

KNIT

FOR

LEARN

By Sarah Albu and Heather Barrett  
with the students of FOLK6740 - Public Folklore



"GIRL WITH EYEGLASSES IN ROCKING CHAIR KNITTING,"  
1892. (COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS)

# KNIT, PURL, LISTEN

*exploring connections between sound + textile*

**Sarah Albu + Heather Barrett**  
**with the students of FOLK6740 - Public Folklore**

Edited by Dale Jarvis  
Layout/Design by Jessie Meyer  
**March 2020**  
Craft Council of NL Gallery / Heritage NL







NEWFOUNDLAND KNIT  
SOCKS BY SPINDRIFT  
HANDKNITS.  
(COURTESY OF  
CHRISTINE LEGROW)

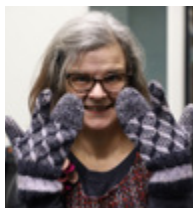
## THE EXHIBIT

**WE ARE KNITTERS** who work in music, sound, performance and radio. This collection, presented at the Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador Gallery in March/April 2020, is a sonic exploration of textile tools, processes, reflections and memories of working: from land to sheep to fibre to yarn to garment. This interactive sonic space asks how handcraft sounds, and how craft artists experience sound internally (real or imagined/implied) while working with material. It asks how we experience the life of an object through its multiple transformations, and through memory and reflection after its present form has been created. It asks how we measure time, in material, and in sound, and how the body itself is technology.

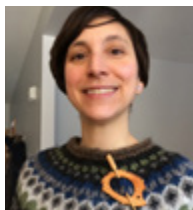
Knitters make objects not only to look at, but to touch and wear. Musicians and sound artists make sound opportunities not only for audiences to hear, but to experience through participation. With knitting and with sound, there is lots of making and doing.

— **Sarah Albu & Heather Barrett**

# ARTIST BIOS/ STATEMENTS



**HEATHER BARRETT** was born in St. John's, N.L. where she still lives today. She is a veteran CBC journalist and broadcaster, and an award winning radio documentary maker. She has university degrees in both journalism and music. In recent years, she has become an avid knitter. Heather enjoys incorporating many of her interests in whatever project she is working on. Her love of knitting has led her to explore storytelling and sonic opportunities with a community of creative knitters both in Newfoundland and Labrador and beyond.



**SARAH ALBU** is a Montréal-based experimental vocalist, composer and performance-maker. Her background in theatre and obsession with science fiction feed quirky and darkly comedic imagined worlds. She has performed and presented work at the Banff Centre for the Arts, the National Arts Centre of Canada, and international concert series and festivals across Canada, Europe, the US and Mexico. Active in free improvisation, new music and Balkan folklore, she is comfortable lending her voice to settings ranging from 15th century polyphony to noise and psychedelic rock. An avid knitter and folk dancer, her recent work explores the effects of rapidly developing technology on our bodies and lives through a mix of curiosity and nostalgia.

## **FOLK6740 - PUBLIC FOLKLORE**

is a graduate-level folklore course at Memorial University, which addresses the various ways in which folklorists present their research back to the communities from which the material originated. As part of their course, students interviewed local knitters, compiled the stories in this booklet, and edited some of the sound clips used in the exhibit.



# KNITTING IN A NORTHERN LAND

By Shirley A. Scott

**HAND KNITTING** is a democratic, low-technology flourishing of personal creativity that is alive and well in Canada today. You may knit a beautiful garment for twenty dollars or for two hundred dollars. You may knit with the fibres of science or the fibres of history. Only the simplest equipment is needed — money is no barrier to knitting. You may wear a knitted garment to a skating rink, to a bar mitzvah, or to a shareholders' meeting — knitting has social standing. You may clothe yourself or your friends, for hand knitting is an act of generosity.

Best of all, for the knitter, hand knitting is a straw into gold experience, one of the highest orders of self-fulfillment options in a complicated world. The excitement of transforming a linear filament into a work of three-dimensional wearable art, all while sitting in your favourite chair, is hard to surpass. Knitters arrive — they are not



WOMAN KNITTING, 1941.  
(COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS)

always travelling. Knitters' eyes glitter, their fingers glide, and their minds and bodies are engaged and active. They get the best from life.

