of it in our garage, with each piece of rope being approximately six feet long. I have no idea where it originally came from, or what it was used for, but it was dirty, worn out, frayed at the edges and becoming unraveled.

I took one strand of the rope, tied it around the middle of the five pieces, passed it through the plywood disc and the fabric form, creating a support/tie that I could use to suspend the mobile. Once all of the rope was in place and the mobile was suspended, I began to unravel more of the rope. This was an easy task to accomplish, but a very messy one. As the rope separated, small fibers broke free and blew around, which meant that I had a lot of cleaning up to do. This obviously was a job that should have been done outside.

I have taken the slides of this mobile inside the house, because I could not wait any longer for a calm day with the right amount of light, to enable me to take the slides outside. Prairie weather does not always cooperate with the best intentions of any individual.

"Weather" or not this mobile will survive the prairie summer has yet to be tested. I would not leave it outside for the winter as cold weather has a tendency to crack light weight plastics, but I do hope that this piece will make it successfully through a few summers. I cannot think of any reason why it should not.

Wooden Mobile 1991 - incomplete

Wooden Mobile 1991 - incomplete

79" H x 29" W x 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " D

wood, white all purpose glue, embroidery cotton,

burlap, fray check fabric glue

Approximate cost to produce: \$4.00

Slide reference #94 - #96

The idea for this mobile was two fold. It was supposed to tie together the appearance of the wooden structure of a box kite, with the screening effect of a room divider. Box kites always seem to be fragile objects where fine wooden struts are tied or glued together and lifted into the air for flight. The fear that I experience with them is not whether they will fly, but whether they will come back to earth and land in one piece.

When I chose to work with these small wooden struts, I immediately made the decision to reinforce the structure of this mobile by doubling up on the cross members that were to hold the piece together. This would not only give me extra support, but would allow me to have two working faces, without either one of them appearing to be the backside.

The struts were made of scrap lumber, so I had to make sure that each strut was sturdy and discard those that had knot holes and checks. Since there is only one row of upright struts, the duplication and reinforcing occurs with the cross members. On both sides of the uprights the matching cross members are glued with white glue and tied into position with embroidery cotton, for extra strength.

I am quite happy with the appearance and structural support of the wooden frame. I think that once it is suspended properly it will serve its purpose well.

I have listed this sculpture as being incomplete because I do not like the way that I have suspended the burlap strips inside the frame. I believe that the decision to use burlap for this mobile was a good one. The colour and texture of the fabric with its plain, heavy, open weave, complements the "weave" created by the crossing wooden struts that make up the sculpture's structure. Exposing the frayed edges of the burlap; which were reinforced with fray check, gives the fabric the same unfinished appearance, that the wooden structure has with its extended struts.

My concern at this point in the mobile's development, is that it is too flat. I think that if I remove these burlap pieces and replace them with ones that are longer, I could sew folds into them, which would create more interesting surfaces.

Since this mobile is incomplete in my mind at least, I did not suspend it as a final finished sculpture. I had not found the time to rework this piece, when the last of the slides for this paper were to be taken. I believe that once I get the burlap strips reworked, and suspend the mobile properly, it will be a successful piece.

Summary

The sculptures for this paper were cost efficient. When I have spent an excessive amount of money on any one of these pieces, I have suggested alternate less costly, materials and solutions for student work.

One must always be aware of the special needs of those individuals who suffer from allergies. Keeping that in mind, I have made sure that none of the materials or process, that I have used would be considered hazardous and do not require extra safety precautions or equipment to produce. The processes discussed in this section, are all practical and can be accommodated in an ordinary art classroom. Outside of the use of a sewing machine and a blender for certain projects, there was no need for specialized tools, equipment or facilities.

That the sculptures produced for this study may encourage other art teachers to work fabric sculpture into their art programmes is evident by their reactions. I am sure that the sculptures that their students produce, will also convince them that there is a place for fabric sculpture in the Manitoba Secondary School Art Curriculum.

When it became known by other art teachers that I was exploring the strength of my thesis I received enquiries about the applicability of fabric sculpture to different grade levels and school settings. Interest within my school division; Transcona Springfield #12, has resulted in a request for a professional development workshop on fabric sculpture that would be open to all interested teachers. Although I have discussed the techniques and resource materials produced for this paper at length with some of my colleagues, I look forward to presenting it in full at the upcoming workshop the fall of 1991.

Resources for Teaching

Sculptors who work with Fabrics

In reviewing the work of sculptors who work in fabric, one major consideration must be dealt with and that is will the ordinary classroom teacher be able to find examples of fabric sculpture in exhibits, on slides, or in books and magazines, to show their classes for discussion and inspiration? This may appear to be a minor problem, but it is not.

