



*“... I think there is merit in just
‘being.’ Somehow or other the
greatest gift we have is the gift of
our own consciousness, and that
is worth savouring. Just to be in
a place that’s so silent that you
can hear the blood going through
your arteries and be aware of your
own existence, that you are matter
that knows it is matter, and that
this is the ultimate miracle.”*

— Christopher Pratt, artist



Artist *profiles*

Artist *profile*

Fig. 1 Angela Andrew



Angela Andrew – *Tea Doll Designer*

Innu tea dolls have been created by Nitassinan Innu of Quebec and Labrador for over a hundred years. (The earliest collected examples of tea dolls date back to the 1880s.) But today, Angela Andrew of Sheshatshiu is one of the few

craftspeople keeping the tradition alive. She makes as many as 100 tea dolls a year – many of which are sold to art collectors.

Angela learned the art of making tea dolls from Maggie Antoine, a woman from her father's community of Davis Inlet. She learned her sewing skills from her parents, who originally lived a life of hunting and trapping in the bush. Angela played with tea dolls as a child.

She explains that when her family travelled across Labrador, following the caribou and other game, everyone in the family helped pack and carry their belongings - even the smallest children. Because of this, older women made dolls for the little girls and stuffed them with as much as a kilogram (two pounds) of loose tea leaves. Then, when the family needed tea, it was taken from the dolls, and replaced with lichen or moss.



Fig. 2 "Innu Family" tea dolls
By Angela Andrew (2002)

*“Mom was constantly sewing, cleaning, and smoking caribou.
When I finished school and came home, she would say, ‘Come and
sit with me and stretch the caribou.’
Because she couldn’t do it alone
— she saved this work for when
I come home.”*



Angela was born in an Innu camp near Tshiaskusheet (Gull Island) in Labrador. Shortly after she was born in 1946, her father decided to get a job at the American Army Base in Goose Bay so his children could get an education. “Way back then people make everything themselves, like snowshoes, candles, toboggans ...,” Angela remembers. “Mom was constantly sewing, cleaning, and smoking caribou. When I finished school and came home, she would say, ‘Come and sit with me and stretch the caribou.’ Because she couldn’t do it alone — she saved this work for when I come home.”

Angela laughs at the memory, “I didn’t want to do it. I broke my fingernails stretching caribou.” But she always gave her mother a hand with the caribou and other errands like sawing wood and bringing it into the house. “We didn’t have running water or electricity. So when my mother was finished completely doing everything she would sit and sew. I felt so good to see her so relaxed and it felt so peaceful to sew. I wanted to be just like my mother.”

For Angela, making tea dolls is part of celebrating the caribou hunt and remembering the old ways. It was her mother who taught her how to sew and how to stitch moccasins and her father who showed her how to make the leggings that her male dolls now wear. “My father was so patient,” Angela remembers.

Fig. 3 Mother and baby
Provincial Museum, Labrador Interpretation Centre collection

“I decided to try making dolls as a way to encourage younger people to think about their culture,” she says, “about who they are as Innu people, and so that they could be proud of themselves.”

Angela's tea dolls are made of plain broadcloth and filled with loose tea. They have caribou skin faces, hands, and moccasins. She dresses them the way people used to dress up for special occasions like the Drum Dance: The men would wear black pants and white canvas jackets with rickrack on the bottom, and the women wore long dresses with aprons and red caps. “They don't dress up like that any more,” says Angela, “and they don't have drum dances any more. They used to have a special celebration after killing the caribou; the old men play the drum and sing an appreciation song to the animals. People really enjoyed themselves when they sing and dance and they were so happy.”

Preparing the caribou skin for her dolls is a long process. Angela explains: “For my caribou skins, I soak them as soon as we kill the caribou, the flesh comes out so easily, and even the fur, and I scrape it. I take the flesh first, and after I take the flesh back to the water, I put it near the stove for three to four days to tan.

Then I boil the caribou brain and then I cool it. And I throw the caribou hide in the brain and the water, rinse, dry a little bit and stretch it, and then back in the brain liquid and stretch it a little. Then I dry it and hang it on the roof.”

The process requires a very hot fire and lasts as long as a week. The fire is too hot for her to work at home, so Angela tans her caribou hides in a Labrador tent by her cabin in the woods. While she works on her caribou skins, she thinks about her father's father whose name was Maskana. He was a shaman and a great hunter, and lived in Davis Inlet. Angela never met her grandfather, but her father taught his children the legends and wisdom he had learned from Maskana.

Today, Angela is often invited to visit schools and show her tea dolls. When she talks to



Fig. 4 Innu Tea Doll
Margaret Angel collection

the students she tells them the same thing her father told her: “Respect the animal, every animal they have to respect, even fish. And try not to abuse it. People who abuse it think they hurt something and can have problems in the bush. Animals are very spiritual, they know when you abuse them. You can’t kill even a porcupine.”

Angela enjoys teaching about the tea dolls and explains that preserving Innu culture is one reason why she makes them. “I decided to try making dolls as a way to encourage younger people to think about their culture,” she says, “about who they are as Innu people, and so that they could be proud of themselves.”



Fig. 5 Innu Tea Doll



Fig. 6 Innu Tea Doll

“Respect the animal, every animal they have to respect, even fish. And try not to abuse it. People who abuse it think they hurt something and can have problems in the bush. Animals are very spiritual, they know when you abuse them. You can’t kill even a porcupine.”

Try it...

