

Lois Etherington Betteridge, Pioneer of a Craft Revival in Canada

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With a working career of some sixty years Lois Betteridge MFA, CM, RCA is still at the forefront of contemporary Canadian silversmiths. As a craftsperson she commands a superior mastery of centuries-old handwrought techniques that is rarely matched today; above all, she excels as a virtuoso chaser [fig 1]. She is equally proficient in design. Each of her works embodies a seamless fusion of design and technique that is striking for its innovation and originality. She is motivated by a single indomitable aspiration: technical perfection in the creation of beautiful objects.

She does not use preliminary sketches but begins working metal with a general preconception in mind which she then allows to evolve and assume form in an almost morphogenetic process, until she decides a piece is finished. The process is one of personal psychological expression through the manipulation of metal with hand tools. Functionality remains the determining factor underlying the ultimate appearance of each piece; she does not allow design to take over or subsume function. Her essential commitment is to a traditionalist approach to silversmithing albeit with a contemporary look. The end result is a remarkable and distinctive body of work that extends over a period of more than fifty years. Lois is the only metalsmith of her generation in Canada who had the benefit of an extensive formal training in traditional silversmithing techniques at a university level. Although silver has been her preferred medium, she has also worked in other metals.

Lois's achievement was accorded official recognition in 1997 when she was invested by Governor-General Roméo LeBlanc as a Member of the Order of Canada, the nation's highest civilian honour. The citation underscored her prestige as an outstanding metalsmith, her unreserved sharing of knowledge as a teacher, as well as her role as a Distinguished Member of the Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG). Another official award followed in 2002 with the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee medal, bestowed by the Government of Canada on outstanding Canadians, in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the accession of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to the throne. Other honours of a distinguished nature had presaged these; in 1977 Lois was elected to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts. The following year she became the second recipient of the recently created Saidye Bronfman Award, Canada's pre-eminent commendation for excellence in the crafts, which is administered through the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC).¹ The award obliges the museum to collect pieces by the winners and it now owns eight works by Lois. In 1991, she received the M Joan Chalmers 15th Anniversary Award, a unique presentation marking



1 Lois Etherington Betteridge at her workbench, 1976.
(photo: Keith Betteridge)

1 Stephen Inglis, *Masters of the Crafts: Recipients of the Saidye Bronfman Award for Excellence in the Crafts, 1977-86*, Hull QC, 1989, pp19-20, 54-65.

the first fifteen years of the Ontario Crafts Council.² It is through her students that Lois has had the greatest impact on the craft, placing her at the very fulcrum of its national progress during the late twentieth century; there are few contemporary silversmiths in Canada who have not been under her tutelage. She has taught in a formal educational context as well as taking on apprentices in her studio. The guiding dictum of her teaching is that the perfection of traditional techniques is fundamental to being an accomplished silversmith. Otherwise she encouraged her students to explore aesthetic independence; it is for this reason that her recognizable imitators are few.

Her pivotal importance as a teacher has been celebrated in three exhibitions over the last decade. The first was organized in 2000 by the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre in Guelph, Ontario, in which she and seven former students participated.³ It was followed in 2002 by *Teacher, Silversmith, Mentor: 20 Years in the Highlands with Lois Etherington Betteridge*.⁴ In addition to the work of Lois, this exhibition included pieces by thirty-eight of her students from the Haliburton School of the Arts, Sir Sanford Fleming College. The culminating event was the celebration in April 2009 of her eightieth birthday with an exhibition at the Bancroft-Snell Gallery in London, Ontario. There were twenty-one participants, most of whom were her former students. As a group show it was a veritable 'Who's Who' of Canadian silversmiths and metalsmiths from across the country.⁵

Born in Drummondville, Quebec, Lois was the daughter of Alfred Etherington who, in 1933, founded and became sales manager of the Sovereign Pottery in Hamilton, sixty kilometres west of Toronto.⁶ From that time onwards the Etheringtons lived in nearby Burlington where Lois spent the remainder of her childhood years. Upon completion of high school she attended the Ontario College of Art for the 1946-47 term. She then enrolled at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, because it was one of a few universities in the United States that had a BFA programme in the crafts; there were none in Canada at the time. She was also encour-

aged to attend this university by her brother, Bruce Etherington, who was already studying architecture there. Coincidental with her arrival at the University of Kansas Carlyle H Smith (1912-2004) was setting up a jewellery and silversmithing curriculum in the Department of Design. It was the first such programme at an American university. Lois took Smith's silversmithing classes and it was he who fostered her commitment to a lifetime pursuit of the craft. Smith had studied at the Rhode Island School of Design and, just prior to going to Kansas, under William E Bennett (1906-1967), Head of the Silversmithing Department of Sheffield School of Art in England.⁷ Textile design was another area of specialised study pursued by Lois at the university. She graduated as a BFA in 1951.