Exhibits that deal with fabric sculpture are increasing in number and in scale, but they are still few and far between. The number of field trips to art exhibits, galleries and museums an art teacher can hope to take students on is limited by the location of these shows and institutions, the number of students involved, the time allotment necessary for the field trip and the cost of transportation to and from locations.

Access to teaching kits, slides and display materials from galleries, museums and university collections, is limited to those teachers who have access via membership cards, professional passes or letters securing special permission. These institutions do not loan out materials at whim, so even with the correct authorization, borrowers may have to collect the materials in person, present further identification papers and sign out these materials, accepting full responsibility for their safety and guaranteeing their prompt return. Teachers who do not live in the same community as the institutions from which they are trying to borrow materials, have the added costs and problems of attempting to get the necessary authorization and the materials that they have requested, via the mail or courier services.

Public libraries, school division resources centres and school libraries, have limited budgets and must purchase teaching materials that will appeal to, and meet the needs of, the widest possible clientele. In the art section

most of these facilities one should be able to find materials on major sculptors such as Michelangelo and Rodin. You might be able to find materials on more modern sculptors like Brancusi, Arp, Hepworth, and Moore but the chances are remote of finding support materials, books or magazine articles, on artists who work in fabrics whether the artist is currently working or not.

Once an art teacher has "checked out" the materials most readily available, the next step is to identify which sculptors and sculptures they are most interested in and need further information on. With such a list completed it is time to start a more selective search for support material that they can use in their classrooms.

With this in mind, I have put together short summaries on the fabric sculptors that I make reference to, when I am introducing fabric sculpture to my students. I have tried to indicate how I present some of this work and how my students have responded to it, in the hope that this will help other art teachers and encourage them to introduce fabric sculptures to their classes.

Claes Oldenburg

I enjoy introducing my students to the use of fabric as a sculptural material, through the work of Claes Oldenburg. His use of common objects as subject material evokes positive responses from my students whenever I expose them to his work.

Finding good reference material for Oldenburg can be difficult. The only two books that deal extensively with his work, that I have been able to find in the University of Manitoba Fine Arts Library are: Claes Oldenburg (1970) and Oldenburg - Six Themes (1975). Both of these books are out of print, and to my knowledge there has been very little new material dealing with Oldenburg's work published in the last ten to fifteen years. The best source for teaching material on Oldenburg, might be found in art encyclopedias such as H.W. Janson's History of Art (1962), which most libraries and many art teachers have access to.

The Oldenburg sculptures that encourage the most animated responses from my student are the toilets.

1. Toilet - Hard Model 1966
cardboard, wood, other materials
44" H x 28" W x 33" D
2. Soft Toilet - Ghosts Version 1966
canvas filled with kapok, wood painted with
liquitex (sic)
51" H x 33" W x 28" D

3. Soft Toilet 1966

vinyl filled with kapok, wood painted with liquitex
50 $\frac{1}{2}$ " H x 32 $\frac{1}{4}$ " W x 31" D

There is something about the adolescent fascination with bodily functions, that draws them to these sculptures with irreverent glee. Without seriously distorting the shape of the toilet as a subject, the softness of the canvas and vinyl, gives Oldenburg's toilets a "hung out to dry" cartoon character presence. In "Soft Toilet - Ghosts Version", the lid and toilet bowl look like an open mouth, with the lid bumpers resembling broken teeth ready to bite down on the toilet seat or its next user.

After the inevitable giggles and comments on Oldenburg's choice of subject matter have subsided, students are quick to note the differences that each material makes in the appearance of the toilets. They discuss the way that the light plays on each material and how the folds in each type of fabric act differently. They contemplate how these toilets would collapse if the towel like bar that suspends them were removed, and speculate whether they would still look like toilets in a collapsed condition.

I often ask students to think of extension pieces or variations that could be created to accompany Oldenburg's;

4. Giant Fag Ends 1967

canvas, urethane, foam, and wood

52" H x 96" W x 96" D

The suggestions given to me have ranged from soft cigarette lighters and burnt out matches, to black lungs made of metal and fingers constructed of yellow foam.

Although the "Fag Ends" are not as realistic looking as the toilets are, they do stimulate discussion. If I show my students a slide of the "Fag Ends" without telling them the title of it, a few of them mistakenly identify them as crumpled up soft drain pipes, but the real "smokers" in the crowd "cough up" the correct identification easily.

