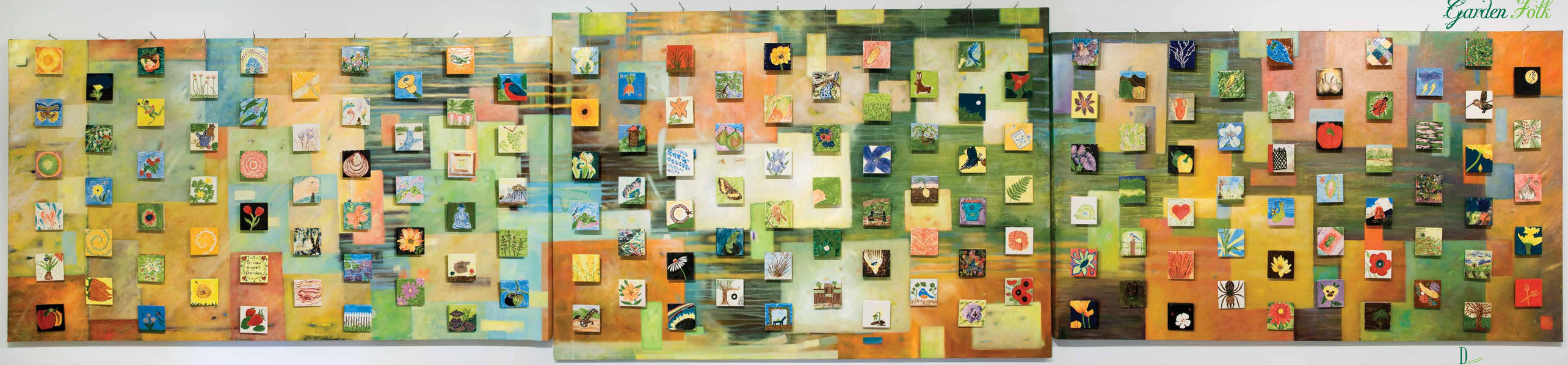
Garden Folk



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Art, is a harmony parallel to nature

Paul Cezanne

L'art fait ressortir les grandes lignes de la nature
(For nature, as we know, is at once without and within us)
Antoine Bourdelle

The garden has enriched my spirit and given me the means and the meaning to express myself
Victor Cicansky

It is well known that Regina 'folk' have a passion for gardening. *Garden Folk* celebrates the Regina love affair with gardening. It also acknowledges the many benefits of art and gardening, and their ability to nourish body, mind and spirit. "The garden as a metaphor for creating a place of sanctuary and healing has been utilized for centuries."[1] Gardens can be "metaphors for or points of departure to understanding history, politics and our relationship to nature."[2] *Garden Folk* is a collaborative health and social service project designed to promote awareness of how gardening and the visual arts can empower healing and social change. These in turn can contribute to the psychological and spiritual well being of community.

Local artists in the exhibition include Victor Cicansky, Gerri Ann Siwek and Donna Krielke. This exhibition also features the work of Artist-in-Residence Bonnie Chapman and 46 studio artists from her *Creativity for Health* Program at the Pasqua Hospital. Bonnie Chapman and the 46 artists collaborated to create a spectacular large mural entitled *Prairie Breeze in the Garden*, developed between March and June, 2008. The studio group includes oncology, palliative, mental health, and acquired brain injury patients and their families. Victor, Gerri Ann and Donna visited the artists in the Hospital in March and talked to them about how gardens inspired their visual art practices.

A further component of this exhibition is the *Garden Folk* Healing Garden planted at the north entrance to the Sherwood Village Library. Home Depot Regina generously donated plants, shrubs, flowers, labour and technical expertise towards the planting of this garden. The garden-planting activity included the participation of artists Victor Cicansky and Gerri Ann Siwek, the Saskatchewan Candlelighters, and Bonnie Chapman and studio artists from the *Creativity for Health* program at Pasqua Hospital. The Dunlop Art Gallery was also pleased that the *Garden Folk* Healing Garden could be featured in the 2008 *Regina Secret Gardens Tour* organized by New Dance Horizons over the July 19/20 weekend.