Upon returning to Canada in 1952, she set up a studio in Oakville, near Toronto, and soon afterwards in a premises on Yonge Street, Toronto, near the wealthy Rosedale neighbourhood. She has worked as an independent studio-metalsmith ever since, largely in silver and gold, but also in other metals. Her clientele was varied, but initially her mainstay was jewellery-making and liturgical metalwork for Bede House, a local church supplier to mainly Anglican churches. Her chief competitors in Toronto were Harold Stacey (1911-1979) and Douglas Boyd (1901-1972) for handcrafted silver hollowware, and Nancy Meek Pocock (1910-1998) for jewellery. Despite their dominance of the local scene, the young Lois Etherington managed to support herself through her craft, which few others were able to do during this period.

Though working full-time as a silversmith, she nevertheless took advantage of every opportunity to expand her metalworking skills. In 1953, she studied chasing in evening classes at the Provincial Institute of Trades (later Ryerson Polytechnic Institute, now Ryerson University) under the master jeweller and silversmith, Hero Kielman (1919-2008). Kielman had just arrived from The Netherlands, where he had studied at the Vakschool voor Goud en Zilvermeden (Vocational School for Gold and Silversmiths) in Schoonhoven.

2 As a cultural philanthropist, Joan Chalmers provided vital financial support to innumerable organizations and individuals in the areas of dance, theatre, film, the visual arts and music, but her great passion was the advancement of Canadian craft practice.

3 Judith Nasby and Anne McPherson, *Lois Etherington Betteridge: A Tribute Exhibition with Beth Alber, Jackie Anderson, Anne Barros, Beth Biggs, Brigitte Clavette, Kye-Yeon Son and Ken Vickerson*, exhibition catalogue.

4 Exhibition catalogue essay by Barbara Isherwood, Toronto, 2002.

5 *Celebration: The Legacy of Lois Etherington Betteridge*, exhibition catalogue, London OTY, 2008.

6 During the 1940s Sovereign Pottery was the largest maker of dinnerware in Canada. In 1947, the firm was sold to John Bros Ltd, Hanley, Staffordshire.

7 Richard Helzer, 'A Legacy in American Metalsmithing,' *Metalsmith*, vol 14, 1994, pp 16-21.

Most of her liturgical pieces were destined for the Anglican church of Canada or the Roman Catholic church. Examples are a chalice and ciborium [fig 2] of 1955 for the newly founded St Christopher's Anglican church in Burlington. The overall forms and decoration of these pieces display conspicuous echoes of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Their surfaces bear residual hammer marks, while the decoration consists of narrow bands of repeat motifs such as small silver appliqués or cloisons filled with either ebony or ivory. These motifs have an appropriate emblematic character and include a fish, trefoil, equilateral triangle, and so forth. Stylistically these vessels are not necessarily characteristic of her work during this period, which was marked by much experimentation. There is an unavoidable debt in other pieces to Scandinavian Modern, which was the rage in Canada and the United States with persons of more progressive taste. Whether through the mediatory influence of Smith, Kielman or her Toronto contemporaries, or more likely all of them combined, Lois could not escape Scandinavian Modern.

In 1955, she successfully applied for a scholarship to the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, where she spent two academic years, graduating with an MFA degree.⁸ Cranbrook was, and still is, renowned as an important incubator of modern design in the United States. Its curriculum was shaped by its first director, the Finnish architect and designer, Eliel Saarinen and was based on an apprenticeship method of individual instruction. Lois thrived in this atmosphere. Her mentor was Richard Thomas (1917-1988) who, in 1948, developed a full-time programme in metalwork that was to become the Metalsmithing Department.⁹ The approach to teaching was one of openness; the outlook was internationalist. Thomas expected his students to achieve a thorough mastery of material, tools and processes through disciplined training while encouraging them to explore new design possibilities. The Cranbrook method would have a lasting effect on Lois. Inevitably, her experience there exposed her to the International Style or Americanised version of Bauhaus design, as well as the more fluid, Scandinavian-influenced mid-century modern which would inspire her over the next decade. She admits to being impressed by Eliel Saarinen's iconic silver urn of 1934 which was the centrepiece of Cranbrook social functions.¹⁰

