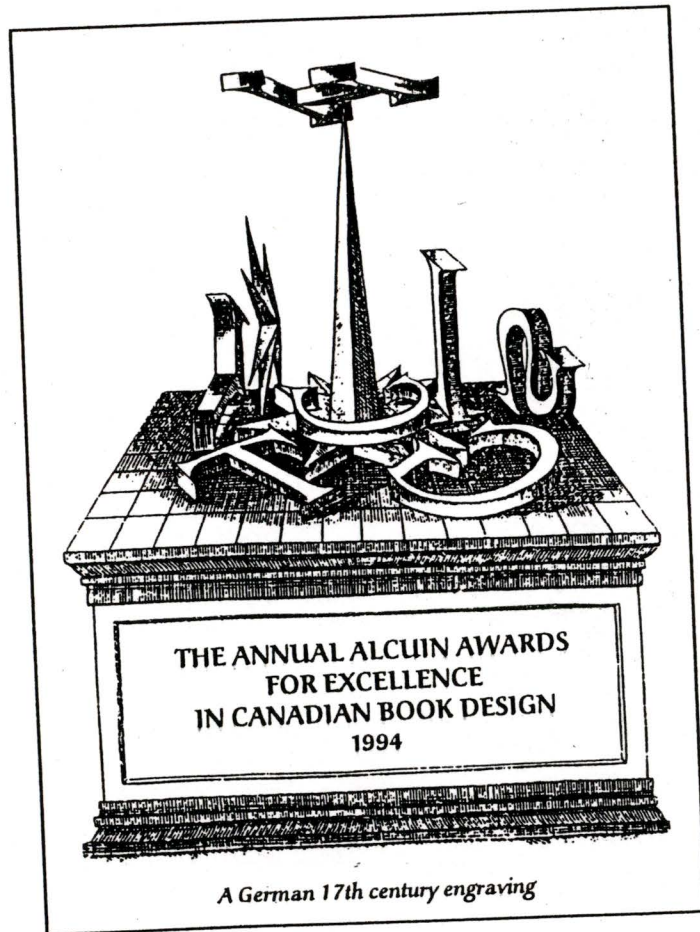


AMPHORA - 101

AUTUMN 1995

THE ALCUIN SOCIETY'S QUARTERLY JOURNAL
OF FINE PRINTING AND THE ART OF THE BOOK



A 'BOUILLABaisse' ISSUE OF MIXED READING
RELATING TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF BOOKS

handed by the American journalist, Lowell Thomas, who built up the hero image in a series of lucrative lecture tours across the U.S. Another unbeliever was Pierre Van Paassen, a Dutch journalist of repute who, having researched the archives of the Turkish General Staff to whom Lawrence was supposedly such a thorn in the side, found not a single mention of Lawrence and the damage he was supposed to have inflicted. But that didn't dent the myth, further re-inforced by the wide-screen movie of the sixties, with blue-eyed Peter O'Toole in the role of Lawrence.

However, credit where credit is due: Item 237 lists Lawrence's fine (and readable) translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, printed in 1932 by Emery Walker, Wilfred Merton, and Bruce Rogers, one of 530 copies illustrated by Bruce Rogers, in black morocco, and a good buy at £1,000. For less amply lined pockets, there's the first trade edition of the same thing, Oxford University Press, 1935, for £30 (Item #230).

Sometimes, like the wake-up paean in Haydn's "Suprise Symphony", an item steals in that simply does not belong and can only be described as emetic. Consider Item 43, *The Angel of Peace*, "a plaster bas-relief, painted in gold, pink, and blue, with a border incorporating incised lettering pricked out in gold, the whole in a darkwood frame." This extraordinary memento was presented to Neville Chamberlain when he came crawling back from Munich in 1938 by a Miss Agatha Walker, whose hopes were soon to be dashed. How does such a stomach-turning item, a non-book if there ever was one, come to be included in an otherwise respectable catalogue? But it's another mosaic to add to the pile. Sometime, somewhere, it will fit in.