For *Garden Folk*, Victor included clay sculptures, particularly three new works, *Garden Shovel*, (2008) *Armchair Tomato*, (2008) and *Armchair Cabbage*, (2008). His sculptures are inspired by his Romanian immigrant upbringing surrounded by gardens. Gerri Ann has submitted a series of four paintings depicting colourful flowers, birds and objects, such as an English teacup in *Remembering Roses* (2008). Gerri Ann's paintings explore the sentimental, supernatural and magical connection between flowers and the body, mind and spirit.[3] Three of Donna's watercolours based on vines, leaves, plants and Saskatchewan wheat, such as *Symbiosis The Language of Grains: Trail Mix– wheat, flax and wild oats* (2005) are also in the exhibition. Her works express the natural cycle of life with exceptional clarity, brilliance and precision.[4]

Garden or horticultural therapy has been around for a long time. Horticultural therapy is the use of plants by a trained professional as a medium through which certain clinically defined goals may be met. Therapeutic horticulture is the process by which individuals may develop well-being using plants and horticulture. Although the physical benefits of garden therapy have not yet been fully realized through research, the overall benefits are almost overwhelming.

Pasqua Hospital has recently installed a garden at the front entrance to their building as they recognize the importance and power of providing a garden 'retreat' where patients can relax and have time to be comforted by nature. *The Healing Gardens* at Alberta Children's Hospital in Calgary is an outdoor space where children and their families, staff, and visitors can wander, explore and experience the therapeutic benefits of a healing, horticultural environment. The gardens provide a private area for reflection and discovery away from the hospital setting to regain a connection with nature. Each garden has a unique design that allows children and families to explore nature in its various forms using interconnecting pathways. The Garden Therapy Program at Central State Hospital in Milledgeville, and in regional hospitals in Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Rome, Thomasville and Savannah in the United States have been helping people for over 40 years through gardening activities known as social and therapeutic horticulture.

Bonnie Chapman's *Creativity for Health* program brings art-making experiences to Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region patients, family members and staff through a mind, body, spirit approach at bedside and in the studio environment. Bonnie acts as a guide, offering participants the opportunity to be engaged in the creative process as an antidote to the anxiety, boredom, pain, depression, stress and isolation that are often part of the institutional experience. The program has been operating at Pasqua Hospital since March 2004. With the support of the Saskatchewan Arts Board, Bonnie is Saskatchewan's first Artist-in-Residence at Pasqua Hospital. Her *Creativity for Health* program has benefited over a thousand people in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region hospitals. Bonnie's creative, intuitive and compassionate nature has engaged the hands, heads, hearts and souls of people living with various afflictions and their families in creative expression in the hospital studio and at bedside. The focus of *Creativity for Health* is bringing beauty into the space around us, connecting and celebrating community, and nourishing the spirit. Hundreds of "non- artists" have expressed gratitude through their testimonials of experiencing the healing journey of self-discovery and well-being that is enhanced through rediscovering their creative source.[5]

Thus, *Garden Folk* has brought two unique forms of healing agents together for the first time through the assistance of Bonnie Chapman and her artists at Pasqua Hospital: that of the creative expression of the arts, and the restorative qualities of the garden. Additionally, this unique project is the first time that the Dunlop Art Gallery and the Regina Public Library have partnered with an Artist in Residence Program at a hospital in order to support a transformational community health project.

It is clear to me that all of these artists bring their own autobiographies to their work – direct, personal experiences with life, with the garden. Whether it is a ladybug, a watering can or a bird on a glazed, ceramic tile, Bonnie's prairie topography, Gerri Ann's red poppy, Vic's green cabbages or Donna's labyrinth vines, each person has a story to tell, and through their work, we as the audience are privileged to partake in these memories, dreams and histories. When I read some of the touching artist statements of poetry and prose composed by the artists at Pasqua Hospital regarding their experiences in the *Garden Folk* project, I gain a sense of the individual portrait. Seen together as a whole in their one magnificent mural, I see a powerful community garden that transcends and provides hope, and that draws sustenance from their very proud sense of place.[6]

— Amanda Cachia
Director/Curator, Dunlop Art Gallery

1 Stewart, Gwen Nyhus, *The Healing Garden: A Place of Peace* (Regina, SK: Nyhus Stewart Publishing, 2004), xi.

2 Smith, Valerie, *Down the Garden Path: The Artist's Garden After Modernism* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 2005), 11.

