



Lynette Sarah Plett, detail, "A Mennonite 'Grecian' Vase," quilted wall hanging, 2007.

Freda, and Mary—in the kitchen and in the garden.

The intricately painted images on the small flask make visible Grecian women's wool work in ways that Mennonite women's farm work has seldom been recorded. The artist who painted these images honoured the importance of women's everyday work by documenting it in such a way that the evidence of it remains thousands of years later.

In a creative and revisionist act, in place of the images depicting Grecian women's wool work, I machine embroidered an image of Mennonite women's farm work—two women bracing themselves against the wind, hanging clothes to dry.<sup>4</sup>

Using an art form I inherited from my Mennonite foremothers—quilting—I create an artifact that supplements the often short-sighted memory of historical records. "A Mennonite 'Grecian' Vase" honours the everyday work of my foremothers. It recovers and recreates visual evidence for Mennonite women's farm labour.

*Lynette Sarah Plett was born and raised in a Mennonite farming community in Manitoba. When she left Manitoba to begin doctoral studies in Toronto, she began using quilting to express and represent her academic ideas and research. Her doctoral thesis, Thinking Back Through Our Mothers: A Sampler Quilt of Kleine Gemeinde Mennonite Women and Country Homemakers (2006), uses quilts and quilting as processes and metaphors to recover, recreate, and represent farm women's everyday lives.*

<sup>1</sup>This paragraph was part of the introduction to one of the blocks of my doctoral thesis quilt, Lynette Sarah Plett, "Thinking Back through Our Mothers: A Sampler Quilt of Kleine Gemeinde Mennonite Women and Country Homemakers" (Doctor of Philosophy, University of Toronto, 2006).

<sup>2</sup>"Mennonite 'Grecian' Vase" was part of the April 2007 Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) Art Exhibit, *Looking Back, Looking Forward*. Images of this exhibit are available on the OISE/UT website: <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/student-services/conferences/artexhibit.htm>.

<sup>3</sup>Images and a description of the Grecian urn that inspired this project are available on the Metropolitan Museum of Art website: [www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/evdy/ho\\_31.11.10.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/evdy/ho_31.11.10.htm).

<sup>4</sup>The image is based on one of the bronze panels on a memorial to Mennonite pioneer women in Canada. The memorial, sponsored by the Mennonite Heritage Village Ladies Auxiliary, is located at the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, Manitoba. The memorial was completed in 1985.

## References

Barber, Elizabeth Wayland. *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years: Women, Cloth, and Society in Early Times*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1994.

## JOANNA M. WESTON

### On Clover Hill

the child smells purple  
amongst the green

counts leaves  
up to four

lies face down  
in the bee-rich world

takes the hum  
inside herself

as she sings  
soft clover songs

and holds fast  
to the luck in her hand

*Joanna M. Weston has published internationally in journals and anthologies including The Missing Line (Inanna Publications, 2004).*