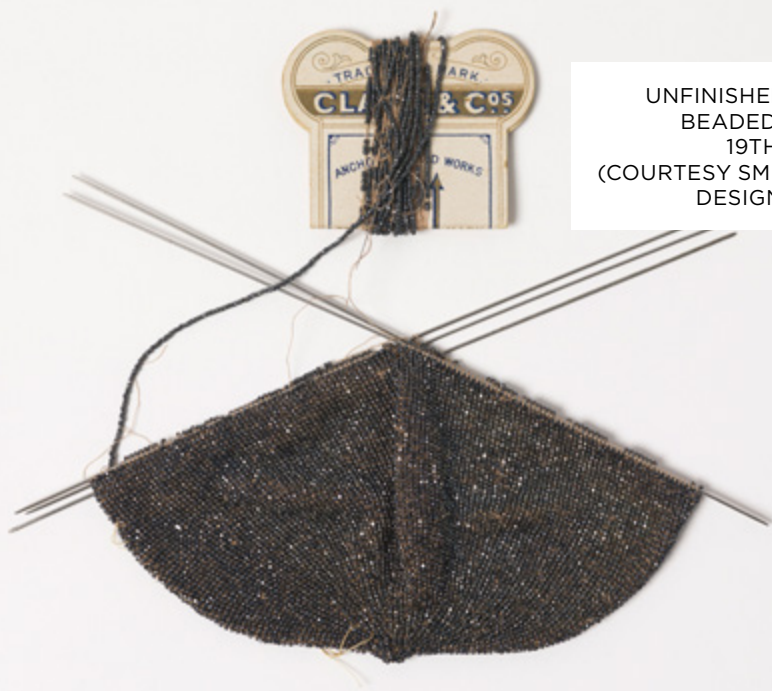
But in the beginning there was necessity.

Canada is a northern land, and except for its gentle, wave-lapped coastal regions, it is full of fire and ice. But the fire seems brief and the ice long. Our summers are short celebratory affairs for throwing away on pleasure — it is winter that grips the Canadian imagination. For all but the most insulated city dweller, winter is both a natural and a spiritual force to be reckoned with. Knitting is a remarkable weapon on both scores. When the first Europeans came to this country, they were often shocked by the ferocity of the seasons that went along with the opportunities of life in their adopted land. Their need for warm, serviceable clothing was urgent and imperative.

Canadian knitters have always had their work cut out for them.

**REPRINTED, WITH PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR, FROM:**

Scott, Shirley. *Canada Knits: Craft and Comfort in a Northern Land*.  
Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1990.



UNFINISHED PIECE OF  
BEADED KNITTING,  
19TH CENTURY.  
(COURTESY SMITHSONIAN  
DESIGN MUSEUM)

## Our Knitters & Their Stories

# HEATHER BARRETT

Interviewed by Rose Baruh

For the last couple of years Heather Barrett has been going back to an old, but not forgotten Newfoundland female tradition – the art of knitting. Originally from St. John's, with immediate connections to Green's Harbor and Old Perlican, Heather strongly supports the importance of celebrating and honoring family traditions. The art of knitting reemerged in Heather's life back in 2015

*"I am just so glad knitting came into my life as an adult. I just took a course on a whim a few years ago. And I rediscovered it. And I think I've discovered it in a new way. And it's just opened up this whole new world of enjoyment and socialization and intellectual discovery. And I am just so glad that either I found it or it found me"*

Whether she knits in her cozy sofa in the privacy of her home, watches some Netflix show or gets together with her knitting group at Jumping Bean, the advantages of this activity are various in particular their therapeutic and meditative qualities

*"I feel calm and relaxed but engaged as well. There is almost like a flow going on. I am interested in something, I am watching patterns emerge or colors emerge. It's a quiet, meditative thing. I use it to calm down and kind of just destress"*

Heather believes the time has come to promote Newfoundland's distinctive craftsmanship and fiber arts outside the conventional modes of practice, especially through the many new and emerging cyber portals, social gatherings and public activities such as Facebook, Ravelry and Yarn bombing.