Other works that students respond well to, if slides or pictures can be found are;

5. Soft Pay Telephones - Ghosts Version 1963

muslin filled with kapok, painted with liquitex,
mounted on wood panel covered in muslin
49" H x 22" W x 12" D

6. Soft Pay Telephones - 1963

muslin filled with kapok, painted with liquitex,
mounted on painted wood panel
46 $\frac{1}{2}$ " H x 19" x 12" D

7. Soft Fur Good Humour 1963

fake fur filled with kapok, wood painted with
enamel

Four units - each
19" H x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " W x 2" D

8. 7Up 1961

muslin soaked in plaster over wire frame,
painted with enamel
55" H x 37" W x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " D

One of my favorite Oldenburg soft sculptures is;

9. Soft Scissors 1968

canvas filled with kapok, painted with liquitex

pieces range in size from;

24" - 72" long x 35" W

The paradox of this piece has always attracted me. The cold steel of a pair of oversized scissors a tool designed to cut fabric like materials, constructed of fabric, duplicated and bunched up together to hang like a parcel of asparagus, creates a cutting edge of a different sort.

Once students have become used to the size of these Oldenburg sculptures, it is interesting to watch their reactions as they tackle his larger works.

10. Giant Ice Bag 1969 - 1970

plastic and metal with interior motor

15'6" H x 18' in diameter

There is one good photograph of this sculpture in History of Art (1962) that shows the ice bag in various positions. One of my student started to mimic the sound track to the movie "Jaws" as I explained how the ice bag was designed to rise and fall, twist and turn. This lead us into a discussion about performance art and the use of audio materials to enhance the visual impact of art.

Studying the work of Claes Oldenburg encourages the students acceptance of fabric as a sculptural material and stimulates discussion on a

variety of topics and levels. The fact that many of his sculptures were done as part of a series, reinforces the Manitoba Secondary School Art Curriculum recommendation to have students tackle an original idea through a number of pieces. Oldenburg's use of common objects as subject matter, viewed in different ways and made of different materials, motivates students to consider the objects and the world that surrounds them in a new way.

Iain Baxter (N. E. Thing Company)

Although Iain Baxter was born in England, he has taught and worked in Canada for so long that his is considered a Canadian artist. Finding published work that gives an accurate account of Baxter and the N. E. Thing Co. is not easy. I have bits and pieces of material about him from my student years at York University, where he was professor.

Whenever possible I like to use Baxter's plastic and vinyl inflatables as examples of fabric related sculptures.

1. VSI - Pool flower 1967
electricity, coloured PVC and air
3'6" H x 15" W x 15" D

2. VSI - Cirrus Cloud 1967
electricity, coloured PVC and air
4'6" H x 100" W

This two part sculpture is one of Baxter's better known works and has been photographed and published in a number of sources because it was on display at the "Sculpture 67" exhibit in Toronto.

Although students are generally intrigued by the philosophy behind the N.E. Thing Co., our limited resource materials makes much of our discussions hypothetical. I often conclude our discussion with the complaint and concern that more work needs to be published on Canadian artists in general and sculptors in particular.

Christo Javachefe

"Christo uses fabric in a big way" is my usual introduction to the work of Christo because he was very active through the 60s, 70s and the 80s information about his work is readily available in published form, and documentary films have been made to publicize some of his sculptures.

The debates which gave Christo's work so much extra attention have a tendency to surface again when students discuss his mammoth environmental sculptures. His use of fabrics to highlight that which is known, from that which he chooses to hide, can be just as difficult to fathom for the students of today, as it was for the viewing public at each sculptural site during installations.

I find that by providing the students with background information about Christo's early life behind the "Iron Curtain", and following a chronological path through his work, they can comprehend if not always accept, what he is attempting to do. We usually start by discussing some of his earlier works such as;

1. Packed Bottles and Cans 1958
cans, bottles, lacquered canvas, enamel paint,
twine
11" H x 29" W x 11" D

2. Iron Curtain Wall of Oil Barrels 1961
erected in the rue Visconti Paris June 27, 1962
240 oil barrels 14' H x 13' W x 5'6" D

3. Wrapped Motorcycle 1962
motorcycle, polyethylene and rope
30 $\frac{1}{4}$ " H x 76" W x 16" D
4. Package on Wheelbarrow 1963
Fabric, rope, wood and metal
35" H x 60" W x 23" D

Reviewing these works gives the students the chance to confront and question some of the concepts Christo deals with on a smaller scale. We discuss his use of common objects and the transformations that occur when these forms are wrapped. Most of my students find his work easier to deal with on this scale. It is when we move to the next size, that their knees start to wobble and they feel like they have lost their footing.

The wrapping of monuments, buildings, streets and landscapes may have been a small size step for Christo, but it is an incomprehensible leap for many of my students.

5. Wrapped Coast, Little Bay Australia 1969
one million square feet of erosion control mesh,
35 miles of polypropylene rope
6. Wrapped Monuments to Victor Emmanuel, Pizza
Duomo Millan 1970
Woven synthetic fabric and rope

These smaller Christo visual statements help to bridge the gap from the comfortable size of Christo's earlier work, to the ever increasing scale of his later works. I use these two works to discuss Christo's use of draped

fabric as a second skin, covering, distorting, protecting and hiding the objects underneath its folds and ties. We look at how these sculptures relate to the people and objects around them. We consider the element of time, as it pertains to Christo's art, the history of places and life in general.

