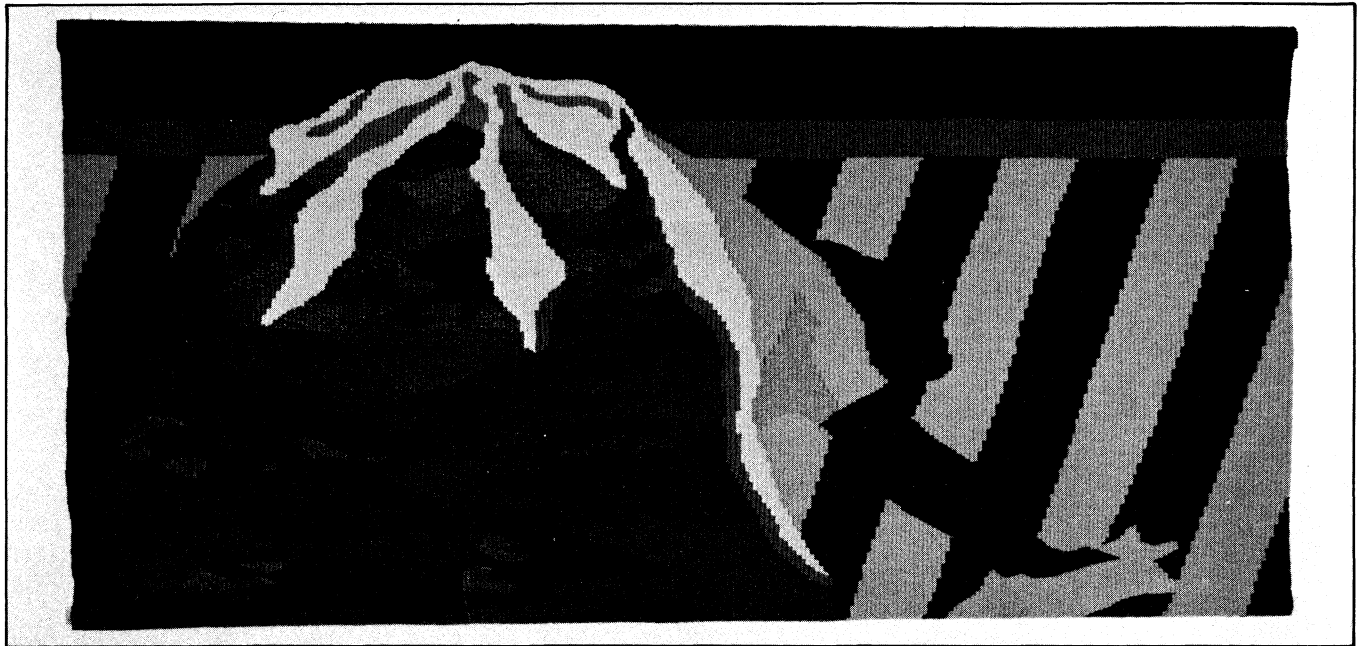
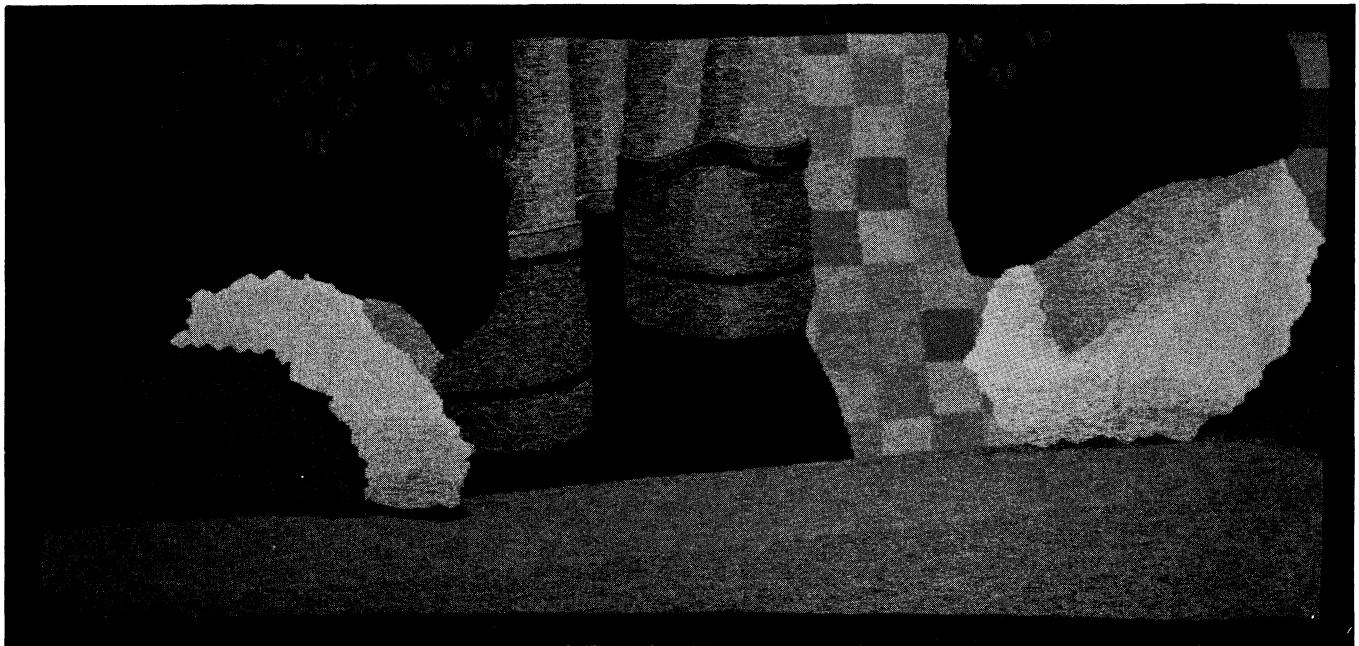