Today she is an established host and producer of Weekend AM on CBC Radio One in Newfoundland and Labrador and a sole owner of the arts and craft store Yarn Cove, or as she prefers to call it "a woolly state of mind".

## In Grandma's Rocking Chair

*"I would sit in a rocking chair with her like, she'd sit where I am sitting, and then I squish in on the side. And she would take her*



*knitting needles she cast on the stitches for me. But then she would show me how to put the needles together and slip my needle through the loop of the other, and how to bring the wool over. So I'd be snuggled into her on the side, and we'd be knitting together"*

*"I do have the cushion that we knit together. My mother had it for many years. We have a small house in Green's Harbor in Trinity Bay where my mother grew up. And it just became a bit of summer house furniture. It was just an old cushion that was in this little house that my family uses during the summer. But I brought it back recently to my own house in St. John's to rescue."*



GRANDMOTHER'S CUSHION. (COURTESY HEATHER BARRETT)

### **Let's Knit!**

*"I take my knitting with me. If I am traveling, I will knit on an airplane. I will knit if I am a passenger in a car. If I know I am going to be somewhere and I have to wait for something, like if I have to go to a government office and wait to get documents, I'll take my knitting there. During the snowstorm that we had last week, I actually got stuck at work overnight. We were trapped at work. I knew I might be staying at work overnight when it started so I made sure I took my knitting with me so I would have something to do"*

### **Meeting With the Gals**

*"Usually we will meet about once a month and we'll talk a little bit about knitting, maybe what we are knitting or what we are working on, patterns that we like or wool that we like, but we'll also talk about everything else. We'll talk about life, we'll talk about our children, challenges with caring for older parents, we'll gossip about things. It's basically an excuse to socialize, but with knitting"*

### **Reclaiming Tradition**

*"I think women are feeling more comfortable in reclaiming what would have been considered as traditional women's work or old-fashioned women's work. There is a recognition that in the past that work may have been looked down upon because it was homemaking, but now it's being recognized as just as legitimate work for how people live or made their lives as the work that men did like fishing or farming, out of the house. There is almost like a political reclaiming of that work and saying that I am out here and I am owning it"*

### **Fabriculture Meets the Web!**

*"The internet has changed everything because there's so many resources online, so many patterns, so many options of materials to use, so many different kinds of yarn and wool. It's now a choice for people to knit. When I was a little girl, people knit for necessity, that's how you got sweaters, hats or mitts"*



HEATHER BARRETT. (E. MOHAMMADI)

## **Favorite Patterns**

*"My favorite patterns are the traditional Newfoundlander patterns. It's been documented in the Saltwater Mittens books. In terms of colors, I tend to gravitate towards deep reds and purples, and blues. I like those really rich jewel tones. I'd like to put them against gray or a neutral background. But I really like reds and blues and purples are my favorite"*

## **Behind the Yarn Bombing Phenomenon**

*"I think it is great. I think it is really subversive. The whole movement of craftivism like being an activist through what would be traditionally home based activities associated with women and homemaking, but kind of bringing it out into the public and bringing it into unexpected places. I think it's a fantastic idea. It kind of reclaims the power of knitting, and brings the strength of women that would usually be felt in the home and in private places, into public places and unexpectedly, and it kind of disrupts what's going on. Look, if you see a parking meter covered in yarn, it's surprising and unexpected. And it's a little bit unsettling, like, why is that happening? Why would you do that? What's the statement there?"*

## **Honouring the Family and the Province**

*"Members of my family in the past knit. And I like to think in a way that I am honoring and celebrating them by continuing to knit".*  
*"I think it's hugely important because, prior to the last few decades, most of our goods and what we consumed had to be made locally. So it was a survival tool up until about fifty years ago. The patterns were developed independently of other parts of the world because we are an island, we are isolated. The wool was local and women were celebrated for their skill in small communities for making certain patterns. Knitting has long been commemorated in visual art. Sometimes it shows up there, it will show up in writing sometimes. Newfoundlanders have, I think, a stronger sense of place and home and self and the way that we, so I think it's actually quite important here compared to other parts of North America."*