With these smaller wrapped structures and landscapes in mind, we make the next jump in size.

7. Valley curtain, Grand Hogback, Rife Colorado
1970-1972
185' - 365' H x 250' - 1,368' W
200,000 square feet of nylon, cable
8. Running Fence, Sonoma and Marin Counties,
California 1972 - 1976
18' H x 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ " W x 24 miles
9. Surrounded Islands, Biscayne Bay, Greater
Miami, Florida 1980 - 1983
6,500,000 square feet of floating pink
polypropylene
10. The Umbrellas, Project for Japan and Western
U.S.A. - Project close to completion
thousands of umbrellas 18' H x 24' in diameter
will meander in the landscape for several miles
simultaneously as a two part project in both
countries.

With Christo's larger pieces, our discussions focus on the questions of: how we look at a piece of art, from which angles, which locations, and should we be able to see all of it, or most of it, at one time? I often ask my students to speculate; If Christo's work continues to grow in scale as it has over his lifetime as an artist, where will it grow next?

Christo presents us with sculptures that break down the barriers of size and scale that we have historically accepted in art. Perhaps it is not knowing where Christo is going with his art ideas, that makes people apprehensive about his art.

Judy Chicago

I have never been comfortable with Judy Chicago's work. It is not that I dislike or disapprove of her feminist stance or subject matter, I simply do not like the way that she handles it. There is a raw brutality about her work, that exploits the integrity of the subject matter, making it subservient to "her Cause". I believe Chicago to be sincere in her desire to "...change women's circumstances, to introduce a female point of view, to create art that affirms our womanhood and to make art relevant to peoples' lives" (Chicago, 1973, p. ix)

Chicago has been credited for her commitment to the feminist movement and her support for the acceptance of women as artists, which validates her intentions.

1. The Dinner Party 1979

Thirty nine porcelain place settings on
embroidered fabrics runner
three 48' long tables placed in the shape of a
triangle.

The dinner party is one of Chicago's most celebrated and best known pieces. Finding information about it is easy, as the work has been shown extensively in North America, and Chicago has produced a book about its construction, Chicago (1980).

Numerous newspaper articles and magazine reviews have been printed, and may be used to provide insight into Chicago's Dinner Party. Badanna Zack writing for Art Magazine reflected my sentiments about Chicago's work when she concluded a review of the Dinner Party with:

Though *The Dinner Party* is large in size, it is simplistic in content and didactic in intention. Like most political works it never rises above its original purpose. It is unfortunate that all that thought, research, effort, work, publicity and time produced such a contrived visual statement. (p. 28)

I believe that Chicago has had a powerful impact on the North American art scene. I offer her work here not as an example of a fabric sculptor that I would recommend, but, as an example of an artist whose philosophical beliefs often outweigh her artistic accomplishments.

I do not use Chicago's work as resource material in my introduction to fabric sculptures, but other teachers may see something in her work that I do not. I omit her from my reference materials out of choice, not neglect.

Joyce Wieland

Joyce Wieland, like Judy Chicago, has strong political and philosophical convictions which she expresses through her art. Her work includes painting, drawing, watercolours, collages, sculptures, assemblages, plastic wall hangings, quilts and films. As a Canadian artist who has a passion for patriotism, Wieland's work has been well accepted and published information about her is available. The book Joyce Wieland which was published to supplement her 1987 exhibit at the Art Gallery of Ontario, provides a retrospective view of her work.

Wieland's work as a relief or three dimensional quiltmaker qualifies her as a fabric sculptor.

1. Reason Over Passion 1968
Quilted cloth assemblage
256.5 x 302.3 cm.
2. I Love Canada 1970
quilted cloth assemblage
153.1 x 149.8 cm. and 160.5 x 154.9 cm.
3. O Canada Animation 1970
embroidery on cloth
107.0 x 114.0 cm.
4. Man Has Reached Out And Touched The
Tranquil Moon 1970
Mixed Media
298.5 x 163.2 cm.

5. The Water Quilt 1970 - 1971
Embroidered cloth and printed cloth
assemblage
134.6 x 131.1 cm.

6. 109 Views 1970 - 1971
Quilted cloth assemblage
256.5 x 802.6 cm.