3 Gerri Ann Siwek artist statement

4 MacKenzie Art Gallery label text, 2007 Art Auction

5 Bonnie Chapman statement

6 Kery, Don, *The Garden of Art: Victor Cicansky, Sculptor* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), 81.

Donna Krielke *Cycle of Life*, 1979

Victor Cicansky *Soft Sex*, 2007

Gerri Ann Siwek *Remembering Roses*, 2008

Gerri Ann Siwek *Birds in the Garden of Dahlias Again*, 2008

Donna Krielke *Symbiosis The Language of Grains: Trail Mix– wheat, flax and wild oats*, 2005

COVER
Mural collaboration by 46 studio artists and Bonnie Chapman, *Prairie Breeze in the Garden*, 2008

< some of the artists from the *Creativity For Health* studio, Pasqua Hospital

Statement by Bonnie Chapman and the *Creativity For Health* studio artists, Pasqua Hospital, Regina

We began
as a mineral. We emerged into
plant life
and into animal state, and then into
being human,
and always we have forgotten our
former states,
except in early spring, when we
slightly recall
being green again.
— RUMI

Help is to be the always
hopeful
gardeners of the spirit
who know that without darkness
nothing comes to birth
as without light
nothing flowers.
— MAY SARTON

These poems have inspired our contribution to the *Garden Folk* exhibition. *Prairie Breeze in the Garden* is a large mural for the thirty-two foot west wall of the Dunlop Art Gallery. It consists of three horizontal acrylic paintings on canvas by Bonnie Chapman, an aerial view of the plotted, pieced-fold, pied landscape of Saskatchewan with the sun's morning through evening light moving across the paintings. Painted, glazed and fired ceramic tiles by the 46 studio artists with imagery inspired by gardens are suspended with fishing line just slightly in the front of the paintings and at various heights. These sway as if being softly blown in the breeze. Bold and colorful flowers, vegetables, native plants, patterns in nature, light, rain, rainbows, birds, animals, bugs, garden gates, compost and ponds are some of the images that have been created as healing symbolism, archetypes and rituals of the garden.

Mural Participants
Myrna Tallon | I. M. Liminal | Mahaila Scott | Alida Scott | Chris Sait | Linda Sanftleben | Patrick Watson | William Dintu | Becky Canham | Candace Weimer | Philemena Sali | L. Joan Beirnes | Karen Herrior | Kate Herrior | Rick Leng | Melody Crick | Lenore Huber | Jennifer Hurford | Connie Baker | Ida Donovan | Desiree Vilness | Myrna Young | Susan Sameta | Linda Hebert | Terry Daly | Linda Smuk | Beverly Illaiq | Rebecca Illaiq | Sandra Greenough | Tom Chambers | Dorothea Schrader | Gloria Liscykinski | Valerie Monteyne | Mary Lou Koethler | Charlene Sullivan | Linda Bulmer | James Bulmer | Tom Ferrier | Barbara Macdonald | Joy Sallans | Glenda Nischuk | Susan Neden | Donna Oltean | Sandy Gulka | Trudy Signeth | Gwen Windsor

Saskatchewan Candlelighters planting the Healing Garden at Sherwood Village Library

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Bonnie Chapman for her extraordinary vision as the consultant for the project; Victor Cicansky, Donna Krielke & Gerri Ann Siwek; Saskatchewan Candlelighters; Dunlop staff: Dr. Elizabeth McLuhan, Jeff Nye, Joyce Clark, Corey Bryson, Sonia Parra; Rob Bos & Randal Fedje; Margaret Bessai, Laura Koroluk, Janell Ranae Rempel, Jessica Riess; Sherwood Village library staff, particularly Branch Head Pamela Johnson; Bill Lawson & Barry Schier; Robin Poitras & guests, New Dance Horizons; Saskatchewan Arts Board, Canada Council for the Arts, Community Initiatives Fund, Government of Saskatchewan Department of Tourism, Parks, Culture & Sport, Shawn Kamitsky & Tracy Brooks from Home Depot. Last but not least, I wish to convey personal, heartfelt thanks to all the wonderful 46 artists from Pasqua Hospital. Your garden imagery has moved and inspired all of us.