THE ALCUIN SOCIETY, VANCOUVER

DESIGN AWARDS, PUBLICATIONS OF 1994

For this, the Society's thirteenth annual presentation of design awards, the undersigned judges spent much of April 8, 1995 examining and discussing the visual qualities of three hundred twenty-eight books submitted by their Canadian publishers and/or designers and bearing an imprint date of 1994. The steady increase in submissions continues: this is about ten percent more than were submitted last year although some publishers and designers continue to ignore the Society's requests for submissions to this competition. We acknowledge what we receive and celebrate those listed and described below as evidence of a standard of excellence achieved by designers and producers of the contemporary Canadian book which we feel would be remarkable when compared with examples of the best produced anywhere.

Submissions were judged in the following categories as most recently revised by the Society's Design Awards Committee in 1989. As noted below, the judges suggest some changes.

General Trade Books: Prose (includes Fiction and Nonfiction)
General Trade Books: Adult Picture and Photography Books
General Trade Books: How-To-, Cook-, Craft- and Hobby Books
General Trade Books: Poetry
Text and Reference Books
Limited Editions (numbered and/or signed)
Juvenile Books other than Texts.

The person submitting is invited to check one of these categories on the entry form accompanying each book but either the Society's Committee or the judges may assign it to a more appropriate category as was done in the case of two award winners this year. Each book is judged as a whole on the suitability and harmony (in respect of both the text block and the binding/covering/wrapper) of type, illustration (if any), layout, and materials used – all in relation to their appropriateness to the book's subject matter, intended audience, etc. First, second, and third prizes are available in each category, with ties permitted. A book may be cited for Honourable Mention because of some exceptionally noteworthy feature(s), for example a striking and appropriate cover, which brought it, in the eyes of the judges, above the mass even if as a whole it fails to sustain comparison with those of prize-winning standard.

General Trade Books: Prose (includes Fiction and Nonfiction)

1st Prize: *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War through the Twentieth Century* [by] Jonathan F. Vance. Vancouver: UBC Press. [Designer: George Vaitkunas; Printer: D.W. Friesen & Sons]

2nd Prize: *The File on Arthur Moss: A Novel* [by] Douglas Fetherling. Toronto: Lester Publishing. [Designer: Gordon Robertson; Printer: D.W. Friesen & Sons]

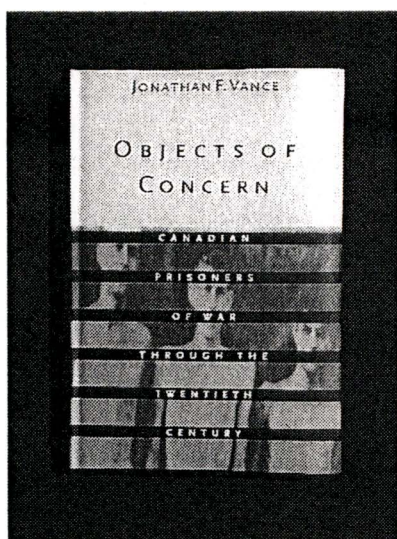
3rd Prize (tie): *Karen Kain: Movement Never Lies: An Autobiography;* with Stephen Godfrey and Penelope Reed Doob. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart. Designer: Kong Njo; Printer: D.W. Friesen & Sons]

3rd Prize (tie): *Why Must a Black Writer Write about Sex? A Novel* by Dany Laferrière; translated by David Homel. Toronto: Coach House Press. [Designer: Christopher, at Reactor; Printer: Kromar Printing]