SUSAN A. KELLY:



1



2

WEAVER

La belle-soeur de l'artiste soumet un ouvrage qui décrit les luttes d'une femme désirant se faire une carrière.



3

A Sister (In-Law) Writes. . .

Dear Editor,

Being as I am a stranger to 'written' art, this submission comes more from a belief in the politics of women, than a love of writing. Susan E. Kelly is my sister-in-law of ten years now and I have watched her gain a political analysis of what is happening to herself and her art.

It seemed to me that many other women artists must be going through the same kinds of problems that Susan has and that the Canadian Woman Studies Journal was a very appropriate magazine in which to share those experiences.

Susan also wrote a poem about what it's like sitting in her studio, which I have enclosed.

Yours truly,

*Susan A. Kelly
Toronto, Ontario*

Studio Life

Safe envelope tho' not sealed
promotes concentration
sheltering, a bubble home
to sigh and never mind
begin the dance
address the loom
sit down

Image progress too slow going
attention sifting drifting
wool spools spilling
paint chipped floor boards
bruised grey meets tweed
kind of like to see it bleed
startling miracle.

Another world beyond my door
pictures hanging black and white
people talking come and go
some one darts in pass me quickly
flicking lights on Mars.

Softer here, other side, alone
colour comforts an effort made
you can read one from their rooms
tell tale signs
music between lyric lines.

Dick Tracy, Sue Coe, Mrs. Reinhardt
cow's skull, jaw bones separate
some cryptic latin on the wall
pale pine boards
imposing structure bolted down
rows of nails, shiny, bent.

Heavenly light
the room is white
no more coffins
I'm in the show (slow) room.

Black pipe pumps heat up
my red bag hanging
lines of twine
tension holding wool packed tight.

Tape deck tunes
rainbow houses and acrid smells
hold my breath or should I yell
wind is howling windows rattle
train tracks, cannon blasts
Bow wow.

Swiss knife open, tiny scissors tucked inside
I'm inside
under pressure
snap out make fingers move
pluck at warp key of g
tune back in to tapestry.

Susan (E.) Kelly



4

It has been six years since Susan E. Kelly finished weaving *Plum Pudding/Washer Woman*. That tapestry marked the turning point of her political appraisal of design. If the figure of a woman is in a tapestry, what does that say about women? Is she symbolic of all women? If Susan made her skin white then she would, in effect, be saying, 'This experience is valid only for white women.' In the end, the decision was to make her green, thereby avoiding the negation of other skin colours.

Through the years, this discussion broadened to which sex to emphasize. Did she want to 'celebrate' the male gender or the female? She wanted to celebrate them equally and the people in her tapestries are,

for the most part, androgynous.

Many of the tapestries are extreme close-ups of bodies, usually in action. Although Susan's designs are a form of realism, the viewer's own perception completes the image. It is up to the viewer to decide whether the body is male or female.

These internal arguments are necessary for the development of Susan's designs. They are also affected by external influences that she had to overcome. As an equal partner in marriage, Susan had to set aside her art to pursue a part-time job to help support the family. And weaving in spare time does not produce work of a professional standard. Neither does it allow a woman to become an established artist. Susan found she had to devote

herself entirely to her weaving, in order to produce a satisfactory piece of work.

It has taken Susan six years to develop enough confidence to establish weaving as a meaningful activity in her marriage. Now that she has defined herself as an artist first, she gets all the respect and support she needs as a weaver and as a wife.

Photos and Artwork by S.E. Kelly

1 *Plum Pudding/Washer Women*, 1976

2 *Point of View*, 1980

3 Detail, *Bargaining*, 1981

4 *Swing*, 1980