## **The Unexpected Journey**

*"That's sort of an unexpected journey for me, like it did not expect to get so heavily into the art of knitting. I just wanted to make a hat. That's all I wanted to do. And now I am sort of going into all kinds of different worlds with it."*

# RENEE LAWRENCE

Interviewed by Ehsan Mohammadi

A mother to two adorable children and transcriber at MUNFLA (Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive), Renee Lawrence started knitting for the first time when she was four years old. Almost three decades later, she still has tremendous enthusiasm for knitting and its social aspects. Many things have changed since the days she started knitting, but one thing is still certain: knitting has been stabilized as an art craft in our contemporary life. She grew up in St. John's. However, since she has family in the bay and there were neither chains nor big markets, they had to make the required facilities themselves back in the days. Knitting "in those days was not only practical craft for what you need for your family, but it was also a way to pass the time."

In her knitting style, she starts with basic local patterns and then tries to develop her own taste as there are many new ideas and trends that are not necessarily covered by traditional patterns. In the meantime, by making new patterns she feels her own inner voice and her ability to make bridge between past and present. She believes that online chat groups and social media, where people are able to share their own experiences, help all knitters to come up with new ideas and patterns. She observes that knitting has been considered as a new trend by people these days, as you can see people of different ages and genders knitting here and there.

Renee sees knitting as a kind of meditation or therapy which has filled the gap in her life that was covered previously by other activities. Moreover, she knits according to her mental state. In fact, the colours and the patterns are all based on her feeling at that moment and if she is busy or not at that particular time. The more mental capacity and the less agitation, the more complicated patterns she will use in her crafts. Furthermore, she expresses that knitting is so flexible. Renee compares knitting to carpentry which can be used either for humans, animals, or objects. In addition, she believes that there is a similarity between motherhood in one hand and knitting on the other. In both, you feel kind of fulfilment and sense of reward because "you make something yourself and can see the end result."

With knitting, Renee holds that you can draw inspiration from other arts like painting, photography, architecture, and so on. While she





RENEE LAWRENCE. (E. MOHAMMADI)

finds it complicated to follow arts other than knitting, she believes that to find an innovative or new pattern, the boundaries of different arts could overlap each other. In fact, the idea or the image you have in your mind does not necessarily turn into a knitting pattern. So, you need to be open to other skills to use or imitate them in your artifacts.

Knitting, in the way that people once produced goods for their own needs, is a kind of nostalgia these days. Renee regrets that even in her family, people get used to buying things from stores rather than making themselves. Many of her teachers and family members who were the bearers of this knowledge are not alive anymore. While many techniques and patterns have been recorded and maintained, some parts of that knowledge have gone forever.

### **Family of Knitters**

*"I have been knitting since I was four or five years old. Typically around the bay there is less access to facilities and things like that. So a lot of times, especially back in the old days, rather than going to the Walmart or wherever to shop for the things, you had to make them yourself. So, a lot of my knitting knowledge comes from my family around the bay who lived that way. But also originally it was my*

*great grandmother and my great aunt in town who taught me to knit when I was about four or five."*

## **Knitting as Meditation**

*"I always say that it's my therapy. It's a way to unwind. I used to read a lot and then I used to find fishing and hunting and berry picking, being in the woods, being away from the hustle-bustle of daily life, was kind of a break. But now that life has kind of changed, knitting is that for me. So, whether I am doing it at home, or I am doing it at work on break, or I am doing it when I am waiting for doctor appointment, it's just a minute to do something else with your hands to keep them busy and keep your mind focused on something, and not just aimlessly scrolling on the Facebook on your phone or something like that".*



JASMINE PAUL AND RENEE LAWRENCE. (E. MOHAMMADI)