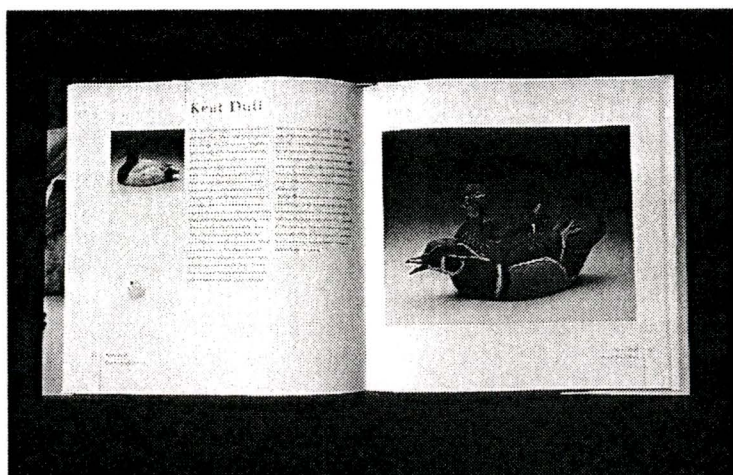
Hon. Men.: *The Man Who Created Narnia: The Story of C.S. Lewis* by Michael Coren. Toronto: Lester Publishing. [Designer: MacTriX DTP (Pip Pearce & Margaret Epp) and Scott Richardson; Printer: D.W. Friesen & Sons]

Hon. Men.: *Without a Guide: Contemporary Women's Travel Adventures* edited by Katherine Govier. Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross. [Designer: John Pylypczak, Concrete Design Communications; Printer: Best Book Manufacturers.

This has often been the largest category and this year comprises 104 items, nearly a third of the total in competition. A decade ago, almost everything in this group would have been "hardback" and sewn; now a majority are perfect-glued in one or another of the varied forms of "paperback" covering, commonly with flaps and an individually designed front cover. The range is broad in both content (from the ephemeral to the scholarly) and format (large and small, thick and thin, illustrated and unillustrated). Such diversity might make the judging seem like matching apples and peaches and the judges suggest that the Society's Design Awards Committee consider separating fiction and nonfiction categories in future. That the latter now almost always, while the former rarely, involves the use of illustrations provides significantly different design issues. Nevertheless it has not been hard, nor entirely subjective, to identify qualities additional to the treatment of illustration which make the few stand out from the crowd in the combined grouping. That six books should have been selected for citation (two novels and four nonfiction) indicates the quality still being achieved in hard economic times; that four of these were physically produced by the D.W. Friesen firm indicates the strong grip which that now very experienced printer holds on quality English-language book printing in this country. Books in this group are often most successful if least "striking". They rely on such understated design features as continuity of design motifs from chapter-head to chapter-head, proportion of the type area to the page size, and careful matching of type style and spacing to line length and margins. For example, the simple horizontal black bar motif of the first-prize winner is very effective in relation to its subject; both novels have a graphic unity appropriate to their topics, the second-prize winner is of particularly suitable dimensions for a shorter book. Pastel colouring and a layout of illustrations which often suggests movement recommend the Kain biography (which would be just as recommendable among the books in the



1st Prize: General Trade Books (Prose); *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War through the Twentieth Century*.



1st Prize: General Trade Books (Adult Picture & Photography); *Decoys: A Celebration of Contemporary Wildfowl Carving*.

next category). Both Honourable Mentions make effective use of symbolic devices, although of very different types, in their design.

General Trade Books: Adult Picture and Photography Books

1st Prize: *Decoys: A Celebration of Contemporary Wildfowl Carving*, photographs by Ernie Sparks with text by Laurel Aziz. Camden East: Camden House. [Designer: Linda J. Menyes; Printer: D.W. Friesen & Sons]

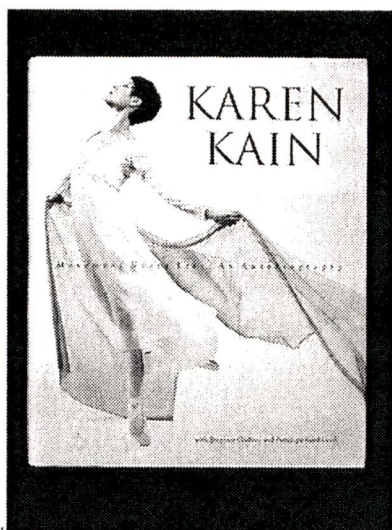
2nd Prize: *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, edited by Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson and Minnie Aodla Freeman. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre; Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization [Designer: George Vailkunas; Printer: C&C Offset Printing Co., Hong Kong] - [also submitted in the French-language edition]: *Femmes artistes inuit, Échos de Cape Dorset*; traduit par Christian Berubé. Hull: Musée canadien des civilisations.