Upon her return to Canada in 1957 she was appointed a lecturer in Applied Arts and Crafts at the Macdonald Institute (now part of the University of Guelph), Guelph, Ontario.¹¹ Her teaching responsibilities were weaving and design; she also taught silversmithing as an extra-curricular pursuit as well as continuing to do studio work. In 1960 she married Keith Betteridge, an emigrant from the United Kingdom, who was a postgraduate student in veterinary medicine at the Ontario Veterinary College in Guelph.¹² Some months previously she had resigned her teaching position with the intention of moving to England to study with William Bennett, but had retained her studio at the Macdonald Institute. It was at this time that Lois completed a set of fourteen Stations of the Cross in lead for the chapel of Marymount College in Sudbury, Ontario.¹³

After Keith Betteridge received an MVSc degree from the University of Toronto in 1961 the Betteridges moved to England so that he could pursue PhD studies at the University of Reading. They



2 Chalice and ciborium, Lois Etherington Betteridge, 1955. St. Christopher's Anglican church, Burlington, Ontario. (photo: Ross Fox)

8 The Cranbrook Academy of Art is just one component of the Cranbrook Educational Community, a complex that incorporates the Cranbrook Schools, Cranbrook Institute of Science and Cranbrook Museum of Art. A product of the Arts and Crafts movement, Cranbrook was the brain-child of Charles Gough Booth, a Canadian-born newspaper magnate, and his son George. Its name is derived from the birthplace in England of Charles Booth's father. See Robert Judson Clark et al, *Design in America: The Cranbrook Vision 1925-1950*, New York, circa 1983.

9 There was an earlier silversmithing workshop at Cranbrook

from 1929 until 1933 when it closed. It was under the direction of Arthur Nevill Kirk. Clark (as note 8), pp152-53, 167, 169-71.

10 Clark (as note 8), pl 32.

11 Founded in 1903 by Sir William Macdonald and Adelaide Hoodless, the Macdonald Institute ranks as one of the leading schools of home economics in North America.

12 Founded in 1862, it is the oldest veterinary college in North America.

13 Since transferred to Notre Dame Chapel, St. Jerome's College, University of Waterloo.



3 Maker's mark of Lois Etherington Betteridge registered in 1961 with the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, London.

(photo: Keith Betteridge)

remained in England for six years, spending their last two years in Birmingham. During this period they had two children; Lois, with her studio in their home, continued to work at her craft, while managing a household. Her silversmithing was exercised by means of a rigorous organisation of time and tasks. With a children's playpen near her workbench she learned to work in intense twenty-minute intervals during the daytime as well as through long evenings. In this way she managed to juggle craft and household without sacrificing either. She registered a maker's mark [fig 3] with the Goldsmiths' Company in London, in order to have her works assayed and hallmarked according to British law. Although she felt somewhat isolated in her craft this was overcome to a certain degree through regular participation in exhibitions such as those held at the Bear Lane Gallery in Oxford at which she exhibited annually.¹⁴ Dating from this period is a five-piece tea and coffee service (including slop basin), which has subsequently been separated. As evidenced in the teapot [fig 4], with its boat-form body and surfaces of flawless smoothness, it shared in the Scandinavian aesthetic. The use of black nylon in the handle exemplifies her ongoing experimentation with modern materials.



4 Teapot, Lois Etherington Betteridge, 1963. Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, Guelph, Ontario.

(photo: © Keith Betteridge)

In 1967, Lois returned to Canada with her family, settling in Ottawa, where Keith joined the Department of Agriculture.¹⁵ It was a fortuitous move as, in the nation's capital, she was positioned to benefit from a succession of commissions from government circles as well as private patrons. First among the former was a series of silver letter openers fashioned in 1968 for the Hon Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, for presentation to visiting foreign dignitaries. This was followed the next year by a comparable commission from the Hon Alastair Gillespie, Minister of Trade and Commerce. In 1970 she made a bronze sculpture for presentation to the Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, by parliamentary colleagues as a Christmas present. Called *The Ultimate Executive Toy*, it was inset with twelve gemstones representing each of the Canadian provinces.