Ask a grandparent or older person to show you how to make or do something that is no longer commonly made or done by hand (for instance, knitting, baking bread, carving, etc.) Share your experience with your classmates.

Reflect...

Think of an item from your childhood that you feel is representative of your culture (even if it is an item from popular culture) that you would like to share with a younger child today.

Artist *profile*



Fig. 1 Émile Benoit

Émile Benoit – *Musician, Composer, Storyteller*

“Faire rire le monde et pis essayer d’mette le monde hereux. C’est euh, c’est ma vie ça ... je me garâcherais à la mer si j’pouvais vous faire assez, vous faire rire. Ouais, ouais. Pis j’sais pas, j’sais pas m’-nager.”

– Émile Benoit

[To make people laugh and to make people happy. That’s my life ... I would toss myself in the sea if it would make you laugh enough. Yep. And I don’t know how to swim.]



Fig. 2 Émile's last album, *Vive la Rose*, was released in 1992

In 1973, a 60 year old fisherman from the Port au Port Peninsula attracted provincial attention in a violin contest in Stephenville. Although he came in second, Émile Benoit would quickly become known as Newfoundland and Labrador's foremost violin player, storyteller, and composer of almost 200 songs.

Émile grew up speaking French. His great-grandfather came to Newfoundland and Labrador from Brittany, France. His mother was an Acadian from Cape Breton. Émile was born March 24, 1913, at Black Duck Brook (L'Anse-à-Canards). He was raised listening to Breton, Acadian, Irish, and Scottish music. An avid storyteller, as well as musician, Émile learned a vast number of tunes and stories from his childhood. His first violin was a wooden toy with no strings, carved by his father. Later, an uncle made stringed violins for him. When Émile was 12, his family gave him his first store-bought violin.

Although Émile was a popular musician and performer on the Port au Port Peninsula, he made his living as a fisher. He began fishing with his father at age nine, after going to school for just three years. Émile's father died when Émile was about 15 years old. This placed Émile in charge of his younger brothers and made him responsible for supporting the family through the inshore fishery.

At age 21, Émile was a married man. His wife, Roseanne, died of tuberculosis after nine years together. Émile raised his four children with the help of his three sisters. When he was 37 years old, Émile married his second wife, Rita, with whom he had nine more children.

By 1973, when Émile competed in the Stephenville music festival, his children were grown up, and he



Fig. 3 Émile performs, c. 1995

Fig. 4

The Waltz in the House Emile Benoit

Inside Pamela Morgan & Andre Wall's newly acquired house in Topsail there was only a chair. Emile sat & composed this



Fig. 5 Émile performs with Rufus Guinchard at the St. John's Folk Festival, 1979

was able to retire from fishing and focus on his music. Although he had retired, Émile's music and stories were drawn from his life as a fisher, farmer, carpenter, blacksmith, dentist, veterinarian, and even midwife. He is remembered as an entertaining performer, who clowned around with his audience and danced with his fiddle.

Émile went on to perform in festivals in New Orleans and Toronto and give shows in France, England, and

Norway. In Newfoundland and Labrador he travelled with "Pistrolis en Atlantique" and recorded with Figgy Duff. In 1979, Émile released his first album, *Émile's Dream*, followed by *It Comes from the Heart* (1982). In 1992, Émile received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council. He died later that year, but up to two months before his death, Émile was still performing on stage, playing his beloved violin and sharing his music.

Fig. 6



‘At 3 o’clock in the morning, I woke up and here was the tune in my mind. So, I got up and I took my violin and I played it. I had no tape recorder so I called my sister and told her that it was an emergency and she had to tape my jig over the telephone because if I went back to bed, I might forget it. So I went back to bed, and sure enough when I got up, the jig was gone. A good thing I called my sister.’

— Émile Benoit describing how he wrote “Émile’s Dream”

Try it...

Think of some titles for a song that could make a good fiddle tune. Explain why it would be a good title and if it would be up-tempo, medium tempo, or slow tempo. Or compose a tune which could be played on the violin. Give your tune a name.

Reflect...

How can music help preserve elements of our culture?

Artist *profile*

David Blackwood – Artist



Fig. 1 David Blackwood

Today David Blackwood is one of Canada's most successful printmakers with his work in significant collections across the country, including the National Gallery. However, when David Blackwood was a teenager, in his hometown of Wesleyville, his studio was a store that his father wasn't using, and his canvas was torn sheets taken from his mother's clothesline (which he blamed the neighbours' goats for eating).

David kept three paintings on display in the storehouse window, and people would stop by to check them out. People in Wesleyville were interested in

David's art because David painted pictures of everything he saw in that community. He even painted people who didn't want their pictures painted. One day, when David got home from school, he learned that one of his paintings had angered the family of the person depicted in it. Hearing that the brother of the man he had painted was on his way over to the store to destroy the painting, David grabbed the family's 12-gauge and ran to his studio. There he removed the painting from the window display and hid it.



Fig. 2 David Blackwood
The Search Party

Purchased by the National Gallery of Canada in 1964, was David Blackwood's first etching.

The brother arrived and knocked on the studio door. When there was no answer, he kicked the door off its hinges. There stood David with the rifle levelled at the angry man.

“Where’s the painting?”

“One more step,” David said, “and I’m going to let you have it!”

“I’m reporting you to the RCMP!” the man yelled, and he turned and walked away.

