



Art Textiles of the World: Canada, a new book from Telos Art Publishing, features Dorothy Caldwell as one of the 20 selected artists.

At left:
DEEP LAKE HIGH HILL (2007)
53cm x 188cm.

Opposite page:
Bottom, A BOOK OF MARKS (2007-8) notebook
24cm x 18cm.

This page:
Below left, BASIN (2008) 46cm x 46cm. Below right, THIS PLACE (2008) 46cm x 46cm.

As one of the founding members of the Textile Printers and Dyers Association of Canada, which was an outgrowth of the Surface Design Association, she was involved in sharing information and practical knowledge with a growing number of textile artists, designers and educators. These two organizations exerted a major influence on the growing assessment of Woman's needlework that saw it joining the feminist art history movement of the seventies and eighties and adding to the growing discourse on fine arts versus crafts. As the domestic and functional uses for textiles evolved from practical or ritual to decorative, Caldwell, having come out of the fine arts world, considered her craft to be art. This in turn allowed others to view her pieces in the same way. Her work is now shown in both fine craft galleries and art museums.

Her work reached an apex in size with Landstat. It subsequently became more intimate and, at the same time, it began to seem almost jewel-like in tone as she moved away from "earth tones" to the dark richness of indigo, kept behind wax or paste resist, that was discharged to blue/whites to set off the appliquéed satins and silk velvet scraps she

had been collecting. These pieces became more heavily stitched and more intensively worked while becoming simpler in appearance.

"Driving down Road 25 between Warkworth and Caselton, watching fields of grass blowing in the breeze, I was reminded of how this mass of vegetation is affected by the physics of wind. As the wind passed through the field, its velocity and its force initiated waves of movement and I became aware of the rhythms and patterns it generated. I saw the "inter-connective-ness" between the land, the air and myself as I observed and processed this experience and then committed it to memory. If I was to investigate the land further, I may wonder what the previous crop had been, whether anyone had ever lived there and when did this road go in?"^[1]

This observation of landscape has been a hallmark of Canadian artists for over a century and in these terms Dorothy Caldwell's work is part of the Canadian cannon of fine art. In 1996 she was awarded the Prix Saidye Bronfman Award and her work was added to the collection of fine crafts at the Museum of Civilization. >>>