## **The Good Old Days and the Masters are Gone**

*"As a kid learning as most kids do, you don't take stuff seriously. I figured out how to do that, I know how to do it now; that's awesome. But there's a kind of regret that some of my teachers are not still around now. So, I can't learn other crafts or more advanced skills. In that respect, I guess it's kind of similar to oral history in a way. There are lots of patterns and things that have been done from memory and maybe not written down. Or they're written down somewhere and poked away on pieces of paper, but they don't look at things with an archival mind-set like ourselves. So, it gets lost or thrown away, or torn or damaged in fire or whatever. There's a kind of regret that I didn't get more serious about knitting before the opportunity to get hold of some these tools or to get information out of those who were still alive had passed."*

# JASMINE PAUL

Interviewed by Kathleen Fleming

Jasmine Paul is a 31-year old woman originally from Whiteway in Trinity Bay. In 2006, she moved to St. John's, and does "a little bit of everything" working as a professional fish-harvester, like her father, along with also being a knitter, a writer, and an undergraduate student in the Folklore program at Memorial University of Newfoundland.



JASMINE PAUL. (E. MOHAMMADI)

Discovering a love of crafting through the textiles program at the College of the North Atlantic in 2009, it was knitting that she really "latched onto," finding that it was relaxing and helpful when trying to concentrate on television programs or lectures. While usually a solitary knitter, Jasmine has knit with friends and enjoys the storytelling and bonding that comes from being part of a group. An entrepreneur like her maternal grandmother, who used to own a

craft shop, Jasmine makes, dyes, and sells her own wool, in addition to occasionally selling her knitting projects at craft fairs. She mainly enjoys making larger, straight pieces such as scarves or shawls, but has made hats and socks.

Self-described as being “a bit unusual,” Jasmine tries to combine the modern with the traditional, either by using contemporary materials in traditional patterns, or by making up her own designs. Working under the belief that crafting and knitting is important because “it stitches people together,” Jasmine works as a knitting teacher at Michael’s craft store in St. John’s, Newfoundland.



JASMINE PAUL AND KATHLEEN FLEMING. (E. MOHAMMADI)

## **Creating Bonds**

*“I think we can expand what we want to do and still appreciate the value of traditional crafts.”*

## **Traditionally Untraditional**

*“Well I think in... everything that I do, even with my academics, I’ve tried to tend on the traditional with the contemporary, so in my knitting I’ll choose to do a lot of traditional patterns, but I’ll use*



contemporary materials. Instead of using the rougher Briggs and Little yarn all the time, I opt for a softer one, done with merino and that will change the texture of it a little bit.”

## **Knitting Bloomers**

“In 2012, the Craft Council and the Anna Templeton Center, they wanted to do a project based on that, and I chose to knit the bloomers pattern in the book. So, there’s actually in this book a pattern for a pair of underpants done with wool. But what I did was I took all of my old underwear, cut out the crotches, and made yarn out of all of them, and I also got donations from my friends. They recycled their old underpants, took out all the elastic, we had to use stitch-rippers, we ripped all the elastics, and then I had to cut each piece into strings of yarn. I ended up using 72 pairs and that’s what I knit the bloomers pattern with. They weighed 20 pounds when I was done!”

## **There’s No Such Thing as a Mistake**

“With knitting, determination is I think key. And you know, this is what I say to my knitting students, if I’m teaching them how to do something and they’ve made a mistake, I’ll say, ‘Well you want to know what, that’s not actually a mistake...because with knitting there not really any kind of mistake. Anything you do will influence the shape of the thing that you are making, and maybe you don’t want to make something that you want to wear, maybe you want to make a piece of art. In that kind of way, that’s allowed’.”

## **Back to Knitting**

“My Nan Paul, now she knitted a lot more when I was younger, before I was born, and she also did quilting. But as she started to age, her hands got more arthritis and stuff, and she stopped. But, in the last few years I’ve noticed the appearance of knitting baskets in her living room. So I think in a way, cause I’d have my knitting with me when I went to see her, and she’d just pick it up and she’d start working on it, and I think that kind of encouraged her to get back into it again... I think Nan seeing me knitting reminded her of how much she liked it and I think it encouraged her to pick it back up again. I don’t think she does it a whole lot, but the knitting basket is there underneath the table where it wasn’t 12 years ago, but it’s there for the last 5 years.”