3rd Prize: *Cités de l'archéologie fictive: Oeuvres de Peter Eisenman, 1978-1988* sous la direction de Jean-François Bedard. Montréal: Centre canadien d'architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture. [Designer: Glenn Goluska; Printer: Litho Acme] - [also published (but not submitted) in the English-language edition]: *Cities of artificial excavation*.

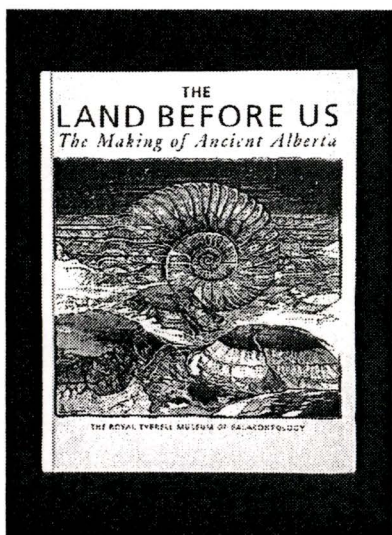
How illustrations are treated is a major consideration in this group: both the quality of their colour reproduction and their layout in their differing sizes and shapes, in conjunction with captions and associated text of varying amounts, yet on pages of fixed dimensions. A difficult task at best; sometimes almost impossible. Exhibition catalogues such as those at the Civilization and Architecture Museums have long set the standard for extensively illustrated printed books. After all, the museum or gallery exhibit itself must also ensure both the most attractive visual layout of items and the most intelligent juxtaposition of related objects. The first-prize winner might almost as well have been an exhibition catalogue, its purpose being to display individual craft objects. In each of these cases, the challenges were met admirably.

General Trade Books: How-To-, Cook-, Craft- and Hobby Books

Hon. Men.: *Detailing Fundamentals for Interior Design* [by] Ronald M. Veitch. Winnipeg: Peguis Publishers. [Designer: Pat Stanton; Printer: D.W. Friesen & Sons]



3rd Prize: General Trade Books (Prose); *Karen Kain: Movement Never Lies*.



1st Prize: Text & Reference Books; *The Land before Us: The Making of Ancient Alberta*.

In many recent years, one or another prize has gone unawarded in this category. Design jumbles, if at times pretty ones, have often characterized the output of the amateur in this type of publication. Furthermore, it appears harder each year to distinguish these from, for example, picture, children's, general trade, or even reference books. And the number of submissions dwindles: this year there were but eleven, by far the smallest category except for limited editions. The judges recommend to the Alcuin Society's Design Awards Committee that the category be discontinued since submissions can as well be judged in another category as appropriate. For the second year in a row, only an "Honourable Mention" is awarded, for a book with excellence of layout and a useful type of binding for the purpose.

General Trade Books: Poetry

1st Prize: *Rabatteurs d'étoiles* [par] Rachel Leclerc. Montréal: Éditions du Noroît. [Designer: Claude Prud-Homme; Printer: Imprimerie d'Éditions Marquis]

2nd Prize: *Collected Poems, Volume III* [by] Ralph Gustafson. Victoria: Sono Nis Press. [Designer: Bev Leech; Printer: Morriss Printing]

3rd Prize: *Song for a Far Quebec* [by] Madeleine Gagnon; translated by Howard Scott. Toronto: Coach House Press. [Designer: Gordon Robertson; Printer: Metro Litho]

Hon. Men.: *Learning to Ride* [by] Susan McMaster; illustrated by Robert Verrall. Kingston: Quarry Press. [Designer: Paul Verrall; Printer: Webcom]

The "feel" of the classic European slim book of a few poems comes through in the first-prize winner this year, as does the feel of the classic larger compilation in the second. Both show simplicity of typography on appropriate paper of soft tone, but of greater bulk for the slimmer volume. The selection and spacing of the type is exceptional in the third-prize winner and Verrall's woodcut illustrations command attention in the Honourable Mention.