David waited for the police – he wanted to tell them that the rifle wasn’t loaded. When the police didn’t show up, David put the door back on its hinges, and continued to create pictures about the people around him. With the exception of the one man who broke down the door of his father’s store, David gives the people of Wesleyville credit for respecting his art. He has said that, while there were no artists as role models in Wesleyville, talents were valued, and the people in his community expected him to put his skill to good use.



Fig. 3 David Blackwood For Ishmael Tiller: *The Ledgy Rocks*, 1990, Intaglio Edition: Artist's Proof 6/15

While art trends in the twentieth century were becoming more abstract, David's work became more illustrative. When he was at the Ontario College of Art (1959 to 1963) he produced his first etching, *The Search Party*, based on stories of Wesleyville men lost during sealing expeditions on the Labrador ice. Developed in Italy in the fifteenth century, etching is suited for artists who work with narratives. (For instance, Rembrandt used etching to portray Biblical stories in the seventeenth century.) Etching also attracts artists who like to draw since it is based on lines.

David uses line to show the texture of woolen mitts, and the wrinkles on a sealer's face. His etchings are filled with dark colours that resonate with the hardships that he often portrays and the stories that he tells – whether they are of the resettled island his mother came from or the suffering of sealers caught in a blizzard. Although David also paints and creates monoprints (single prints created by painting on a hard surface like plexiglass, which are then run through a press), today it is his etchings for which he is the most famous.

“My approach to art is one of exploration and discovery. I’m always, as an artist, constantly a student, and learning. You learn through your own explorations and you learn through other people and in my case, sometimes they are half my age!”

– David Blackwood



Fig. 4 David Blackwood
Cape Islanders Waiting
Intaglio, Edition AP, 1967



Fig. 5 David Blackwood
Survivor Wandering
Intaglio, Edition AP, 1969

Try it...

Try sketching a simple line drawing that you think would translate into a good etching

Reflect...

Pick one of David's pieces shown here and create a story to go with the image.

ETCHING

Etchings are created by coating a metal plate with a waxy liquid that hardens to form a thin cover called a ground. Etchers use an etching needle, shaped like a pencil, and draw lines that cut through the ground and expose the plate. Once the drawing is made, the plate is dropped into an acid bath, which bites or etches into the exposed lines (but doesn't hurt the parts of the plate protected by the ground). The printmaker then removes the plate from the bath and cleans off the ground to reveal the image that was etched into the plate by the chemicals.

Next, the printmaker smears ink over the plate and removes the excess with a piece of cheesecloth leaving behind just the ink in the etched lines. The inked plate is then laid on the flat surface (or bed) of a printing press and covered with wet paper and blankets. The plate is rolled under a cylinder, which produces thousands of kilograms of pressure and forces the paper into the etched and inked lines on the plate. When the paper is pulled from the plate, a print of the image has been made in reverse on the paper. Each print pulled from the same plate is numbered and the group of prints is called an edition.

Although modern printing presses are a much faster way to reproduce images, traditional etching produces such beautiful lines and luminous colours that it has remained a popular art form. Furthermore, because the artist hand inks and pulls each print, an etching is considered a valuable original artwork.



Fig. 6 David Blackwood
Fire at Sea
1970, Intaglio Edition: Artist's Proof

Artist *profile*

Robert Chafe – *Playwright*



Fig. 1 Robert Chafe

“Newfoundland. The people who live here. Love.”

– Robert Chafe’s answer to the question, “What inspires you?”

Award-winning playwright Robert Chafe started university with plans to become a doctor, but his career path changed when he saw a one-man show by John Taylor called *My Three Dads*. The show inspired the 21-year-old to write and perform his own comedic monologue. Staged in 1992, *Urbanite* contrasted growing up in the Goulds with yearnings for the big city life. *Urbanite* was followed by a number of acting opportunities, which began to cut into Robert’s class time and ultimately replaced his earlier plans with a new career in theatre.

By the time Robert won the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council Award for Emerging Artist in 1999, he was already becoming popular with audiences for his play writing – although he had originally started writing plays so that he could act. This is not unusual in our province, however, as Robert points out in his essay, “Is Newfoundland Theatre Dead?” published by Riddle Fence. He says that in the Newfoundland and Labrador acting community, most actors work in collaboration and write their own one-man shows and larger company scripts.

Feedback and collaboration are an ongoing part of Robert’s process. It can take as long as eight years from the first idea to the first performance of one of his plays. After that performance the play can still be subject to edits and substantial alterations. Continuing from his first play, Robert’s writing has been closely tied to the performance of his work. This may be the reason why Robert’s plays continue to entertain and surprise his audiences.



Fig. 2 Theatre Newfoundland Labrador’s production of *Tempting Providence* with Deidre Gillard-Rollings and Darryl Hopkins.

Script excerpt from *Tempting Providence*

The following excerpt comes from the beginning of Robert Chafe's play about the life and career of Myra (Grimsley) Bennett, who came to the Great Northern Peninsula on a two-year contract and stayed for the rest of her life.

- - - Characters - - -

- MYRA** Age 31 years at the beginning of the play, which progresses through approximately ten years of her life. Stern, though caring, serious, though quick witted.
- ANGUS** Late twenties at the beginning of the play. Thoughtful, playful, charming, down to earth. The perfect man. A working man. A warm heart and dirty hands.
- MAN** Various distinct male characters, aged fourteen to eighty.
- WOMAN** Various distinct female characters, aged nineteen to eighty.