# SHEILA RYAN

Interviewed by Karin Murray-Bergquist

Sheila Ryan learned knitting from her mother as a young child, but didn't fully embrace it until many years later, when she came to appreciate its complexity. Realising that her mother had spared her the most difficult parts of the craft, she decided to challenge herself by taking on more involved projects, honouring her mother's legacy and setting off on her own adventure into the textile world. From vamps (ankle-high slip-on knitted slippers) and mittens, including the trigger mittens designed for Newfoundland hunters, to delicate scarves and pop culture icons, she has explored knitting from all angles.

Sheils comes from an inventive family, in which a number of people have been creatively minded, including her sister and her aunt. Despite not having a working spinning wheel, the latter spun her own yarn using a specially modified bicycle wheel. Sheila's young nephew, as well, favours knitting, and accompanies her on trips to the yarn shop.

Sheila enjoys experimenting with classic patterns, with many knitting projects firmly rooted in her home province of Newfoundland. She often draws on recently published works on traditional knitwear, such as Christine LeGrow and Sheila Scott's *Saltwater Classics*, for inspiration. While her mother did not follow patterns — like a musician learning by ear, she simply observed existing patterns and copied



SHEILA RYAN. (E. MOHAMMADI)

them — Sheila often uses patterns for inspiration and guidance. Both technically precise and highly artistic, patterns are a good way to test out new stitches and hone mathematical skills. Knitting with others offers her the chance to exchange ideas and discuss future projects.

In the next few years, Sheila intends to start working with more colours, branching out from the standard greys, blacks, and whites or off-whites that her mother worked with. She's also hoping to explore the places where knitting has shaped the local culture and history, such as the Faroe Islands or Shetland. She often knits with a Netflix show in the background, including the crime drama Shetland, where the knitwear is as riveting as the murderous intrigues.

Sheila, like her mother, knits practical items such as socks and mittens, but lately she has been branching out into more elaborate, delicate scarves and decorative oddities. Among her latest accomplishments is a knitted Baby Yoda, which she made as a gift for a friend. Her advice to aspiring knitters is simple but strong: "Don't be afraid of it. Take it on, and take it in baby steps, and just build your confidence. And you'll soon feel that sense of success, because it's something that you did, it's an accomplishment."

## **Sense of Continuity**

*"The role of tradition? Well, you know what, all my sisters say 'Oh my gosh, Mom will never die!' And my nieces and nephews, who are now married with children of their own, all say 'Oh, can you knit a pair of mittens for Farley, like Nan knit for me?' So it's really keeping my mom alive, and I feel like I'm passing on some of her things."*

## **Knitting Through the Generations**

*"You know what, I'm with my mother. All the time. And if I run into a problem with my knitting, I say 'Gosh, I wish Mom was here, to help me with this,' and I plow through it, and I get it fixed, and I think 'Yep, she's with me,' you know? I feel a real comfort in it."*

*"Since 2017 [my nephew] has been coming to wool stores with me, either Wool Trends or Cast On Cast Off. On Tuesday I picked him up.. and he says 'Auntie Sheila, isn't this where your favourite wool shop is?' I let him pick out some synthetic, some big bulky wool for himself. When he was finished, he had enough to make a little scarf!"*

## **Surprises in the Craft**

*"This scarf surprised me. Baby Yoda surprised me. Knitting my first pair of socks, from start to finish, by myself. And I did them on cables*

*like this, but I was able to do two of the socks at the same time — I had found a video online that showed you how to do that, so it was very successful. I didn't have the fatigue of finishing one sock and then starting all over again."*

## **Intricate Calculations**

*"There is a lot of mathematics in knitting, for sizing, and to adjust patterns, and things like that — I do not have that skill, maybe I will someday! But I do not have that yet. I tried to knit a sweater for myself, and I was so thrilled with how this was coming out [...] so I was doing one arm, and it was just coming on great, so I thought. But I had misread the pattern, so I didn't realise, I did one decrease in the stitches, but I was supposed to do that decrease all the way up the arm. So I ended up with one arm that was really wide and came down to my knees. I did get it fixed after, so I got a great sweater out of it. With a story!"*



