

MAGazine

A PUBLICATION OF THE METAL ARTS GUILD OF CANADA

FALL 2004



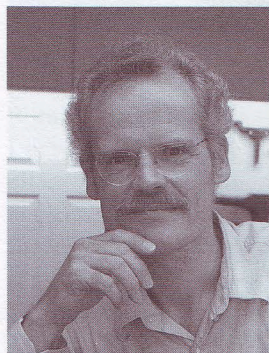
THE PEARL

**Janis Kerman, Sarabeth Carnat, Van McKenzie, Shelley Gaffe, Wesley Harris,
Tony Leung, Costin and Gabriela Lazar, Mo Ying Chan**

**Ken Vickerson, Joan Irvin, Mathew Nuqingaq, Meet the Jurors, Book Reviews,
Win a Ticket, Business Tip**

THE PEARL

Wesley Harris



Wesley Harris

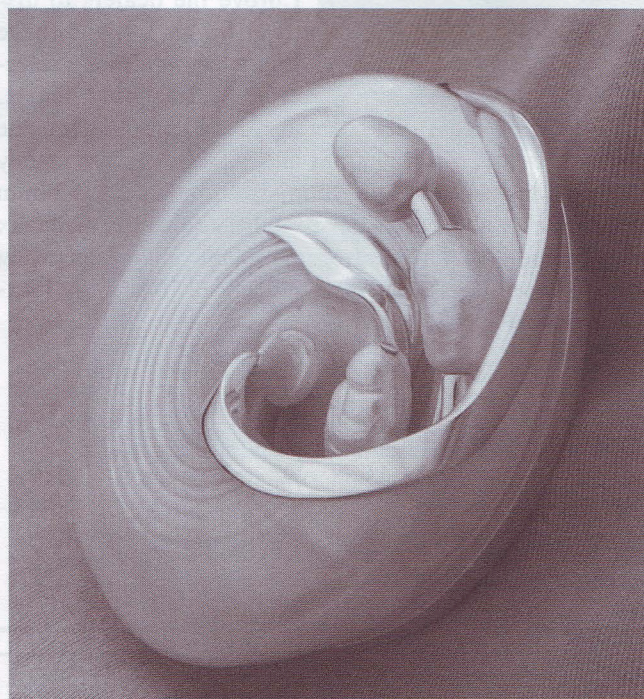
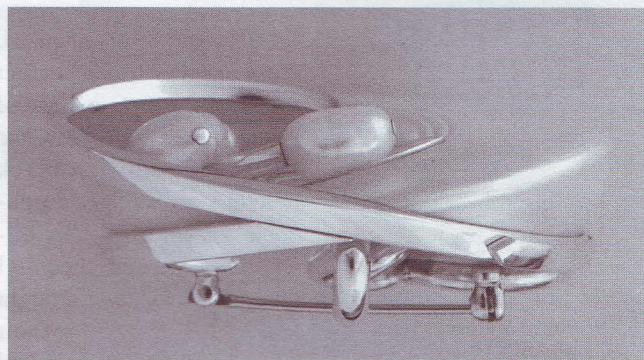
The Peace Pearl was commissioned by the Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2003 as part of their 30th anniversary celebration. The finished piece was featured on promotional materials for the 30th annual St. John's craft fair, and was also used as a fundraiser at both the Corner Brook and St. John's fairs. The only stipulation given by the Craft Council was that the object to be made must contain one or more pearls.

My own experience with the Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador over the years has been totally positive. When asked to create a piece in celebration of this organization, I simply wanted to respond with something very beautiful. Then I happened upon this lovely pearlescent shell (at Sassy Beads in Ottawa, of all places!) and I just wanted to let its own beauty speak.

The full shell was conical in shape and spiralled down to a point. I decided to cut across the cone near its widest and to use the open end of the spiral. The lovely 3-D cavity was the perfect place for a spray of pearls as if growing from within. I set three freshwater pearls (each symbolic of one decade) on sterling wire "stems". Along with a single leaf, this little bouquet was riveted both to the metal framework at the back and directly to the shell itself through the leaf.

The finished piece pleases me. I like the subtle white-on-white of pearls and shell and sterling silver. Technically, it was an experiment in stone setting where the metal was carefully fit and riveted directly to the shell. The challenge was to carefully shape the contours in the metal to perfectly match those of the shell. And, there was a certain amount of breath-holding while riveting right onto the shell! But all the patience and precision paid off.

I usually do not name my work. When the Craft Council asked me for a title, I simply said that I had always referred to it as "the pearl piece". We agreed to alter the spelling to read "pearl peace", but somehow it came out in print as "Peace Pearl". It really did not matter. I still prefer to let the work speak for itself.



The Peace Pearl

Wesley Harris received an MFA in Metalsmithing from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1981. After graduation, he worked with Lunt Silversmiths as a silver designer until 1985. Since 1986 he has freelanced as a jewellery artist and metalsmith. Wesley is also the stay-at-home parent of two lovely daughters. Together with his wife, Margaret, he lives and works in western Newfoundland. He may be reached at wesleyharris@nf.sympatico.ca