7. The Maple Leaf Forever II 1972
Coloured pencil on quilted assemblage
218.4 x 50.2 cm.

8. Laura Secord 1974
quilted cloth assemblage
157.5 x 350.5 cm.

These well known pieces make up the bulk of Wieland's quilted work. With very few exceptions, my student usually react to these quilts with a minimal amount of interest. On the other hand, Wieland's assemblages and plastic wall hangings are received with more enthusiasm. Most students are intrigued with the objects that she chooses to "Package" in her wall hangings. We discuss the use of art as historical capsules reflecting thoughts, cultures and attitudes. These pieces also provide us with a conceptual bridge to Christo's work.

9. Home Art Totem 1966
Mixed Media
117.0 x 23.0 cm.

10. Stuffed Movie 1966
Mixed Media
142.2 x 36.8 cm.

11. Home Movie 1966
Mixed Media
104.6 x 20.0 cm.

12. War and Piece Peace, 8mm Home Movie 1966
Mixed Media
76.0 x 10.5 cm.

13. Home Work 1966
Mixed Media
106.0 x 24.0 cm.

14. The Space of the Lama 1966
Mixed Media
124.5 x 40.5 cm.

15. Patriotism 1966-67
Mixed Media
85.5 x 38.0 cm.

16. Confederation Spread 1967

Mixed Media

150.5 x 201.9 cm.

Although the political and philosophical aspects of Wieland's work are as evident as those found in Judy Chicago's work, I find Wieland's work more palatable. In part this may be due to the fact that Wieland's work reflects a wider range of topics and interests, thereby providing more content to each piece and a larger body of ideas in total.

Whether Wieland's work will be venerated in the future is questionable. Reaction to her 1987 exhibit was moderate. Ken Carpenter writing for Art Post concludes his review of Wieland's show with the remark that "...it should come as no surprise if in the long run Wieland counts more as a cultural phenomenon than as a truly important artist per se". (p. 27)

Aganetha Dyck

Although she is not well known, Canadian prairie artist Aganetha Dyck provides a soft sell approach for many of the women's issues that interest both Chicago and Wieland. Dyck is best known for her use of ready made garments which she "felts" or shrinks to structural forms, then "packages" or frames in suitcases. Other related sculptures include a series where enormous quantities of buttons and clothing fasteners, have been pickled in clear acrylic, poured into glass jars to set and stacked on shelf units like home made preserves.

In an article titled Women's Work: The Radical Domestication of Aganetha Dyck, reviewer Sheila Butler notes that "Again Aganetha Dyck depends upon non-verbal associations and intuitive connections in her creative process". (p. 19)

Dyck's work is quietly allowed to stand for itself. With her use of domestic objects and fabric garments, which have traditionally fallen within the "women's domain" of food preparation, laundry and care giving, Dyck exposes us to her feminine viewpoint. Finding slides or pictures of Dyck's work is difficult, but well worth the effort. Following is a list of sculptures that I like to show to my class, but unfortunately, there are no size specifications or details listed on the illustrations that I use.

1. Close Knit 1976-1981
2. Cabbages 1978
3. 23 Suitcases 1981

4. Shelf 1983

5. Canning Table 1983-1984

When discussing Dyck's work with students, obvious connections can be made between Dyck's suitcases as a form of packaging, Wieland's plastic wall hangings and Christo's packaged monuments, buildings and landscapes. There is also a link between Dyck's pickled buttons and a sculpture by Claes Oldenburg called Pickle Slices in A Jar 1963-1964. Unfortunately I do not have a slide of this piece.

Discussing Dyck as a Winnipeg artist helps to make students aware of the art community within this province. Most of the information that I have is limited in scope and somewhat out of date. One hopes that more attention will be paid to her work in the future, and better reference materials will become available.

George Segal

American artist George Segal is well known and liked by my students. I have had many of my classes adopt his technique of using plaster and plaster tape to create human forms and molded objects. This technique although messy, is easily incorporated into the classroom and provides the students with the experience necessary, to appreciate his work with a greater degree of understanding.

Segal's use of the human form in everyday situations provides the students with a difficult, yet familiar concept of environmental sculpture that they can relate to. The rough textural surface of the plaster tape draws our attention away from the characteristics that identify us as individuals, to suggest a more universal experience.

With very few exceptions Segal's style and techniques have remained constant. Some of my students will complain that he has not ventured past his initial success. There is some validity in this statement, but I do feel that Segal has grown in his ability to bring out more of the human subtleties of attitude, that we express in our day to day dealings with society.