- - - Setting - - -

Stage should be relatively bare, with limited use of props and costumes. The play is actor-driven. Myra and Angus are constant characters. Man and Woman denote a variety of characters which become self evident in the dialogue and minor stage directions. It is strongly recommended that these characters themselves be actor-driven, and not be reliant on costuming.

All actors should remain on stage unless otherwise noted. While not in a given scene they should be visible, giving focus to the action. It may be desired to have Myra and Angus in constant character, even when not in scene. Man and Woman may be omnipotent, and at times become watchers of the event.

Set and time change should be executed primarily with lighting, if at all. The play is written to move quickly and swiftly through scenes. The text does the work. Pause should only be taken where noted. Fun, fast, playful, and, above all, theatrical.

TEMPTING PROVIDENCE

- - - Act One - - -

ANGUS alone.

ANGUS Who knows the answer to that? A person's inner thoughts like that. It's a forbidden domain. She

was a thoughtful woman, and a private one. So, as for what she was thinking, what was on her mind, who can say. I don't pretend to know everything. Why she decided to stay, was content to stay. Put down roots here, of all places. Here.

MYRA stares out to sea.

MYRA

Daniel's Harbour.

ANGUS

Smack in the middle of three hundred miles of sparsely occupied coast. Daniel's Harbour.

MYRA

Though there is really no harbour at all. The sharp land as straight and fierce as the long horizon that it dutifully stares down. A collection of houses sit at the top, where the grass begins. A collection of people in front of them. Waiting. I am late. What a horrible way to make a first impression. Three weeks late but only as a result of the ungovernable will of God. Pack ice so thick, and a late spring that has meant that my passage north was to be late beyond being fashionable. The stranger arrives to the strange land. On the SS *Home*.

A weak smile.

The *Home* carries the first provisions the area has seen since the autumn. People scramble for the food first, and then later to me for introductions. A long thin hand falls into mine and its loose skin, its thinness, makes me recall that of my grandmother's. A comforting thought on my first day here if not for the fact that this dainty hand is attached to the arm of a forty-year-old man. Many are sick. They will not tell you such, but it is clear enough. Many near starvation. It takes little of my formal experience and training to identify why I have been placed here. It takes no time at all to see a most urgent need for a nurse.

Robert often develops his plays closely with directors Danielle Irvine or Jillian Keily. For instance, his play *Butler's Marsh* (2001) was written to be produced by Irvine, who brought her own touches to the play. The suspense-filled play, which weaves in folk tales from Bell Island, follows a woman's experiences as she spends a night in Bell Island's Butler's Marsh – the same marsh in which her mother had a life-altering experience years before. To increase suspense for the audience, Irvine staged the show outside and encouraged people to sit on stumps and rocks near the actors.

Tying in this province's culture and history is a central part of many of Robert's plays. An example of this is *Tempting Providence* (2002), which he was commissioned to write for the Gros Morne Theatre Festival. This play is about Nurse Myra (Grimsley) Bennett*, who for 50 years was the only medical professional along 320 kilometres of coastline on the Northern Peninsula. Before writing the play, Robert read Nurse Bennett's diaries and history books describing medicine in Newfoundland's outports in the 1920s. He also interviewed people in Daniel's Harbour who had known her, including members of the Bennett family. Myra Bennett's son Trevor helped Robert not only with anecdotes, but also with his mother's speech patterns – what she would say and how she would say it. Robert also invited Trevor Bennett to attend an early reading of the play so he could provide feedback.

Another of Robert's plays, *Émile's Dream* (originally called *Vive la Rose*), was commissioned by and co-produced at the Stephenville Theatre Festival in 2008. This play, which was developed with director/producer Jillian Keiley, centres on the story of Émile Benoit**, the famous fiddler from the Port au Port Peninsula. The play's program lists three characters: Émile 1, Émile 2, and Émile 3.

Here's how the script begins:

Three stools, in dim pools of light.

1, 2 and 3 enter with fiddles in cases. They sit and take out their fiddles. They introduce themselves to the audience. Once they are done, they catch each other's eye and begin to play together. ("Diane's Happiness" and "David's Reel"). At some point, 1 stops playing and, while the others continue, he begins to roll up his sleeves. Once completely done he begins immediately to speak...

Émile 1: They're not as handsome, eh? They're not half as handsome as me, eh?

Émile 2: But you will make do with these few I've left you.

Émile 3: They will play my songs.

Émile 2: And they will speak my stories.

Émile 1: And they will use my words.

Émile 2: And where they cannot...

Émile 3: They will do their best.

In this way, Robert Chafe uses Émile Benoit's words and stories, but shares them between three actors who are all playing the same person. It is this kind of innovative playwriting that keeps audiences flocking to Robert's plays.



Fig. 4 A performance of Robert Chafe's *Vive la Rose* (later called *Émile's Dream*)

Script excerpt from *Tempting Providence*

In this excerpt Myra becomes acquainted with some of the superstitions and folk medicine practices of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Fig. 6 Theatre Newfoundland Labrador's production of *Tempting Providence* with Deidre Gillard-Rollings as Myra and Darryl Hopkins as Angus Bennett.



MYRA I thought myself fully prepared for any emergency, any medical emergency or situation that would, that could present itself here. And yet this place, these people, in all of their glory manage to surprise me. Not in the condition with which they present themselves, not with the illnesses. But with the stubbornness. The sheer stubbornness when it comes to taking care of themselves, with heeding my words. I had not foreseen having to lecture on the contagious nature of the tubercular patient.

Helen begins to breastfeed Marie.