Bonnie Chapman

was born in 1958 in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. She is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan with a major in Fine Arts (B.Ed.1980). She also studied at the Pilchuck School of Glass, Seattle, Washington (1985). Bonnie has traveled, painted, and taught in Canada, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, the US, South Korea, India, and England (1981-2003). Bonnie founded "Creativity for Health", Saskatchewan's first community arts program for patients and caregivers in a healthcare setting. Bonnie has lectured on Art and Healing in Canada and the US (2004-2008). Collections include Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II, Victoria Hospice Society, and Governor Yokomichi of Hokkaido among others in Canada, US, Europe, and Japan.

Victor Cicansky

was born in 1935 and raised in Regina, Saskatchewan. He is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan (B.Ed. 1964), the University of Regina (B.A. 1965) and the University of California at Davis (M.F.A. 1970). In 2007, Victor received an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the University of Regina. He has taught at the University of Regina, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, University of California at Davis, and the Banff School of Fine Arts. He is the recipient of many grants and awards. Cicansky has had many solo and group exhibitions across Canada, the US, Japan and Europe. He is represented in many major public and private collections, including the Saskatchewan Arts Board and the National Gallery of Canada.

Victor Cicansky *Sunkissed Orange Shovel*, 2007

New Dance Horizons performing at the opening reception of *Garden Folk* at Sherwood Village Library

Donna Krielke

was born in Regina, Saskatchewan, in 1945. She graduated from the University of Regina with a BA in Fine Arts (1969) and further trained in Directed Studies at Montreal's Concordia University in 1970. She has 25 years experience teaching watercolour to students of all ages, and has been an instructor in oil and watercolour painting for the Department of Extension, University of Regina, and has instructed painting at Bishops University Summer School (Quebec) and University of Saskatchewan Emma Lake Campus. Her work is in many public and private collections, including Sask1, City of Regina, Saskatchewan Arts Board, CBC, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Dunlop Art Gallery and the Mackenzie Art Gallery.

Gerri Ann Siwek

was born in 1951 in Hamilton Ontario. She studied at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto and the Art Students League of New York. In 1980 she moved to Regina and began creating and exhibiting art while also working as a graphic artist and as an arts educator. She studied Adult Education at the University of Regina. Gerri Ann has received numerous grants and awards and her imaginative and often humorous works of art are included in private, civic and provincial collections. In 1998 Gerri Ann Siwek created the *Fanamena Mobile Museum of the Weird and Strange*, a traveling museum on wheels featuring 13 exhibits, a souvenir shop and a tour guide. In April and May of 2007, Gerri Ann was a visiting artist and arts educator in Verona, Italy.

Garden Folk installation views

List of Works

All measurements are in centimeters
Height precedes width precedes depth

Bonnie Chapman
Mural collaboration by 46 *Creativity For Health* Studio Artists, & Bonnie Chapman, Artist in Residence, Pasqua Hospital Regina

Prairie Breeze in the Garden 2008
165 painted and glazed ceramic tiles & acrylic on canvas,10 x 10 each (tiles), 120 x 617.5 (canvas)

Victor Cicansky
Potted Corn 1994
clay, glaze
37.5 x 20 x 20

Garden Shovel 2008
clay, glaze
20 x 60 x 30

Armchair Tomato 2008
clay, glaze
15 x 17.5 x 17.5

Armchair Cabbage 2008
clay, glaze
15 x 17.5 x 17.5

Green potted cabbage 1996
clay, glaze
25 x 27.5 x 25

Green potted cabbage 1996
clay, glaze
25 x 27.5 x 25

Red potted cabbage 1996
clay, glaze
25 x 27.5 x 25

Donna Krielke
Cycle of Life 1979
watercolour on paper
50 x 50

Symbiosis The Language of Grains: Trail Mix– wheat, flax and wild oats 2005
watercolour on paper
55 x 75

Trilogy
watercolour on paper
201.25 x 55

Gerri Ann Siwek
Remembering Roses 2008
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 60

Poppied Dreams 2008
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 60

A Tulip Narrative 2008
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 60

Birds in the Garden of Dahlias Again 2008
Acrylic on canvas
190 x 100

THIS CATALOGUE *is dedicated to the memory of* Sandra Greenough, Rick Leng and Myrna Tallon.

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Garden Folk
July 19 – September 28, 2008
Sherwood Village Gallery
Curated by Amanda Cachia

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