The works that I usually discuss with my students are;

1. Woman Shaving Her Legs 1963
plaster, metal, porcelain and masonite
63" H x 65" W x 30" D

2. The Gas Station 1963 - 1964
plaster, metal, glass, stone, rubber
96" H x 264" W x 60" D

3. The Butcher Shop 1965
plaster, metal, wood, vinyl, plexiglass and other
objects.
94" H x 99" W x 48" D
4. The Execution 1967
plaster, wood, metal and rope
96" H x 132" W x 96" D
5. Self-Portrait with Head and Body 1968
plaster and wood
66" H x 32" W x 42" D
6. Picasso's Chair 1973
plaster and mixed media
78" H x 60" W
7. Girl Emerging from Wall 1974
plastic and ceramic tile
39" H x 17" W x 10" D
8. The Holocaust 1983
plaster and mixed media
120" H x 240" W x 120" D
9. The Constructors 1985
plaster and mixed media
13 $\frac{1}{2}$ ' x 12' W x 7' D

10. The Street 1987

painted plaster, wood, and mixed media

8'6" H x 26' W x 6' D

Segal's work is well documented with numerous sculptures permanently on display in Canadian galleries and with published books that provide up to date retrospective reference materials and studio films that expose his techniques. Collecting appropriate teaching materials for Segal's work should be quite easy.

Magdalena Abakanowicz

The sculptor who has impressed me the most over the past few years has been Polish born Magdalena Abakanowicz. With the publication of Abakanowicz (1982), her work has attracted increased attention in North America.

Although she started her career in the 60's as a fiber artist and had great success with her early weavings, I believe that she will be best known for her work as a sculptor. Using predominantly natural fibers such as cotton, hemp, sisal and wool, she produces very large, multi-unit installations. The size, weight, texture and tension created in her work is very evident and intentional. As she states in her book Abakanowicz (1982)

"Creating, I am using woven materials and strings. These components allow me to construct different forms.

I like the surface of threads that I make, every square inch differs from the others, as in the creations of nature.

I want the viewer to penetrate the inside of my forms.

For I want him to have the most intimate contact with them, the same contact one can have with clothes, animal skins, or grass.

I am interested in constructing from my forms an environment for man.

I am interested in the scale of tensions that arises among the various shapes which I place in space.

I am interested in the feelings of a man confronted by the woven object.

I am interested in the motion and waving of the woven surfaces.

I am interested in every tangle of thread and rope and every possibility of transformation.

I am interested in the path of a single thread.

I am not interested in the practical usefulness of my work." (p. 127)

Abakanowicz seems to be fascinated with the metamorphosis of the human form and explores it through embryo shapes, emptied shell like castings, body parts and the cloaking aspects of garments. The earthiness of her materials, the biological nature of her subject matter and the size and scale of her work makes her sculptures powerful.

In as much as I am enthralled by her work, my students accept it with some reluctance. They have a tendency to view it with the same discomfort that they feel when trying to comprehend some of Christo's work. I believe that in this case the hard, cold, dirty, rough appearance of Abakanowicz's sculptures is unappealing to them.

When one considers the size of her work, it is evident that she has been a very productive artist. Examples of her work which I use in my classes are as follows;

1. Abakan Round 1967
Sisal weaving in black
118" H x 40" W x 40" D

2. Baroque Dress 1969
Sisal weaving in orange
157 $\frac{1}{2}$ " H x 157 $\frac{1}{2}$ " W x 20" D

3. Seated Figures 1974-1979
figures: burlap and glue; stand: steel
eighteen figures
each approx. 41" H x 20" W x 26" D
each stand 30" H x 18" W x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " D

4. Backs 1976-1982
burlap and jute
eighty pieces, three sizes
24" H x 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ " W x 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ " D

27" H x 22" W x 26" D
28 $\frac{1}{4}$ " H x 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ " W x 27 $\frac{1}{4}$ " D

5. Embryology 1978-1981
burlap, cotton gauze, hemp rope, nylon and sisal
approximately 800 pieces
from 4 to 250 cm. in length

Outside of the one retrospective book that I have already mentioned, there is very little resource material that depicts Abakanowicz's work. If she continues to exhibit her work in North America, perhaps more material will become available.

Ancillary

There are other lesser known artists who use fabrics as sculptural material. Many of these artists are currently producing fabric sculptures which I would like to be able to show to my students. Unfortunately, finding reference materials for these artists and their works, is extremely difficult. What follows are short notes on these artists and their work, with suggestions about where further reference materials might possibly be found.

Carole Sabiston

Carole Sabiston is a British Columbia based fabric artist who produces large two dimensional panels, which she suspends as three dimensional sculptures. If I understand her technique correctly, she sandwiches her fabrics between a backing material and a fine steel netting or screen, which not only provides support, but also creates a unique translucent quality. Her background as a painter and quiltmaker helped her to make the transition to her current treatment of fabrics in sculptural form.

Sabiston's work has received both national and international attention, but I have not seen much material about her in published form. Perhaps there is something available through the Vancouver or Victoria art galleries. The best teaching resource I have been able to find for her work is the Knowledge Networks' - University of Victoria documentary film The Art Of Carole Sabiston (1990). This film does an excellent job of highlighting Sabiston's thematic interests but it does not fully explain her techniques, with reference to her use of the steel screens.