It is like they think, or want to believe, that I am trying to scare them, assert some sort of authority which they assume I have given myself because of my title. Knowledge is, and has been my only authority. More than anything I want to share it. It is often exceedingly difficult to do so.

At the clinic.

ANGUS Nurse?

MAN Nurse?

WOMAN Nurse?

MYRA One at a time. One at a time. Yes?

WOMAN Nurse, warts. Warts Nurse.

MYRA What about them?

WOAMN My grandmother said to rub a bit of meat on 'em and throw it to the dog. That work?

MYRA Yes of course. If by meat you mean

wood file, and by rub you mean saw off. Otherwise you can rub whatever you want for how ever long you want, but the only thing you'll be doing is feeding the dog. Next.

ANGUS Nurse?

WOMAN Nurse?

MAN Nurse?

MYRA Yes?

MAN The wife gets the wicked nosebleeds. She swears to warding it off by tying a green ribbon about the neck.

MYRA Absolutely.

MAN Yeah?

MYRA Just make sure you tie it tight enough.

ANGUS Nurse?

MAN Nurse?

WOMAN Nurse?

MYRA Yes, yes?

WOMAN My youngest got the asthma. Now they says that you should pluck hair from the head, take her height on the wall, put the hair in a hole at just that spot, just at her head height, and plug it up, and once she grows past that hole, the hole with the hair in the wall what was her height, that she'll never have the asthma again. Now. What do you think of that?

Try it...

Create an excerpt from a one-man show which is either a comedic monologue about an event in your life, or a commentary on some aspect of the culture and history of your region or the province. Perform the show for close friends and family.

Reflect...

Why might it be effective to use different actors representing different stages of a person's life in a biographical play? Is this a better way than having the same actor change and age as the play progresses?

Artist *profile*

Marlene Creates – Artist



Fig. 1 Marlene Creates

Marlene Creates is a conceptual artist. Her work explores the relationship between human experience, memory, language, and the land, and how they rely on each other. Using photography as a medium, Marlene will sometimes interact with the landscape and then photograph that interaction. In 1982, for instance, she travelled around the island of Newfoundland, sleeping outdoors. Each morning when she got up, Marlene photographed her sleeping place to show how her being there had changed the land. (See Fig 2 below)

In her series, *The Distance Between Two Points is Measured in Memories, Labrador 1988*, Marlene interviewed Labradorian Elders who were Inuit, Innu, or Metis. She asked these people to draw what she called a “memory map” of how they remembered the environment of their youth. Then Marlene followed these maps to the place each described to photograph it and find an object from the area. The resulting assemblages included a photograph of the person, their memory map, a framed written section of their story in their own words, a landscape photograph of one of the landmarks in the memory map, and an object from that area. (See the next spread for an example from this series.)

“Most of their stories,” Marlene writes, “revolve around a sadness at the loss of nature in their lives, now that they live in communities. The increasing urbanization of the world worries me and it was in meeting these people that I got the greatest sense that something has been lost in

the way we live now. I don’t want to suggest that their lives are romantic; no one would wish that traditional peasant life continue exactly as it was. But these people make sense of their place in nature.”

Between 1989 and 1991, Marlene completed a similar project by interviewing her mother’s relatives from Lewisporte and Joe Batt’s Arm. Having grown up in Montreal, Marlene didn’t know most of the relatives she was interviewing. She found it very moving to hear stories about her family that she had never before heard.

Marlene’s work has also been influenced by ancient standing stones in the United Kingdom, which are similar to Stonehenge. Early in her art practice, she created her own stone installations. (See facing page) Her work focuses on the influence humans have on our environment and investigates how landscapes, in turn, shape human culture.

Fig. 2 Marlene Creates

***Sleeping Places, Newfoundland* (1982)**
Silver Gelatin Print

(below) A view of Marlene Creates’ installation *Sleeping Places, Newfoundland* 1982

(right) An excerpt from this installation.

Medium: a sequence of 25 black & white photographs, selenium-toned silver prints, each framed 51 cm x 61 cm.



“The land is not an abstract physical location but a place, charged with personal significance, shaping the images we have of ourselves.”

Fig. 3 Three pictures from Marlene Creates' installation, *Cairn: Shore Stone and Mountain Stone*, St. John's, Newfoundland 1982, located behind the Arts and Culture Centre, St. John's. Original dimensions: 2.4 m wide x 2.4 m long x 0.6 m high.



A view of the cairn in 1986 after it had been in place for four years.



A view of the cairn in 1986 after a light snowfall.



A view of the cairn in 2002 after it had been in place for 20 years.

What is Conceptual Art?

Conceptual art is about the concept or idea that an artist wants to portray rather than about the creation of an art object that is aesthetically pleasing. One of the first influential conceptual artists was Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968).

Duchamp questioned the role of art. With the invention of the camera, he wondered why one should paint an object when it could be photographed. He theorized that the job of an artist is to create ideas in collaboration with the art viewer rather than just creating an art object. Conceptual art is the contemporary name for art that strives to do this.

Conceptual artists often avoid the traditional art forms of painting or sculpture. Instead, many conceptual artists create installations which bring a viewer through a series of experiences. Conceptual art may include text, photographs, or videos, but in all cases the concept is the art work, not the art object.

“If a work of Conceptual art begins with the question ‘What is art?’ rather than a particular style or medium, one could argue that it is completed by the proposition ‘This could be art’: ‘this’ being presented as object, image, performance or idea revealed in some other way.”