14 Lois Etherington Betteridge, 'An Autobiography,' *Goldsmith's Journal* (later *Metalsmith*), vol 17 2 1978, pp 30-31.

15 He was appointed Head, Physiology Section, Animal Diseases Research Institute.

An ineluctable aesthetic transformation in her work is testimony to her constant search for new expressive means. During the late 1960s her work displays a relaxation of form and an interest in textured



5 *Set of Liquor Goblets, Lois Etherington Betteridge, 1969. Private collection.*
(photo: Keith Betteridge)

surfaces [fig 5] which suggest a familiarity with the silver of Gerald Benney acquired during her residency in England. By the middle of the 1970s what Lois refers to as her 'art' phase began to emerge. It is characterised by cohesive, organic volumes and highly-worked textural effects that impart an alluring tactile sense to her pieces; they seem to beckon the beholder to touch and to hold them. Form and function are synthesised to such a degree that form becomes emblematic of function in a poetic fusion of witticism and visual beauty; complementary titles often reinforce this effect but the creative intent is even more complex. Her mature pieces appear to be suffused with a celebratory dimension, an elevation of and rejoicing in otherwise mundane activities through their attendant objects, that supersedes mere functionalism. In the words of Lois herself:

For me, the functional object is a way to acknowledge and celebrate the many "rituals" of our daily routines. Rituals we may not be aware of, but which, when celebrated, become meaningful, beautiful and formal, extending the role of objects far beyond mere function. The things we use as a matter of course can enrich our lives by their beauty, by the atmosphere they create, or by evoking personal as well as "tribal" (unconscious) memories.¹⁶

A brandy snifter [fig 6] in the Canadian Museum of Civilization is a transitional piece that contains elements of this new aesthetic. Its bowl with rounded bottom and tall walls that taper inward reproduces the paradigmatic form of glass snifters. Like glass examples, the exterior of the bowl has a perfect regularity of surface making it easy to conjecture that it was spun, yet it was entirely hand raised. Its plainness recalls her earlier work. The stem and foot, in contrast, are cast as a single, rusticated, sculptural unit which acts as a counterpoint to the glistening surface of the bowl. An emerald at the bottom of the bowl, which is reflected on the interior sides, appears to float in the amber brandy when the imbiber, tilting the snifter to sniff and taste, glances inside. Lois's obsession with finish and delight in amusement are further evident in a pearl that is set underneath the foot poised to titillate one's companions in a momentary diversion when the snifter is raised.



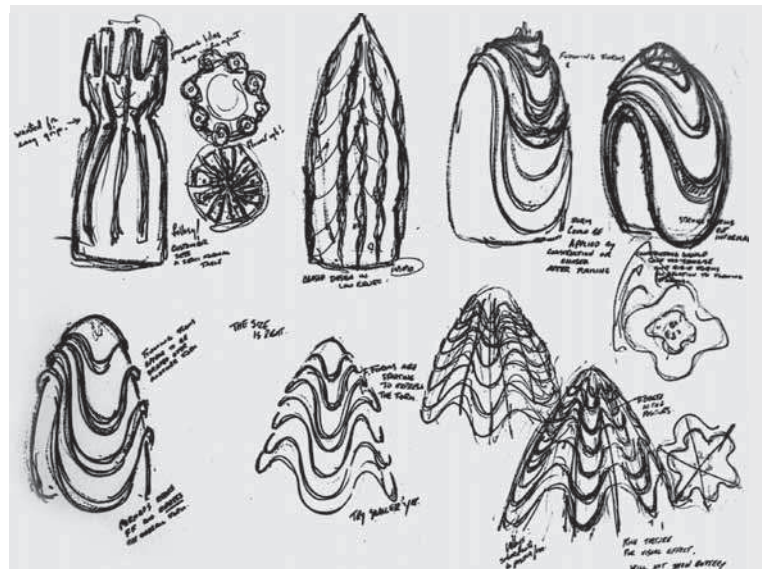
6 *Brandy Snifter, Lois Etherington Betteridge, 1974. Canadian Museum of Civilization acc.no. 86-101.*
(photo: © Keith Betteridge)

¹⁶ 'Metalsmith Exhibition in Print 2001,' *Metalsmith*, vol 21 4 2001, p 18.