If Sabiston's work continues to receive favorable attention, published reference material about her work as a sculptor may follow, thereby exposing her to a larger audience.

Lam De Wulf

(spelling of name may be inaccurate)

De Wulf is a Dutch artist who recently had an exhibit of her fabric sculptures titled, "Protection", at the Museum of Textiles in Toronto 1991. By incorporating wooden struts with clothing and draped fabrics, De Wulf uses the human body as a support structure for her sculptures. During a two minute newscast interview, De Wulf explained that she liked to fuse hard and soft materials together to create free standing relief and wearable sculptures.

I was fascinated by the few sculptures that were shown in the interview. De Wulf had people tied into scaffold-like structures, from which she suspended fabrics, leading one to question her use of the term "wearable sculpture".

The best source of information for De Wulf's work may be from the Museum of Textiles in Toronto. The newsclip that I have made reference to was shown on the Much Music television station in the spring of 1991.

Nancy Graves

American artist Nancy Graves combines her interests in archeology, taxidermy, and art, to produce large sculptures. Her 1970 installation "Camels" which is part of the National Gallery's collection in Ottawa, has been well publicized and photographed. The outer skin of Graves' Camels is made of sheep and goat hides, which means it cannot be called a fabric sculpture per se, but since the outer skin could have been made from man-made fake furs, I do feel that "Camels" can successfully be used as an example of fabric related sculpture. Graves' use of real hides as opposed to man-made ones, can become a major topic of discussion with art students who are concerned with animal rights and conservation.

A catalogue of Graves' work was published to complement her 1987 exhibit, which travelled extensively through North America. I have not been able to get a copy of this catalogue, but hope to get one soon.

Concluding Note

In concluding this section, it must be noted that I have mentioned just a few of the artists whose works could be used as references for introducing fabrics as a sculptural material to high school art students. This list could go on to include the American artist Sheila Hicks, Faith Ringgold, and M.C. Michel, Australian artists Ewa Jarosynska, Pachucka and Rinske Car, Canadian artist Betty Ives and many others. The artists that I have chosen to make reference to reflect my interests, teaching strategies and resources.

As the use of fabrics as a sculptural material grows, one hopes the list of artists will grow, and more published reference materials will become available.

As a teaching tool, access to art works via field trips or through the use of visuals such as slides, pictures, posters and films, is one of the best resources an art teacher can have. I hope that these short introductions to artists who work in fabric sculpture will assist art teachers in their search for appropriate resource materials that they might use to introduce fabric sculpture to their classes.

Searching For More Information

As well as looking at the artists who work in fabric sculpture, I also reviewed the works of art education theorists who might concern themselves with teaching fabric sculpture. To this end I ran an E.R.I.C. (Educational Resources Information Centre) search in July of 1990. I used the following descriptors in as many combinations as possible; curriculum development, sculpture, secondary school, secondary school students and visual arts production. A few articles turn up on the screen, but they dealt with the rationale(s) for teaching sculpture, or the methods used for teaching clay, wood and cardboard sculpture. There were no descriptors listed for fabrics, fiber, material or weaving, so the lengthy E.R.I.C. search I conducted, leads me to believe that there has been little, if any, research done in the area of senior high units in fabric or fabric related sculpture.

During the past year there has appeared to be an interest in fabric artifacts as pieces of art in North America, if one is to judge by the materials and references recently given in Art Education - The Journal of the National Art Education Association, January 1991.

Reviewing the works of art education theorists, who discuss the importance of teaching sculpture as part of the art education curriculum, is a different matter. I have yet to find an art education theorist who would not support the teaching of sculpture as an academic and studio component.

I would suggest that art teachers who are interested in pursuing this line of study should refer to Appendix L - Senior High Reference (p. 133) at the back of the current Manitoba Senior High Art Curriculum Guide. This suggested reading list would not only provide teachers with an overview of current education theories, but would also provide guidance and support to help and encourage teachers to use this curriculum as it was intended.

The only addition that I would make to this reading list would be Laura Chapman's Approaches to Art in Education (1978). I find Chapman's chapter on the teaching of sculptures, pages 285-324, stimulating and challenging. Although this chapter is written for elementary and junior high level art teachers, many of the questions she puts forward, suggestions she makes and approaches to the teaching of sculpture that she exemplifies, can be adopted and adapted for the Manitoba Senior High Art Curriculum.

Conclusion

It is important to look at any art curriculum or programme from the philosophical and theoretical perspective that dictates what goes into a curriculum and from the practical "let's be honest about the situation" perspective of the art teacher.

As an Art teacher I am comfortable with the direction taken by the current Manitoba Secondary School Art Curriculum. It provides the art teacher with a sound philosophical foundation and acceptable strategies for planning, instructing, and evaluating lessons. The apparent weakness in the curriculum guide lies in its assumptions that all teachers are experienced and knowledgeable enough to be able to understand, follow and implement its content.