– Tony Godfrey, in *Conceptual Art*, Phaidon Press, London, 1998

Fig. 4 Josephine Kalleo, Labrador 1988

*from the series The Distance Between Two Points is Measured in Memories
by Marlene Creates*

Medium: assemblage of two black and white photographs and one story panel, selenium-toned silver prints; memory map drawn by Josephine Kalleo, pencil on paper; and saltwater grass from Nain.

Installed dimensions: 160 cm high x 152 cm wide, plus floor space.



(Below) Installation view of
Josephine Kalleo, Labrador 1988





I was born here, 1920. That's my home. Really home. Right different now. I miss lots of it. Right changed. When I was small I cooked everything outdoors, outside the house. Not allowed a fire outside now, not here in Nain. Everything gone. Codfish and caplin and bakeapple. Everything gone. I make a little box with that green stuff in the fall. In October. My father's sisters taught me when I was ten years old how to. Grows right alongside the water. The green stuff. I pick them up when they are white. They get that colour. They're green now. It's green in the summer. Called Eveogatsajak in Inuktitut. I pick them up in October and put them in a pillowcase. Make them wet in water, and then sewing that.



Try it...

Think about a place that has been important to you ...

- Draw a memory map of that place.
- Link that memory map with a photograph of that landscape and something that is appropriate to take from that place.
- Have someone take a photograph of you (preferably in that place).
- Write a paragraph explaining what it felt like to be in that place.
- Present all five items in an art presentation in class.

Reflect...

How have you shaped your landscape? How has your landscape shaped you?

Artist *profile*

Barbara Doran – *Filmmaker*



Fig. 1 Barbara Doran

“I got into filmmaking through the back door, as many people do,” says Newfoundland and Labrador filmmaker Barbara Doran. “I got into it as a social activist and a feminist. It was a way of reaching a larger group of people with ideas that I thought were important and changes that I thought should happen in the world.”

Barbara’s first experience with the world of filmmaking occurred when filmmaker Gerry Rogers called her to work as a researcher at the National Film Board (NFB) in Montreal. Barbara had no film experience but, intrigued with the medium, she began taking night classes in filmmaking as she went to work as the assistant director of the NFB’s women’s filmmaking studio.

Soon Barbara was making her own films. Her first works were documentaries, many of which focused on the subjects that had inspired her to be a founding member of the Newfoundland Status of Women’s Council and to advocate for the province’s first shelter for battered women. For instance, in the mid-1980s and early 1990s, Barbara travelled to several developing countries to film the stories of women living there. Her works about this subject matter include *Speaking of Nairobi* (1986) about the Women’s World Conference in that country and the *African Market Women Series*

about female entrepreneurs in East Africa. Another of her films, *When Women Kill* (1994), follows the stories of three abused women who killed their husbands when they felt they had no other option for survival.

In the early 2000s, Barbara returned to St. John’s to enter a new stage of her career. With more than 20 documentaries to her credit, Barbara began work as a producer of *Random Passage* – the biggest budget miniseries ever to be filmed in Newfoundland and Labrador. Barbara says that all film projects begin with “a good story and idea.” With *Random Passage*, she knew that she wanted to film it by the time she was on page 30 of the original novel by Bernice Morgan.



Fig. 2 Barbara Doran and colleagues while filming *Playing the Machines* (2009)

Excerpt from *Still Rowdy After All These Years*

The following excerpt comes from the script for the documentary *Still Rowdy After All These Years*. Produced by Barbara Doran, this film is a biography of Gordon Pinsent's life and career.



Fig. 4 Barbara Doran chats with Gordon Pinsent on the set of *Still Rowdy After All These Years* (2010)

ON STAGE AND AUDIENCE

10:08:21

Rowe

When you were that 15, 16-year-old boy in Gander, did you have a sense that there was something more for you out there? You didn't really have a lot of cards in your deck to play and yet you, you went.

10:08:35

Pinsent

Well, yes. There was always that feeling, I think, of something else. You know, but whether it was the grass is always greener, I don't know. I've always felt I was part of something larger. I just didn't know what that was.

FILM CLIPS

10:08:51

It was 1948 when I left Newfoundland. It was still a country. I immigrated to Canada. When I arrived in Toronto, I only had two bucks left in my pocket, maybe not even that.

BARRY

10:09:04

Barry

What does a young fella do? You go find a place where you can buy a fella a beer. What, you know? A dime of the two bucks you have. And, uh, and promptly was promised a, promised a job at, uh. But it didn't start until the inspectors were coming. Because they didn't really need him.

PHOTOGRAPHS

10:09:20

It was a job mucking out a basement somewhere. So he showed up on the day the inspector was going to be there. They handed him a shovel. He was digging like a mad thing when the inspector showed up.

BARRY

10:09:28

They signed him into the country, walked away. Gordy gave back the shovel and said, "Don't need to be doing that anymore," and off he went.

FILM CLIP

10:09:37

Pinsent

Somebody at an unemployment agency said to me, "And what kind of work do you want to do?"

PINSENT AND AUDIENCE

10:09:40

I said, "Well, I'm an actor." And they (said), "An actor? Well, we can't get you work at that." They said, "What were you before?" And I said, "I was a shepherd."

And they said, "There are not too many sheep in Toronto." Well, that's all right. Well then you're going to have to get me work as an actor.