7 Spice Shaker, Lois Etherington Betteridge, 1977.
Collection of L E Betteridge.
(photo: Keith Betteridge)

8 Drawings by Lois Etherington Betteridge for the spice shaker in fig 7.



9 Honey Pot, Lois Etherington Betteridge, 1976.
Collection of Eric Betteridge.
(photo: Keith Betteridge)



An intensification of her concern for solid, volumetric forms is seen in a spice shaker [fig 7] where undulating, horizontal folds wrap its vertically ribbed body. It appears organic without reproducing any precise form in nature. Although constructed from sheet silver, the flatness and thinness of the sheet disappear within the plasticity of volume. Some atypical drawings for the spice shaker [fig 8] are instructive as to her creative process. She rarely made preliminary sketches and, when she did, they usually served as an initial point of departure only; otherwise she let a form unfold as she worked the metal. The shaker is no exception. This series of drawings is exceptional, however, because it demonstrates how she stopped at various critical stages in order to rethink where she should go next. Usually she would do this instinctively with the hammer as the instrument of her thoughts rather than pen or chalk. These drawings allow us to envisage the progress of the piece. True to her principles, the end product was finished all over. Her pieces are meant to be seen, touched, held, explored and enjoyed in all their parts, including hidden areas.

A more comprehensible conceit defines a honey pot [fig 9], whose elements are borrowed directly from the natural world. The body is

modelled on a wasp's nest; the handle of the recessed lid as a honeycomb with bee. Lois studied the forms first-hand, striving for accuracy in all the details including the anatomy of the bee. Unlike the abstract designs of earlier years her designs now became personalised and more psychologically accessible in their references, where form intimates function and details speak of surprise and playfulness.

Commissions abounded during this period. Some of the most distinguished examples include: a silver rose bowl (1976) for the Canadian Museum of Natural Sciences; a silver pitcher (1977) for the Joan A Chalmers National Craft Collection; a bronze trophy (1977) for the Canadian Nuclear Association; and a multi-media trophy (1978) for the Canadian Construction Association. Towards the close of the 1970s she temporarily abandoned most commissioned work in order



10 Chalice for Prime Minister Joe Clark, 1979. Collection of the Right Hon Joe Clark. (photo: Keith Betteridge)



11 Tot Cup for an Insomniac, 1983. Collection of L E Betteridge. (photo: Keith Betteridge)

12 Ice Cream Cone, Lois Etherington Betteridge, 1983. Collection of Keith Betteridge. (photo: Keith Betteridge)

to concentrate on her own personal aesthetic inclinations and not be confined by the choices of patrons. It was an exercise preparatory to her major retrospective exhibition, *Reflections in Gold and Silver*, which travelled to eight galleries and museums across the country from 1981 until 1983. She could not, however, ignore one special commission. It was a silver chalice [fig 10] for the newly-elected Prime Minister, Joe Clark, on the occasion of the opening of the thirty-first Parliament of Canada on 9 October, 1979.¹⁷ The presentation was by the caucus of the Progressive Conservative Party. Lois personalised the chalice by embedding a jasper stone underneath the base, an allusion to Clark's Alberta roots.

Lois's 'art' phase culminated in masterful pieces such as *Tot Cup for an Insomniac* of 1983 [fig 11]. It is actually a goblet for brandy or whisky with an outer casing that extends most of its height. The casing is a cylinder of modulated irregularity with small decorative rivets randomly encircling its waist. Projecting from one side is an annulated, handle-like element with discs of ivory and a terminus embedded with a Seiko watch; there is a second, antique watch face underneath the foot. This piece exemplifies Lois's tongue-in-cheek humour at its best. The vessel's form, together with a spring at the junction of the stem and foot, can be construed as poetic references to the unsettled state of mind of an insomniac, while the watches are ever-present reminders of the slow passing of time. The vessel's liquor may be regarded as a hoped for but not necessarily efficacious curative. From a more personal perspective, this cup resonates with intimations of late hours spent by Lois herself at the workbench.