KARIN MURRAY-BERGQUIST AND SHEILA RYAN. (E. MOHAMMADI)

## **Off-the-Cuff Patterns**

*"My mother didn't have a lot of patterns, because she didn't knit from a pattern, she would look at a picture. And she did some very complicated sweaters as well. My mom was out visiting my sister and had met this Norwegian couple, and she was admiring the lady's sweater that she had on, which was a traditional Norwegian pattern. And they're very complicated, the colours, and it had the braiding which is attached to the top, and it had little clasps around there... a puff to the sleeve that came in at the cuff, and the braiding at the bottom of the cuff. And a very complicated pattern. And my mom asked if she could borrow her sweater so she could look at it. And do you know that woman knit a sweater for my sister!"*



# VICKIE WALSH

Interviewed by Megan Webb

Vickie Walsh is a 65-year-old who has been knitting for about 50 years. She self-identifies as a craftsperson and artist from “way back.” She was raised in the 1950s by her grandparents down on the Southern Shore, lived away for work, and when she returned to Newfoundland to find a home, she moved back to the Southern Shore to reside in Burnt Cove. She first learned the basics of knitting from her grandmother, Mary Murphy from Bay Bulls. Her grandmother passed away while Vickie was still relatively young, just before she discovered her passion for knitting.

A few years later Vickie met Gladys Baird who took her under her wing and led her into the world of knitting. Mrs. Baird introduced Vickie to Anna Templeton, and the two women guided her to join the Craft School that is now known as the Anna Templeton Centre. Vickie described the two as like her “community parents.” She attended the Craft School in the 1970s and did the two-year weaving and crafts program.

After graduating from the Craft School Vickie attended art school and became a teacher, specifying that: “I’ve concentrated on teaching community groups and travelling in schools to knit as a visiting artist.” Nowadays, being retired and now that her two sons are adults, Vickie mostly knits for herself. She is part of a knitting group called Kindred Spirits that gathers once a week in Ferryland to knit in each other’s company. Vickie considers the knit projects that the group donates to organizations such as the Heart and Stroke Foundation as their way of “giving back” to the community.



KNIT SOCK BY VICKIE WALSH.  
(COURTESY V. WALSH)



VICKIE WALSH. (E. MOHAMMADI)

### **Kindred Spirits**

*"I do go to a group, the Kindred Spirits. We get together and knit with friends, it's very common for a group of people to sit down together. But you don't get much knitting done, you talk, you tell stories, chat, and we sing songs. We do show and tell, which is pretty common, because people are always interested in what everybody else is doing. So, that's where I knit – I knit a little and talk a lot."*

*"Every once in a while, we have people who like to sing. Christmas time is really fun because all of a sudden someone will say 'let's sing a carol,' and we'll start singing Silver Bells or something, and we all join in while we're knitting. They have set aside a little bit of time for show and tell, which is the knitting style, asking 'does anybody want to tell a story? Does anybody want to sing a song or a poem or something they've written?' It's a nice way to not just have knitting, it's all about the community."*

## **Stitching Together Old Memories**

*"They talk about how when you get older you remember more from your childhood, well, that is all of a sudden happening, and I am absolutely amazed at what I can pull out of the cupboard from way back. Stories that were told to me by my family members, their experiences, and that's what comes back when you're knitting. It puts you in a zone, like a visual meditation. Your hands are visually doing something, and all of a sudden, your mind starts going back, it's very nice. It's peaceful."*

## **Knitflix**

*"This is why we joke about the 'knitflix, little grannies sittin' around watchin' her knitflix.' Well, that's a really good boon to us, streaming has finally caught up with knitters. We can watch what we want, where we want, when we want, when we're knitting."*