With co-producer Jennice Ripley, Barbara began to raise money for the project. Although Barbara often writes and researches the scripts for her own documentaries, she contracted Des Walsh to write the screenplay for *Random Passage* and John N. Smith to direct. As Barbara explains, a producer is involved with all of the filmmaking stages. For Barbara, this includes going into the editing suites with her films. “The producer is the first one in who turns on the light, and they’re the last one to leave ...,” she says. “They’re responsible for not only the big picture, but for all the little pixels that make up that big picture.”

Producers also assist the broadcasters or distributors with promotion. This can be tricky, Barbara says, as theatrical distribution is determined by “bums on the seats” and television funding is often determined by “eyeballs on the screen.” This means sometimes the more serious shows are passed over in favour of what broadcasters and distributors think might have a more widespread appeal.

“We live in a world with inane TV – what we call light entertainment,” says Barbara. There’s not a lot of meat on the bones of ... the latest flasher/zombie film dominating the box office. It seems that the bigger, the noisier, the dumber the show, the more people are watching it. But that’s what the broadcasters and the distributors are looking at, so that all questions of national expression are left behind.”

With less money coming from broadcasters and distributors, Barbara fears for the future of documentary and big budget feature films in Canada. Despite these difficulties, Barbara still loves working in film. “I need to wake up every day with a new mountain to climb. I get that in film,” she says. “I like the freedom it gives me and the necessity for constantly coming up with new ideas. I’m stimulated by it, and also I know that if I screw up there’s no one to blame but myself. That’s both scary and rewarding.”



Fig. 5 Barbara Doran and her crew in Trinity, on location for the filming of *Hard Rock and Water* (2005)

Excerpt from *Hard Rock and Water*

Sometimes I feel like a fake Newfoundlander. I have no connection to the fishery, I'm a townie, I've never even been in a dory, my family never fished. I don't even like salt cod.

But I do know that the closure of the cod fishery in the early nineties was the biggest blow we had since confederation. Fishermen didn't just lose their jobs, they lost a way of life; communities lost their reason for being.

Without the cod fishery, Newfoundland went into an economic tailspin. We had to quickly re-invent ourselves, to develop, among other things, a tourist industry based on another natural resource, one we may be able to control.

Tour boat/Icebergs

Tour Operator: Of course these Icebergs come all the way from Greenland...
... a good chance to get some nice pictures.

We've always had a strong cultural identity, a kind of cultural nationalism that has sparked an incredible outburst of energy in the arts; in books, music, dance and theatre.

Trinity Pageant

Pageant Actor: mind your foot coming down here...
... 1579, The NL trade was swelling
... 120 sail ships annually.

Tourists are coming because they've heard about our unique culture. But they're sometimes looking for something that's like a fly in amber. It's the memory of a way of life we once had. It's as if we're afraid to look into the future so we keep coming back to what connects us to the past.

Pamela Morgan playing guitar. Des singing
"It was early next morning..."

The following excerpt comes from the script for Barbara Doran's documentary *Hard Rock and Water*, which "follows Newfoundland writer Lisa Moore on a quest to discover the essence of nationhood."

Des Walsh is a writer, musician, poet, and a good friend of mine. He spends most of his time in a small outpost not far from where his family settled when they arrived from Ireland generations ago.

Des: My family weren't wealthy people, they were destitute ...
Country has absolutely no interest in us whatsoever.

Lisa: the opposite side of that is strong cultural ...

In 1949 we faced the toughest decision of our lives; whether to keep our status as an independent country or to become part of Canada. Joey Smallwood led the campaign promising everything from Baby Bonuses to Old Age Pensions. He won by the skin of his teeth – by four per cent.

Canadian PM: We have reached an agreement ...

With the stroke of the pen, we signed away our nation; The only country ever to do so voluntarily. We signed it away for a slice of bread. In exchange, we gave Canada control over our abundant resources – they got us cheap.

Let's give three lusty cheers for Newfoundland ... Hip hip hurray!

Almost half the population had voted to take back their nation. My Grandfather was one of the thousands who wore black armbands to mourn the loss of their country. That sense of betrayal and the ache of shattered dreams still hangs over this place like a thick fog. There's a lingering sense that we gave up something precious; something we didn't really appreciate at the time.

Try it...

Think of a topic you would like to explore as a documentary. Who would you interview? Write five-ten questions you would ask the interviewees.

Reflect...

What can documentaries tell us about our province? our culture? our heritage?

Artist *profile*



Fig. 1 Damhnait Doyle

Damhnait Doyle – *Songwriter and performer*

They called it a Cinderella story. The head of A&R for a new record label heard her singing, and in under a year Damhnait Doyle was in a recording studio working on her first album, “Shadows Wake Me” (1996). Now, after almost 15 years of working in the music industry, Damhnait (pronounced daw-net) has made four solo CDs, two CDs with the band Shaye, and has recorded her first album, “Tonight Tonight,” with the band The Heartbroken.

Looking back, Damhnait describes working on her first album as a frightening experience. She says it was like working on the same canvas with six other painters, all more experienced than she was, except that somehow she was the one in charge. To be more prepared for her second album, Damhnait took the time to learn how to play the guitar and develop her songwriting skills by working collaboratively with other musicians.



Fig. 2 A young Damhnait in a production of the musical *Cats* in St. John's, 1995

Damhnait's love of performing was evident from a young age – but it took a stroke of luck to start up her career. After high school, Damhnait was disappointed when her application to the National Theatre School was rejected. Instead, she applied to university and got summer work with Duckworth Distribution Ltd. in St. John's. One day, Damhnait was singing while packaging up music for mailing when a visiting music executive overheard her and ended up listening to her demo tape. Before she knew it, Damhnait was signed on as the first artist on Latitude/EMI Music.