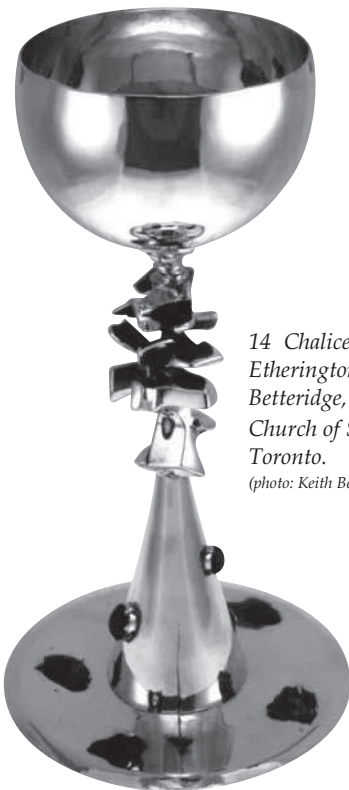


17 'Ottawa Whirl: Parliament Opening Formal-Casual Affair,' *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 18 October 1979.

18 Keith was appointed NSERC (National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada) Semex (Smiley-Reeds-McDonald) Research Chair in Animal Biotechnology, Department of Biomedical Sciences, Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph.



13 Coffee Pot for Six Friends, Lois Etherington Betteridge, 1988. Private collection.
(photo: Keith Betteridge)



14 Chalice, Lois Etherington Betteridge, 1994. Church of St. Mathias, Toronto.
(photo: Keith Betteridge)

19 The recipients include members of the United States National Academy of Sciences and Fellows of the British Royal Society.

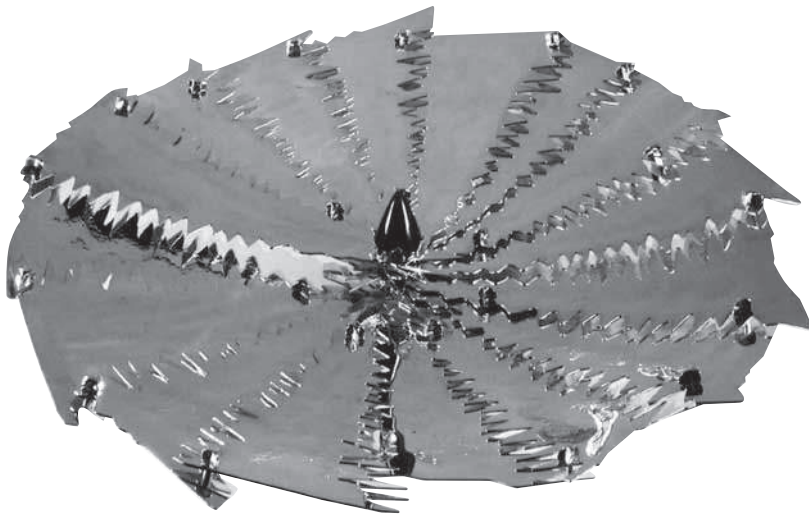
20 It was named for Marshall McLuhan.

Ice-Cream Cone [fig 12,] from the same year, is replete with an even more personalised content. A beaker with lid, the title explains the shape. The body of the beaker is chased with an all over guilloche-like latticework imitative of the biscuit of a cone. The domed cover consists of overlapping, scalloped layers imitative of melting ice cream. To heighten the sense of illusion the silver of the cover is frosted and the beaker is gilt. A single pearl garnishes the very top of the cover. Again the form is not a mere fanciful container but invested with a deeper significance. On the sides are small oval frames containing pictures of children eating ice cream: Lois's children. It is in effect a personal 'memory reliquary'. Again Lois did not neglect the underside of the beaker where there is a fifth photograph, of a hand holding a cone. In formal terms, the *Ice-Cream Cone* incorporates Lois's preoccupation with organic volumes and a sprouting interest in geometry, in the contrasting elements of cover and beaker.

Commissions came to the fore once again, when Lois and her husband relocated to Mont-Saint-Hilaire, Quebec, from 1980 until 1986 and, subsequently, to Guelph where they continue to live¹⁸. Distanced from Ottawa, a public profile was more challenging to maintain, but overcome through frequent exhibiting and for the next few years she was inundated by commissions from both public and professional organisations. Among these was a series of forty desk sets in silver and soapstone for the Canadian Pacific Railway presented in 1981 to the Prime Minister, provincial premiers and board members; this was a rare occasion when Lois duplicated a design in multiples. In 1982, she designed the annual Pioneer Award (in bronze) of the International Embryo Transfer Society, which she casts each year.¹⁹ In 1983 it was the silver medal for the UNESCO-sponsored McLuhan Teleglobe Canada Award to be presented biennially to renowned, international figures in the field of communication.²⁰ In 1984, she produced an honorific piece, *Bringing Home the Constitution*, which was presented to Prime Minister Trudeau for his role two years earlier in the 'patriation' of the Constitution of Canada, marking the severance of the country's last colonial link with the United Kingdom.