Text and Reference Books

1st Prize: *The Land before Us: The Making of Ancient Alberta*. The Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology. Red Deer: Red Deer College Press. [Designer: Kunz & Associates; Printer: Dong A Printing, South Korea]

2nd Prize: *A Bibliography of McClelland and Stewart Imprints, 1909-1985: A Publisher's Legacy* [by] Carl Spadoni and Judy Donnelly. Toronto: ECW Press. [Designer: Paul Davies, ECW Type & Art; Printer: Data Reproductions, U.S.A.]

Hon. Men.: *Place Names of Alberta, Volume III, Central Alberta* edited and introduced by Tracey Harrison. Calgary: University of Calgary Press [with Alberta Community Development and Friends of Geographical Names of Alberta Society]. [Designer: Ouchi Design; Printer: Jasper Printing Group]

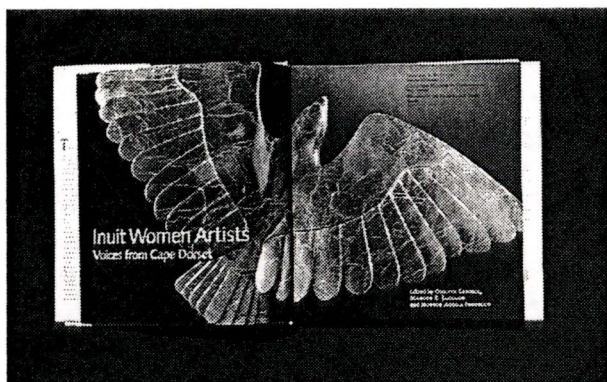
Hon. Men.: *A Stone in My Shoe: Teaching Literacy in Times of Change* [by] Lorri Neilsen. Winnipeg: Peguis Publishers. [Designer: Laura Ayers; Printer: Hignell Printing]

The separate book jacket has long since vanished from this type of book: libraries tend to throw them out anyway. New plasticized treatments of a paper wrapper are now sturdy and sufficiently fingerprint-proof to make a paperback satisfactory even for a book used frequently and roughly rather than for sequential reading. The most prized feature in a reference book is quickly intelligible layout of text, and often related illustrative, information. The first-prize winner deals with both admirably. The second lays out bibliographic information and its indices clearly yet compactly. The Honourable Mentions recognize good layout of directory information in the first case and a particularly inviting appearance in the literacy text.

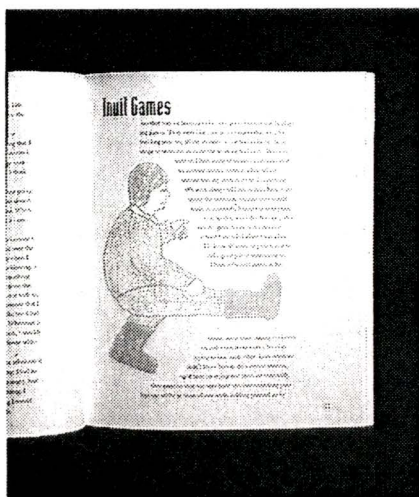
Limited Editions

1st Prize: *L'Empreinte du Bleu; suite poétique de Hélène Dorion; gravures de Marc Garneau*. Montréal: Éditions du Noroît. (8 gatherings unsewn, in folder in wood case; 55 copies) \$800.00. [Designer: Martin Dufour; Printers: Denise Lapointe (engraved illus.), Martin Dufour (text)]

2nd Prize: *The Witkin Gallery 25: A Celebration of Twenty Five Years of Photography in New York City* with a portfolio selected by Evelyne Z. Diatz and an introduction by Peter C. Bunnell. Toronto: Lumière Press. 250 copies) \$200.00 for the ed. with an original photograph. [Designer, printer, and binder: Michael Torosian]



**2nd Prize: Gen. Trade Books (Adult Picture & Photography):
*Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset.***