*Damhnait has made two trips to sing to Canadian soldiers stationed in Afghanistan and has visited Kenya and Rwanda in Africa to help a group called "The Song for Africa" raise awareness about the AIDS pandemic in that continent.

For Damhnait there are two ways to write songs: the way she writes when she's writing by herself and the way she writes when she's writing for or with another artist. When writing on her own, Damhnait often starts with the lyrics, perhaps drawn from a piece of writing or her journals. Then she works on matching the music and melody to the lyrics. It is much rarer for her to start with some music that she's written before tackling the lyrics. Even then, it has to come back to the lyrics, "because if I'm singing this song I really need to fully believe every ounce of emotion that's in it."

Damhnait acknowledges that, like the name of her new band, The Heartbroken, most of her songs are based on themes of love and the loss of love. Although these themes have remained constant in her songwriting, she adds, "but as I get older my heart breaks for very different things — things I've seen on my travels in Africa and Afghanistan.* So it's as if my heartbreaks are bigger and wider."

Fig. 3

"Signal Hill"

Written by Damhnait Doyle

*It feels a little strange, asking how you've been.
I haven't written in a while, but misery's a funny thing.
I used to lie awake and pray you were the one.
But up on Signal Hill, I'm seeking shelter from the sun.*

Chorus:

*I can see the world from way up here,
where the air is thin and there is no fear.
Once there stood an army here,
but the army it stood still.
Waiting for a sign up on Signal Hill.*

*How you feel I cannot tell,
I see only myself in this well.
Deadman's Pond is bottomless they say.
No one knows how many
love lost souls in there lay.*

(Chorus)

*I lay by this pond holding hearts.
I could have seen this from the start.
Even though it seems you've won,
I know I'll find another one.*

(Chorus)

*Whose eyes will you be looking through
when this letter gets to you?*

Fig. 4 A promotional Christmas card for Damhnait's *Hyperdramatic* album (2000)

damhnait doyle
hyperdramatic

featuring the first single "Tattooed"

Happy Holidays

hyperdramatic card 3 of 4 www.dav-net.com



“I used to keep two books. One was a journal ... (with my) truest, purest, ugliest thoughts and I had another book that I wrote my songs in until I realized that something I had written in my journal was actually a song. So then I just kept the one book. Since that point, all of my lyrics have been completely exposed and honest.”

— Damhnait Doyle on her songwriting

The process of writing collaboratively is a different situation, says Damhnait. “When I am writing a pitch for another artist, or for television, I meet my co-writer in a room at 10 in the morning and leave at six that night with a brand new song, completed, and often recorded. It’s more of a thinking job than a feeling job.”

Although Damhnait doesn’t always get to meet the performer for whom or with whom she is writing, she prefers to get to know the artist if she can. For instance, when she learned she was going to co-write a song with Canadian Idol finalist Rex Goudie, they sat down, chatted, and got to know each other. During this time, and unbeknownst to Rex, Damhnait began to write down key things Rex was saying and these turned into the bulk of the lyrics for the song “Like I Was Dying.”

Damhnait says she also really loves working with newer artists. “I started out so young, and I couldn’t say what I wanted ... I didn’t have the musical vocabulary. So I want to help younger artists write a song that is 100 per cent them, as opposed to me going in and trying to imprint on them what they have to say.”

In addition to writing songs with another individual,

Damhnait also has experience with writing songs collaboratively within a band. For seven years, Damhnait was a member of the band Shaye with Kim Stockwood and Tara MacLean and had huge success with their song “Happy Baby.” Throughout the years they continued to write songs together, tying in their varying and eclectic musical influences and were very aware during the process to try and represent each singular voice, while maintaining the sound of the group. Damhnait is also enjoying writing with her new band members in The Heartbroken: Blake Manning, Stuart Cameron, and Peter Fusco.

“We are writing as a unit, but it’s still a very singular experience in that we were all united towards the one goal musically and all on the same page. It’s more like following a very natural progression, with no roadblocks,” she says.

“I just love these songs and think that they’re the best thing I’ve ever done but when I look back, I think, ‘that’s what I thought with every album!’” Damhnait laughs and then becomes reflective. “Each of the records that I’ve made is a snapshot of that point in time. You take the snapshot and pass on as soon as that moment is gone. But I’ve realized that it’s okay to change and to continue that path of searching.”

This song is about the life of Romeo Philliom who was falsely convicted for the stabbing of a firefighter and ended up spending 31 years in an Ontario prison.

*Some guys, they bring flowers
some send cards
gonna tell them I'm a killer
maybe spend a night behind bars*

Fig. 5 An excerpt from “31 Years,” a song by The Heartbroken (Damhnait Doyle, Stuart Cameron, Blake Manning, Pete Fusco)



Fig. 6 Damhnait Doyle, backed by Cape Breton fiddler Ashley MacIsaac, performs at the 2008 East Coast Music Awards.

Try it...

Write several journal entries which express your thoughts on one or more of the following themes:

- love
- personal loss
- your feelings on a heartbreaking issue or problem in the world today

Using one of these journal entries for inspiration, compose the lyrics to a song. Share the lyrics with friends and family.

Reflect...

Make a list of either your favourite love songs or songs that deal with heartbreak. Consider what it is about these songs that appeals to you.