By the mid-1980s Lois had begun a foray into multiple aesthetic essays where conflicting aspirations were sometimes pursued almost simultaneously. The guiding principles driving the most conspicuous group are geometry and 'the sheet'. Whereas in proceeding years she strove to disguise her reliance on sheet silver she now underscored its many properties wherever and however possible. One strain in this direction was a reliance on tubular construction which resulted, to great effect, in *Coffee Pot for Six Friends* [fig 13], where the pot consists of a tubular shaft, while the spout and handle are narrow, hemispherical tubes that intersect the pot creating a perfect circle. The square, stepped base is made of acrylic and silver, and arcs of acrylic are added to the inside and outside of the handle. Geometry, accentuated by highly polished surfaces, dominates. Elsewhere she highlighted the thinness and flatness of sheet silver in shallow or gently curving bowls with hard, if undulating, edges.

Similar formal concerns were pushed further during the 1990s. Elsewhere she explored openwork in baskets, bowls and cups thereby exposing sheet even further. The curved edges of earlier bowls



16 *Argentian Reel*, Lois Etherington Betteridge, 2004. Collection of Michael Barnstijn and Louise MacCallum. (photo: Keith Betteridge)

and plates often become jagged and sharp-edged but she also reverted increasingly to flourishes of whimsy that are more reminiscent of her work of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Transitional to this tendency is a chalice [fig 14], a rare late liturgical piece, where a fractured upper stem contrasts with the geometricity of the cone and circular disc of the lower stem and foot. As the decade advanced the whimsy factor blossomed into an alluring romanticism where, among other things, her love of chasing became reinvigorated. Heralding the millennium, the tendencies of the 1990s seem to converge in a lavish goblet called *I Carry the Sun in a Golden Cup* [fig 15]. True to its title, it is a calyx-like bowl of gold with a carnelian at its centre; the lower stem and foot are of silver. The title of the piece is borrowed from the poem *Those Dancing Days Are Gone* by William Butler Yeats.

In 2003 Lois was presented with an entirely new challenge by Michael Barnstijn, a former member of the company that developed the ubiquitous Blackberry phone; he asked her to fashion pieces from a solid bar of pure silver. Until this time she had only worked with prefabricated sterling silver sheet but she recalled the advice of a mentor at the start of her career: never to admit you cannot carry out a commission but instead to adapt, even if it means learning new skills. Finding that pure silver lacked the consistency necessary to hold its form, she had it alloyed into sheet silver that she could work. This she transformed into a plate [fig 16] composed of a series of flat, radiating segments with sawtooth edges that were riveted together. It appears to rotate in an illusory centripetal movement, an impression reinforced by the title that, of course, is a play on the word *argentum* or silver.

Also from this period is a loving cup made for the Toronto-based Honourable Company of Freemen of the

City of London of North America (2003). Most recent commissions are, however, of a private nature. Lois is making pieces for two synagogues; she particularly enjoys making Jewish pieces because, "as long as the work functions it can be of any shape that one imagines."

Lois might be studied against the backdrop of the women's movement, but it would do neither justice. Certainly she was, and still is, a role model for many young women in the crafts. Gender aside, she is a singular achiever, and that is sufficient in itself as she ranks, unrivalled, as the foremost Canadian silversmith of her generation. No Canadian silversmith has received so many prestigious commissions or public honours within modern memory. Moreover, she has a solid international reputation; to date she has had twenty-four solo exhibitions and participated in countless group exhibitions in tens of countries across Europe and North America. Her ultimate goal, successfully attained, has been to create objects that are functional yet beautiful and eloquent, attuned to modern aesthetics yet fashioned in accordance with time-honoured techniques. Under the veneer of modernism lies a traditionalist. Lois Etherington Betteridge, a studio silversmith for fifty-eight years, is eighty-one this year but her indefatigable commitment to the craft has not abated.

15 *I carry the Sun in a Golden cup*, Lois Etherington Betteridge, 2000. Private collection. (photo: Keith Betteridge)