## **Giving Back Through Teaching the Past**

*"When I was young, I used to think that it was so silly, 'why are all these retired people knitting and giving things away?' But now I see it. It's a value that we can do it, that we have the time to do it, and if it's going to help somebody, it's a really nice way to give back. At our age, we want to give back for some reason. Maybe it's always been in the human brain, people wanting to give back. The older people wanted to give back to the younger people by teaching them their crafts. I suppose that's how I feel, because I didn't think it was cool for old people to just be sitting around knitting and giving things away, but now I understand it."*

## **Memories of Clicking Sounds**

*"We all associate the clicking of the needles with the sound of someone in your household knitting. It's a nostalgic sound, and it's rhythmic. The sound of the actual rhythm of knitting is kind of soothing, and I think that's more of a nostalgic thing. I remember my grandmother knitting and she was sitting there, and the needles would be clicking."*





VICKIE AT CRAFT SCHOOL, CIRCA  
1970S. (COURTESY V. WALSH)



### **WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:**

Rose Baruh	Jasmine Paul
Nick Bendzsa	Glenn Rice
Peter Coates / The Sheep of Peter	Theresa Roberts
Coates / Coates Family Farm	Katie Rowe
Reuben Fenemore	Sheila Ryan
Kathleen Fleming	Shirley A. Scott
Dale Jarvis	Andrew Staniland and students
Michelle LaCour	from Memorial University
Renee Lawrence	Department of Music
Christine LeGrow	Victoria Walsh
Ehsan Mohammadi	Megan Webb
Karin Murray-Bergquist	

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### **CREATIVE TECHNOLOGISTS, TECHNICAL CONSULTATION:**

Erin Gee  
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### **ORGANIZATIONS:**

The Canada Council for the Arts  
Memorial University  
CBC Newfoundland and Labrador  
ArtsNL  
Craft Council NL Gallery  
HeritageNL  
Sound Symposium  
Spindrift Handknits  
Briggs and Little Woolen Mills Ltd.  
International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation



HEATHER BARRETT WITH ROSE BARUH.  
(E. MOHAMMADI)

## **ABOUT THE CRAFT COUNCIL OF NL GALLERY**

The Craft Council Gallery seeks to raise the profile of fine contemporary craft and expand the boundaries of contemporary craft practice through exhibition opportunities, documentation, research and critical writing, promotion, artist presentations, educational projects, and partnerships. It is located in the heart of downtown St. John's, seeks financial assistance for the continuation of its successful exhibition and outreach programming. The Craft Council Gallery was the province's first exhibition space dedicated solely to the presentation, promotion and sale of works of fine craft; and remains the City's only dedicated craft gallery. The Gallery hosts a minimum of 18 exhibitions annually. Solo and group shows are featured alongside experimental, residency-style programs. Programming is developed with input from a volunteer committee comprised of craftspeople, curators and members of the community. We value and encourage both traditional and innovative craft practices. Exhibition proposals from curators and craftspeople are welcome.

The Craft Council underwent a huge change this past year, moving from the historic Devon House building on the east end of Duckworth



STARTING A SOCK AT A HERITAGENL WORKSHOP  
IN 2016. (STEPHANIE MICKYAN)



into a newly renovated Heritage building on Duckworth Street. The Gallery's exhibition space increased in square footage, going from two galleries to three. The shift from owning to renting meant a substantial increase in operational costs. Support from the City of St. John's is vital in this new financial climate to ensuring the Gallery can continue its valuable work in serving both the public and our craft community.

## **ABOUT HERITAGE NL**

The mission of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador's Intangible Cultural Heritage Office is to safeguard and sustain the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador for present and future generations everywhere, as a vital part of the identities of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and as a valuable collection of unique knowledge and customs. This is achieved through initiatives that celebrate, record, disseminate, and promote our living heritage and help to build bridges between diverse cultural groups within and outside Newfoundland and Labrador.





## **Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador**

275 Duckworth Street,  
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[www.craftcouncil.nl.ca](http://www.craftcouncil.nl.ca)



**Heritage NL**  
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[www.heritagennl.ca](http://www.heritagennl.ca)  
[www.ichblog.ca](http://www.ichblog.ca)



ST. JOHN'S