

# The spirit of Nova Scotia

Tradition folk art shows

by Janice Bloomfield

**T**he essence of a place is its people; their essence, the work of their hands.

This is the message of "Spirit of Nova Scotia", an exhibit showing at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, featuring traditional

decorative folk art of 1780-1930. Curator Richard Henning Field brings far more than aesthetic artifacts to this display. Currently finishing his Ph.D. with Dr. Michael Cross of Dalhousie, Field promotes a new method of research which focuses on material culture, a method placing folk art in its historic and cultural setting.

Expanding on this methodology, Field explains Westerners' response to the textiles, one of four divisions featured in the exhibit. Saskatchewan Mennonites quickly identify the coverlets and quilts of Lunenburg County as German, even though the weave or design might be distinct from their own.

Similarly, questions in Saskatoon, Calgary, Victoria, Winnipeg, and Toronto about the carved decoys point to yet further Nova Scotian distinctives. No other area in Canada boasts Mergansers. Few Western hunters understand the concept of confidence birds, such as sea-gulls, which attract other birds to "safe" feeding grounds.

To Field, these are just two examples of how a physical, material artifact leads to the provenance, or place of origin. The

function of an object defines a region, its decoration, a specific tradition or community. "So", says Field, "if I found a Merganser in a shop out West, I could almost bet that its origin is here in Nova Scotia. Carving techniques don't change from region to region, but the birds, their uses, and types of wood all do."

And his approach transforms. The gallery's roomful of what are otherwise antiques relaxes with a sense of hominess. Hooked

rugs recall country farmhouses. Carved decoys shape in weathered hands. Sailors keen homewards with seashell valentines. Each artifact, whether it be of the textiles, sculpture, paintings, or decorated utilitarian objects, brings to life Nova Scotian history.

"Spirit of Nova Scotia: traditional decorative folk art 1780-1930" fills both upper and main galleries of Art Gallery Nova Scotia, 6152 Coburg Road, until December 6.



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Material culture: a method of placing folk art in its historic and cultural setting.

Gilmour and Pink Floyd have

## 'A Momentary Lapse of Reason'

by Peter Wegemer

**H**ello, and welcome to "Which One's Pink", a show that attempts to piece together the fragmented legacy of Pink Floyd in the '80s. I'm your host, David Waters. Before analysing the Floyd album, *A Momentary Lapse of Reason* . . . er . . . *Reason*, let's flash back to 1983, a year of turmoil for Pink Floyd.

With the release of '83's *The Final Cut*, a chasm opened up within our aging "No-Wave" friends. Guitarist and vocalist David Gilmour felt the album only contained three or four good songs, and the rest was depressing filler. The building conflict between Gilmour and vocalist, lyricist, and bassist Roger Waters, led to the inevitable solo projects. Water released *The Pros and Cons of Hitchhiking*, an album Pink Floyd passed up in order to record '79's *The Wall*. Smart decision, boys. Gilmour countered with solo album number two, *About Face*, which contained two Pete Townshend songs.

Welcome back to 1987. Waters has released *Radio KAOS*, and has received a (gasp)

hit for his troubles with "Radio Waves". The pressure was on Gilmour. Could he handle it? We now know the answer. *A Momentary Lapse of Reason* is a mixed bag of tricks that shows Gilmour remembering his Floydian roots and occasionally stepping into the '80s.

"Signs of Life", the instrumental which begins the album, is reminiscent of "Shine On you Crazy Diamond", Part 1, from '75's *Wish You Were Here*, and contains some fluid guitar work by Gilmour. Of the three instrumentals on the album, this one is by far the best. "Round and Around" is only about a minute and a half long and follows the cinematic gem "Yet Another Movie", and "Terminal Frost", despite its frenzied sax solo and Joe Jackson-like compositions, is nice but not overly breathtaking; good driving music, though.

"Learning to Fly" could be the best Floyd single since "Money" from 1973's *Dark Side of the Moon*. Despite being "an earth-bound misfit", Gilmour is "a soul in tension that's learning to fly, condition grounded but determined to try". A sense of optimism surrounds this song,

suggesting Gilmour is ready to accept the challenge of Pink Floyd without Waters. Another stand-out song on the album is "One Slip", which sounds like a cross between Gilmour's solo career, Peter Gabriel, and the latest King Crimson lineup. It is obvious to see how replacement bassist Tony Levin has influenced Gilmour. "On the Turning Away" wouldn't have sounded out of place on *The Final Cut* and "Sorrow" has some amazing soloing that overshadows the obviously depressing lyrics sug-

gested by the title.

There are tiny cracks in the Floyd armour, however. "The Dogs of War", despite some great lyrics and fine vocals, doesn't really go anywhere, and "A New Machine" Parts 1 and 2 remind me of Yes and their pompous art-rock doodlings. Thank God these vocoder-laden songs are short. They can be tolerated, but I recommend no more than one listening per day.

Final verdict: *A Momentary Lapse of Reason* is a fine David Gilmour solo album and a pretty

good Pink Floyd album. Floyd fans shouldn't worry, because I feel Waters will return for a farewell Floyd project within the next four years. Wouldn't you? For the time being, *A Momentary Lapse of Reason* is like the long, black Cadillac limo you have rented many times before. You know the ride you're getting, and despite the minor bumps along the way, you know you got your money's worth and you'll come back again. This is David Waters, Floyd reporter. See you again in 1991!