Hon. Mention: Juvenile Books: *An Inuk Boy Becomes a Hunter.*

Every year the judges hope to have the pleasure of seeing some new variant on the old theme of lavish excellence produced with love and without apparent regard for cost. The first-prize winner this year exemplifies that type of book perfectly. It is good that such works of art can continue to be produced. The trouble taken with the blind-stamped stained wood-box enclosure excites admiration; perhaps even more does the clarity of detail in the reproduction of the fine-line etchings, many hand-finished. The type "bites" evenly and beautifully into the rich paper. Michael Torosian regularly produces books of slightly more commercial appearance but always with the exquisite attention to detail of the fine printer/binder.

Juvenile Books

1st Prize: *Joseph: A Prairie Boy's Story*, story by Jim McGugan; illustrated by Murray Kimber. Northern Lights Books for Children. Red Deer: Red Deer College Press. [Designer: Kunz & Associates; Printer: Dong A Printing, South Korea]

2nd Prize: *White Horses and Shooting Stars: A Book of Wishes* [by] David Greer; illustrated by Chum McLeod. Vancouver: Polestar Press. [Designer: Julian Ross and Shelley Ackerman; Printer: Donnelly Printers, U.S.A.]

3rd Prize (tie): *La Diabliesse and the Baby: A Caribbean Folktale* as told by Richardo Keens-Douglas; illustrated by Marie LaFrance. Toronto: Annick Press, distributed by Firefly Books. [Designer: Lizabeth Laroche; Printer: D.W. Friesen & Sons] - [also published (but not submitted) in the French-language edition]: *La Diabliesse et le bébé*.

3rd Prize (tie): *Hairs on Bears*, text by Geraldine Ryan-Lush; illustrations by Normand Cousineau. Toronto: Annick Press, distributed by Firefly Books. [Designer: Normand Cousineau; Printer: D.W. Friesen & Sons] - [also published (but not submitted) in the French-language edition]: *Poils, poils et repails*.

Hon. Men.: *An Inuk Boy Becomes a Hunter* [by] John Igloliorte. Halifax: Nimbus Publishing. [Designer: Kathy Kaulbach; Printer: Best Book Manufacturers]

For the first time, Canadian-printed books now predominate among citations in this category as they have long done in the others: high-quality

colour work seems now available in Canada at competitive prices. The first-prize winner is one of the more fully integrated designs in a children's book seen in recent years. The feel and colour of the prairie in it is strong; the full-page-bleed illustrations are never allowed to obscure lines of the text. The second-prize winner is a book for children or adults; the whimsy of its running-head design and the simple colouring make it, visually, equally suitable for any age. Both third prizes rely on strong colour and consistent design. The sense of arctic coldness permeates the Honourable Mention in its use of blue and pale yellow; the text layout is also imaginative.

Concluding Comments

Two economic terrors dominate the world of Canadian publishing this spring: (1) sharply increased paper prices, said to have the potential to add a dollar or two to the price of the average-sized book and (2) sharply diminished subsidies from the federal government and, by implication, probably also from provincial governments. Almost every book cited above includes an explicit acknowledgement of government subsidy, usually more specific than just the generic federal "block grant" which most publishers of Canadian content have in the past had almost automatic access to. Retail book sales are said to be very "price-sensitive". Economic pressures have had a marked effect in recent years on the production of exhibition catalogues, hobby books, reference books, etc. It is a credit to the Canadian publishing industry that it is keeping alive the heart of Canadian culture: its children's books, its fiction, its poetry, and still managing to present this culture in a suitable and visually attractive manner. It is clear that Canadian designers are up to the task, provided money is available for them to continue their excellent work.

Judges: The judges named below have acted for the past few years of this competition, providing, we hope, continuity within our diverse views on design qualities:

Roberto Dosil (Praxis Design, Vancouver)
Ronald Hagler (Professor, School of Library, Archival and
Information Studies, The University of B.C.)
Dennis Nagy (Studio Allsorts, Vancouver).

Professor Hagler trusts that this summary of the comments of his fellow judges constitutes a balanced summary of their views as well as his own.