A close look at what is actually being taught in Manitoba's senior high art classroom would I believe, expose art programmes that are out of date with current philosophies, incomplete with regards to content, under-funded and functioning with inadequate facilities. It is because of these factors, that the expectations this curriculum guide establishes are not being fulfilled.

The teaching of sculpture at the Manitoba senior high level has been neglected. An increased awareness of the health hazards associated with many of the materials traditionally used for teaching sculpture, combined with the ever increasing cost of materials, and equipment, burdened with art rooms that lack proper storage, and ventilation systems, has caused many art teachers to ignore sculpture in the curriculum and avoid it in their classroom.

This situation will not be easy to remedy. We must address these problems and conditions with guided research and offer solutions that are both positive and practical.

It is hoped that the ideas that have been presented in this report of studio research and analysis will encourage art teachers to adopt the use of fabric as a sculptural material for their art classes if one acknowledges the following:

1. Fabrics can be an inexpensive material to purchase and work with.
2. The making of fabric sculptures does not necessitate the purchasing of expensive tools or equipment.
3. There are various techniques that can be used when working with fabrics as a sculptural material.
4. The history of fabrics and the history of human beings are interwoven.
5. Information about artists who work in fabrics can be collected.
6. Fabric sculpture can be produced in any art classroom.
7. Fabrics as a form of sculpture can be incorporated into the senior high curriculum without difficulty.

Recommendations

As a method of improving the teaching of sculpture in the Manitoba school system at the senior high level, I recommend that:

1. Research into the teaching of sculpture be initiated, with the findings being published in professional journals and placed on the agendas at professional conferences.
2. Continued exploration, be undertaken to provide teachers with media and techniques that overcome the problems of cost, equipment, facilities and safety, for the teaching of sculpture.

3. Workshops should be conducted on a regular basis to assist teachers with the implementation of the curriculum, with special emphasis being placed on the teaching of sculpture.
4. There should be advocacy for the teaching of art and sculpture in our schools when ever possible.
5. Teacher training be altered to include more emphasis on the teaching of sculpture.
6. All teachers assume the responsibility for teaching the complete curriculum including sculpture to the best of their ability.

As a method of introducing fabrics as a sculptural material into the Manitoba senior high art programmes I recommend that:

1. Teachers explore the advantages and potentials that fabrics have as a sculptural material.
2. Pass the acquired information along to other teachers via Provincial conferences, publications and exhibits.
3. Request workshops on fabric sculpture within their school division and within the Province.

The inclusion of fabric sculpture in the Manitoba Secondary School Art Curriculum would be one positive step towards improving the quality and quantity of sculpture units being taught in our provincial schools.

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MANITOBA SECONDARY ART CURRICULUM - 1988

APPENDIX I

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

NAME:

DATE:

ASSIGNMENT:

IDEA DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION

- A. Can Expand on Idea Initiated by Teacher
- B. Researches Sources for Idea
- C. Initiates and Develops Idea Independently

COMMENTS:

MEDIA FACILITY

- A. Exhibits Mastery of Techniques and Skills
- B. Explores New Media and Techniques
- C. Applies Appropriate Media to Idea

COMMENTS:

DESIGN

- A. Shows an Understanding of Design Elements and Principles
- B. Explores Design Aspects in Work
- C. Applies Design Consciously in Art Work

COMMENTS:

CRITICISM

- A. Applies Basic Critiquing Techniques
- B. Applies Basic Critiquing Techniques to Own Art and That of Peers
- C. Applies Various Critiquing Techniques and Methods to Art

COMMENTS:

APPRECIATION

- A. Understands How Values and Ideas are Expressed in Visual Art Form
- B. Interprets Symbolic Meaning in Visual Art
- C. Understands Conceptual and Realistic Forms of Expression Along with a Sense of Style

COMMENTS:

ART HISTORY AND CULTURE

- A. Understands How Artists Relate to Themes and Ideas
- B. Becomes Aware of the Social and Political Context of Art
- C. Has a Sense of Historical Progression in Art and is Able to Have a Personal Response to Own Culture

COMMENTS:

INQUIRY PROCESS

- A. Demonstrates a Facility with Basic Techniques
- B. Explores New Methods of Inquiry
- C. Applies Inquiry Techniques Independently When Developing a Project

COMMENTS:

PRESENTATION

- A. Applies Effective Presentation Techniques to Individual Pieces of Art in Order to Impart a Finished Quality to Own Work
- B. Demonstrates an Awareness of Audience and Purpose of Own Work
- C. Demonstrates Knowledge of Display and Exhibition Techniques

COMMENTS: