

The Evolution of Scandinavian Folk Art Education within the Contemporary Context

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

Mary Etta Litsheim

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Shari L. Peterson, Adviser

December 2010

© Mary Etta Litsheim 2010

Acknowledgements

My thanks and appreciation go to Dr. Shari L. Peterson, graduate adviser and inspiring educator; Dr. Rosemarie J. Park, Dr. James M. Brown, and Dr. Karen L. LaBat, members of my Ph.D. committee who model excellence respective of the University of Minnesota; Jan DeNoble, loyal and accomplished teacher, editor. Also to Dr. Howard Y. Williams, the initial inspiration for my interest in the field of adult education; and Dr. Gary N. McLean, my first coach in the rigors of academic research. All supported me in their teaching, research, and vigor for affecting and challenging intellectual development.

Most important, my thanks and gratitude go to Jim, Mary Sara, and Scott, who supported me behind the scenes as if they too were engaged in the process. Last, but not least, Ruby and James Rorris, Esq.

My gratitude to Dr. Marion Nelson, my mentor in spirit who inspired me from the day I met and heard him speak at the Revitalization of Ethnic Arts and Crafts Conference in 1996. I still have my notes.

Abstract

Folk education in Scandinavia evolved through the influences of political, social, and cultural change in 18th and 19th century Denmark. Danish high society supported the academic rigor of the German education system and expressed little interest in sustaining the rural folk and its culture. N.F.S. Grundtvig, scholar, minister, and libertarian, who observed this discrepancy between the city elite and the rural class, developed the *folkehøgskole* (folk school) construct that would provide an equitable education and retain the essence of traditional Danish culture. This movement, a melding of education and ethnographic philosophies, inspired the development of folk schools throughout Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and America. Notable modernist and postmodernist educators were inspired by this progressive and student-centered methodology over that of the strictly pedagogic. Museum educators now refer to adult learning technology in developing their events and activities. The Vesterheim Museum, the case in point for this study, offers traditional folk art education programs which include building skills and knowledge in traditional Norwegian arts and crafts. On an annual basis, the Vesterheim sponsors an exhibition and recognition event to recognize the efforts of these artisans. The artistic expression that emanates from the artifacts—weaving, knifemaking, woodworking, and rosemaling--is influenced by Norway's nationalistic period from the mid 17th to the early 19th century. The purpose of this study is to facilitate understanding, through education and recognition efforts, ways in which traditional folk art expression might evolve.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Tables	vii
Chapter 1: Background and Overview	1
Gold Medalist Award	2
Statement of the Problem	4
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions	5
Need for the Study	6
Definitions	7
Assumptions of the Study	9
Overview of the Study	11
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature	13
Scandinavian-American Community	13
Folk School Movement	15
Beginnings in Scandinavia	16
Continuance in America	18
Arts and Crafts Movement	20
Beginnings in Europe	20
Continuance in America	21
Artistry and Folk Art	22
Art, Craft, and Folk Art	22
Symbols	25
Tradition	26
Scandinavian Folk Art	30
Social Context	30
Nationalism	33
Folk and Adult Education	35
Informal	36
Museum's Role	38
Artistic Knowing and Expression	42
Ways of Knowing	42
Meaning and Transformation	45
Developmental Stages	48
Artistic Stages	49
Artistic Development in Postmodern Adult Education	52
Summary	54
Chapter 3: Research Method	56
Case Study Research	56
Foundations of Case Study	57
Methodology Appropriateness	58

Data Collection and Results	59
Researcher's Parameters	59
Research Design	61
Case in Point: The Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum	62
Organization Beginnings	62
Organization Establishment	63
Study Interest	64
National Exhibition Description	65
Recognition Award Description	65
Education Program Description	66
Data Collection	67
Facts	69
Observation	70
Interviews	71
Photographs	74
Study Validity and Reliability	75
Data Analysis	75
Summary	77
Chapter 4: Results	78
Essential Themes and Sub Themes	79
Theme I: About and Developing One's Artistic Self	80
Artistic Role Enlightens Self Perspective	81
Familial Support Is Significant in Pursuing and Sustaining Artistry	84
Community Connections Create Interest in Artistic Endeavor	85
Cultural Affiliation is Acknowledged through Symbols and Rituals	90
Summary	95
Theme II: Sustaining the Tradition Is Based on the Emotional and Practical	95
Primary Style of Artistic Expression Is in the Traditional Form	96
The Traditional Is Integral to a Free Style of Artistic Expression	99
Norwegian and Norwegian-American Expressions Differ	104
Preservation of the Traditional Has Practical Implications for the Future	106
Summary	110
Theme III: Artistic Confidence is Relative to Teaching Effectiveness	110
Philosophy and Methodology Define Teaching Effectiveness	111
Free Style Expression Requires Knowledge of	

Aesthetics	117
Exceptional Opportunities Add Artistic Value	120
Summary	122
Theme IV: Feelings of Dissatisfaction Result in Emerging Issues	123
Competition Creates Impetus for and Barriers to Creativity	123
Awards Criteria and Judging Process Raises Questions	124
Culture of Origin Expands Beyond the Norwegian-American	132
Summary	134
Chapter 5: Discussion	135
Summary of the Study	136
Essential Themes and Sub Themes	138
Theme I: About and Developing One's Artistic Self	139
Artistic Role Enlightens Self Perspective	139
Familial Support Is Significant in Pursuing and Sustaining Artistry	141
Community Connections Create Interest in Artistic Endeavor	142
Cultural Affiliation Is Acknowledged through Symbols and Rituals	144
Theme II: Sustaining the Tradition Is Based on the Emotional and Practical	146
Primary Style of Artistic Expression Is in the Traditional Form	146
The Traditional Is Integral to a Free Style of Artistic Expression	148
Norwegian and Norwegian-American Expressions Differ	150
Preservation of the Traditional Has Practical Implications for the Future	151
Theme III: Artistic Confidence is Relative to Teaching Effectiveness	153
Philosophy and Methodology Define Teaching Effectiveness	153
Free Style Expression Requires Knowledge of Aesthetics	157
Exceptional Opportunities Add Artistic Value	158
Theme IV: Feelings of Dissatisfaction Result in Emerging Issues	161
Competition Creates Impetus for and Barriers to Creativity	161
Awards Criteria and Judging Process Raises Questions	162
Culture of Origin Expands Beyond the Norwegian-American	164
Implications for Research and Practice and Conclusion	165
Researcher Reflections	166

Implications for Research	167
Implications for Practice	168
References	172
Appendices	
Appendix A: Letter to Vesterheim Director	185
Appendix B: IRB Exempt from Review Letter	187
Appendix C: Study Questions	188
Appendix D: Letter to Research Participant	190
Appendix E: Study Consent Form	191

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Artistic Stages	51
Table 2: Study Timeline	68
Table 3: Norwegian Interviews	73
Table 4: Gold Medalist Interviews	74
Table 5: Essential Themes and Sub Themes	79
Table 6: Artistic Mastery in Adult Education	170

Chapter 1

Background and Overview

Weaving is a re-enactment of the creation of the world ... the vertical warp is in fact classed with nature, whereas the weft pertains to culture (Tin, 2007, p. 297).

In the 18th and 19th centuries, creating folk art was a romantic and political expression for the Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes. Preparing for immigration and the long voyage, the soon-to-be Scandinavian-Americans packed their utilitarian and decorative artifacts in their desire to sustain a connection with the homeland. Despite strong and persuasive influences for the immigrants to assimilate within the “American” culture, after World War I and World II, an accelerated interest in heritage and its visual culture became “an extricable and essential component of both individual and social identity” (Reagan, 2005, p. 32). This *diaspora*, the scattering of a culture, and the desire to retain its symbols, was common for the many ethnic groups that settled in the United States.

For most ethnicities, there exists a nation-wide network of museums that preserve the cultural symbols of their folk traditions. “These are the institutions and settings doing the formative cultural mediation [sic] the practical work of civil society” (Carr, 2003, p. 39). As an example, the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa, displays traditional Nordic decorated artifacts and provides additional opportunities for cultural awareness, such as heritage celebrations, conferences, and workshops for “lifelong learning.” Since 1956, in conjunction with its extensive program of folk art classes, the museum has held an annual folk art recognition event and exhibition “famous for producing some of the most accomplished artists working in the Norwegian tradition” (Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, Lifelong Learning Website, ¶3). In 2007,

when the research for this study began, the National Exhibition of Folk Art in the Norwegian Tradition judged 150 handmade objects in various categories, awarding a total of 55 blue, red, and white ribbons, and 5 Gold Medals. The “Gold Medal” is the program’s highest level of award.

Although the majority of the Vesterheim’s exhibition artists submit entries that reflect traditional design and technique, in recent years a “contemporary” category has been established to encourage more free expression. While the Vesterheim outlines criteria in the traditional category that reflects the aesthetics of Norway’s nationalism, the contemporary category reflects traditional aesthetics in a more modern expression of technique and design. However, how these traditional symbols are used and understood does not appear to be fully comprehended.

The Gold Medalist Award

Providing the Gold Medal awards for creating folk art in the tradition is an integral part of the Vesterheim’s Norwegian cultural preservation efforts and aligns with the 19th century perspective of “identities as bounded and coherent” (Macdonald, 2003, p. 5). The folk art designs and techniques used by the Vesterheim artisans provide traditional or contemporary perspectives of Norwegian-American cultural identity and beliefs. Hooper-Greenhill (2000) stated, “The patterns of thought, attitudes and beliefs that structure a society will be embodied with its artefacts” (p. 111).

The “Gold Medal,” as nomenclature for the highest level of artistic award received by Vesterheim artists, has national precedence. For example, the Norwegian textile artist Frieda Hansen, whose “main productive years were in the period between 1900 and 1950, is considered to be the first ‘applied artist’ in the modern sense of the

word” (Norwegian Embassy, Applied Arts Website, ¶5). Her work, still luminary in visual culture, was internationally recognized when she “received a Gold Medal for artistic expression” at the Exposition Universelle 1900 in Paris (Lincoln, 1978, p. 177), as noted in an issue of the American-Scandinavian Review (American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1963). The review also made mention of a “medal in gold” which was awarded to Sven Markelius for “outstanding contributions to Swedish architecture” by the Royal Institute of British Architects (p. 210). This same issue mentions that the Norwegian-American painter Claus Hoie “was awarded the Gold Medal and a \$500 prize at the fiftieth annual exhibit held by the American Water Color Society” (p. 211).

In creating folk art reflective of the tradition, its expression is romantic; in creating folk art reflective of modernism, its expression is yet to be understood. The idea to merge traditional and contemporary expression in folk art is mirrored in the process and results of the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum’s National Exhibition of Folk Art in the Norwegian Tradition. For example, in an already established exhibit category of weaving, a “contemporary” typology has been added. The criteria state that the woven article “should be a contemporary departure from the historical in technique or colors or materials; some elements should still identify the piece as being within the tradition” (Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, 2007, p. 6). This intent to encourage contemporary expression is not clearly supported by definition or criterion in either the annual exhibition awards or the lifelong learning curriculum.

At present, many of the Vesterheim Gold Medalists, who have also been teachers and judges for the program, are advancing in age. These medalists have gradually progressed through the white/red/blue ribbon awards, accumulating points for artistry and

technical competence to achieve the “gold.” Capturing their perspectives and stories could provide valuable feedback and insight to guide the Vesterheim’s future education and recognition programs.

Statement of the Problem

The meaning and relevance of traditional folk art expression is uncertain within the contemporary context, because “what collectors and even museums in this country generally seek in folk art is individual expression which lacks as much as possible the marks of tradition” (Nelson, 1995, p. 13). However, the way artists make meaning in their interpretation and application of the cultural symbols continues to be significant. Gardner (1990) stated:

Individuals who wish to participate meaningfully in artistic perception must learn to decode, to “read,” the various symbolic vehicles in their culture; individuals who wish to participate in artistic creation must learn how to manipulate, how to “write with” the various symbolic forms present in their culture; and, finally, individuals who wish to engage fully in the artistic realm must also gain mastery of certain artistic concepts. (p. 9)

Bringing together the past and present is an artistic challenge for both learner and educator; it assumes a third way of knowing, the *integrative* (Caffarella & Merriam, 2000). And it is this “activity of the mind ... [that] involves the use of and transformation of various kinds of symbols and systems of symbols” (Gardner, 1990, p. 9).

At present in both the Vesterheim’s education program and its recognition program there appears to be a lack of artful understanding on how to assimilate the

language of traditional symbols and their meaning within the contemporary context. It is generally evident that since the resurgence of folk art in the mid 20th century, it is just “the more accomplished artist/craftsman in the revival that is creative within the tradition, much as the early folk artist had been” (Nelson, 1995, p. 96). Understanding artistic development and how the individual and the social context interface in creating meaning will provide introspective support in the process of this study (e.g., Caffarella & Merriam, 1999, 2000; Eisner, 1972; Lawrence, 2005; Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 2000; Parsons, 1987; Taylor, 2006; Tolliver & Tisdell, 2006; Yang, 2003).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to facilitate understanding through education and recognition ways in which traditional folk art expression might evolve. Understanding artistic expression and integrative learning is the foundation for knowing how the creative process evolves. “Adult learning becomes a complex phenomenon involving interaction with biological, psychological, and social environmental factors” (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 87). Understanding the relationship of artistic expression from the tradition to the contemporary context would enhance the skills and the knowledge of the educators and artists. This information could be applied to enhance the contemporary museum’s lifelong learning curriculum and its recognition programs.

Because “learning is a product of the individual interacting with the context” (Caffarella & Merriam, 2000, p. 55), a further analysis of how this interaction transforms the meaning of traditional symbols to meanings relevant in today’s cultural context would be useful. Read (1968) stated, “The same forms may have expressive value, not only for different people, but also for different periods of civilization” (p. 24).

The research question is: How do folk artists as well as educators develop mastery in the traditions of Scandinavian art and yet express meaning within the contemporary context? The following sub questions provide a framework for collecting and analyzing information.

- What is the understanding of “contemporary” in folk art expression?
- What changes have evolved in Norway’s folk high schools that are relevant for the present and future folk art education programs?
- What changes have evolved in adult education philosophy and practice that are relevant for contemporary folk art education programs?
- What is mastery for the folk artists who are expressing themselves within the contemporary context?
- What meaning do cultural symbols from the tradition have in contemporary expression?

Need for the Study

The significance of this case study is to illuminate the importance of preserving the cultural essence of the Scandinavian-American folk art tradition in its evolution and relevance within the contemporary context. The information from this study is expected to improve alignment between today’s folk art education curriculum and recognition programs.

When Scandinavian-American artisans gather, either in small groups or at conferences, there is great enthusiasm for learning all they can from one another, sharing stories about relative cultural events, travel to the homeland, exhibits, museum workshops, and making traditional arts and crafts. Although much of their discourse

includes ideas on traditional methods, they express considerable interest in the influence of the contemporary context. Maslow expressed his enthusiasm for the “education-through-art” movement in saying, “Education through art is a kind of therapy and growth technique, because it permits the deeper layers of the psyche to emerge, and therefore to be encouraged, fostered, trained, and educated” (1971, p. 101). Wennstam (1994), in her discussion on teaching Scandinavian design, provides insight into the continuing role of art in education today:

Postmodern culture has fundamentally changed the role of art and the visual image in society. We are gradually beginning to understand that art can provide a broad and profound medium of education. The process of art produces experiences and meaning with a deep influence on how people see themselves and define their own position in contemporary culture. (p. 26)

Definitions

The terms *folk* and *folk art* will be used throughout this paper. The term *folk* is derived from Old English *folc*. It characterizes “the great proportion of the members of a people that determines the group character and that tends to preserve its characteristic form of civilization and its customs, arts, crafts, legends, traditions, and superstitions from generation to generation” (Merriam-Webster, 2007). Hegard (1995) states that “folk art can be studied either as part of folk culture or as art history” (p. 239). In the Scandinavian languages, folk school terms are *folkehøjskole* in Danish, *folkhögskola* in Swedish, and *folkehøgskule* in Norwegian.

Although there are varying perspectives on *folk art* as “high” art or “unsophisticated” craft, this study is grounded in the framework of Nodermann (1988)

who states that *folk art* is considered a provincial or regional art and not “an amateur class of goods, but of a conscious form of stylization and of the maker’s own aesthetic understanding” (p. 7). The term “art” is generally applied when discussing folk art/the handmade object/artifacts/craft. All infer the essence of art, that “art communicates feelings and emotions, thoughts and ideas” (Freeland, 2001, p. 149). When the term *folk school* is used in this study, it encompasses either the folk college or the folk high school.

The broad artistic construct supporting this discussion is that of *postmodernism*, described as beyond the rationalism of *modernism*. This paradigm of the late 20th and early 21st centuries rejects the previous era’s perspective and criticism of high and low forms of art. *Aesthetic*, when used, is intended to note a non-judgmental perspective of form in context. Anderses (1987) stated:

Being human is to have a feeling for form: [sic] ability to master techniques to perfect form and the capacity to appreciate formal excellence. Sometimes the forms produced elevate the mind above the different emotional states of daily life because of meaning conveyed or past experience associated with them, but they need not do so to be appreciated. (p. 171)

Visual culture is used in describing the hand-made object in this study, although the term *material culture* is also applicable. Both terms have similar meanings, although material culture “largely restricts its focus to three-dimension objects; to materials and their significance, their relationships to each other, and the history and geography and social context of the object” (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 103). Visual culture is “a new concept and an emerging field of study” that “allow[s] the examination of all those

signifying practices, representations and mediations that pertain to looking and seeing ...[;] not shaped in advance by the values of high culture” (p. 13).

Bygdelag is a term used to describe Norwegian-American fraternal organizations. It describes a society, *lag*, whose members have migrated to North America from a particular district, *bygd*, in Norway. Interchangeable and used throughout this paper are the terms *art*, *craft*, *applied art*, *design*, and *decorative art*, which are used to describe folk artifacts, the creative process, and relative programs. The terms *handicraft* and *peasant art* are limited to literature citations; the use of these words in a contemporary context diminishes the artisan’s expression as less than significant in execution. And the term *guild* describes “an association of people with similar interests or pursuits; especially, a medieval association of merchants or craftsmen” (Merriam-Webster, 2008).

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions have influenced the selection of the research method and the research design of this study:

- Current adult education philosophy and practices are instrumental in understanding the development of artistic expression.
- Artistic mastery within the contemporary context is reflective of the individual’s interaction with contextual factors in the environment.
- Creating from the tradition within the contemporary context is reflected in the artist’s meaning and the educator’s knowledge of postmodern adult education philosophy and methods.

Before discussing this study’s research methodology, it is important to reveal the underlying assumptions of the researcher; at times I have been in the position of both

observer (event attendee) and observer-participant (student and intern) in the Vesterheim folk art education programs. This dual role is managed ethically and consciously: “Participant observation combines participation in the lives of the people under study with maintenance of a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data” (Fetterman, 1998, p. 35). The resulting assumptions on my part in this interaction are: (a) that other individuals who seek similar affiliation, expression, and education have the desire for a connection to their ethnicity in their seeking an affinity in Scandinavian expression and techniques; (b) that this connection is also the rationale for group affiliation; and (c) that these individuals and collectives desire to retain the essence of their Scandinavian culture’s traditions in their artistic efforts. Because the “evaluator becomes the conduit through which such voices can be heard” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 38), it is critical for the researcher to understand the weight of their own opinions.

As the researcher, I will move between the *emic* and the *etic*, and vice versa, in forming perspectives from my experiences as a participant in Vesterheim classes and events. Wolcott (1999) says these descriptors “point to differences that make a difference, *emic* to differences important within a particular community and *etic* to differences important to the social scientist interested in intergroup comparison” (p. 37). The *emic* (insider) and *etic* (outsider) lenses can create facilitators or barriers to understanding the participant’s truth. Creswell (1998) states, “Although this lens shapes their [researchers’] initial observations and questions in the field, it may be moderated or changed during fieldwork” (p. 86). *Etic* science is sought by the quantitative researcher. “Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, are committed to an *emic* idiographic, case-

based position, which directs their attention to the specifics of particular cases” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 16).

Overview of the Study

“Learning is a product of the individual interacting with the context” (Caffarella & Merriam, 2000, p. 55). The primary research question is: How do folk artists as well as educators develop mastery in the traditions of Scandinavian art and yet express meaning within the contemporary context? Using the case study method, this question will be addressed using four areas of focus: (a) how individuals in the case setting identify and describe the concept of artistic expression, (b) how learning factors in the case setting facilitate artistic expression and mastery, (c) how the artist and educator in the case setting identify the symbols relevant to their expression, and (d) how the integration of these factors create artistic meaning within the contemporary context.

Chapter I has described the study background and the research questions. It also addressed the purpose and need for the study along with assumptions of the research. Chapter II provides a review of the relevant literature. Chapter III attends to the field procedures with a detailed description of the study method. Chapter IV presents the results of the study. Chapter 5 summarizes and discusses the results of the study, offers conclusions, and identifies areas for future research on the topic of artistic expression and creating meaning within the contemporary context.

Next, in Chapter II the review of literature includes a discussion on the Scandinavian-American community; folk school education, its beginnings in Scandinavia and continuance in America; the arts and crafts movement, its beginnings in Europe and

its continuance in America; folk art education; adult education philosophy; and museum education.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The history of mankind is the story of the significance of objects, of our love and obsession with them; of our dependence on the invisible energy they reflect (Sotamaa, 1994, p. 25).

The purpose of this study is to facilitate understanding through education and recognition ways in which traditional folk art expression might evolve. The research question is: How do folk artists as well as educators develop mastery in the traditions of Scandinavian folk art and yet express meaning within the contemporary context? Understanding artistic development and integrative learning is the foundation for knowing how the creative process evolves. Using the case study method, this question will be addressed after reviewing the literature in seven areas: (a) the culture of the Scandinavian-American community, (b) the folk school movement, (c) the arts and crafts movement, (d) artistry and folk art, (e) folk and adult education, (f) artistic knowing and expression, and (g) artistic development in postmodern adult education.

Scandinavian-America Community

In letters written back home, recent immigrants were more likely to describe breaks in traditional pattern of use rather than continuation of the familiar (Colburn, 1995, p. 159).

In the first wave of Scandinavian immigration, assimilation was expected to be rapid and ethnicity became a secondary concern. For example, Lovoll (1999) states that when Norwegian-Americans first enrolled in the American public schools, some teachers forced “children who transgressed against strict enforcement of English by speaking Norwegian in the classroom to stand in the corner as punishment” (p. 335). “Such seemingly benign issues as first language-use flew directly in the face of Americanization ideology, making Norwegian Americans vulnerable to intensified nativism” (Schultz,

1994, p. 25). However, in the years following, when Norway gained independence from Sweden in 1905, the “immigrants shared in elation over the homeland’s complete freedom”; they developed pride and were then “conscious of a common historic past” (Lovoll, 1975, p. 50).

In the period after World War I “ethnic organizations ranging from mutual aid associations to regional societies to language preservation leagues began and flourished” (Schultz, 1994, p. 25). Lovoll (1975) stated, “In their very nature, the *bygdelags* [Norwegian-American regional societies] were a rejection of the philosophy favoring a culturally homogeneous nation” (p. 143). At the Minnesota state fairgrounds in 1925, “75,000 Norwegian-Americans” assembled to celebrate both their “Norwegian and American nationalisms” (Schultz, 1994, p. 51). Although World War I and II “changed national feeling concerning the display of ethnic origins” (Colburn, 1995, p. 164), an accelerated interest in heritage followed both world events. Nelson (1994), an expert on Norwegian-American material culture, states that due to the “lack of sovereignty and therefore of an indigenous ruling class,” the history of Norway is reflected in the “common people.” These farmers and fishermen provided few written records “but the material record [was] rich” (p. 5).

The second generation of Norwegian-Americans, distracted by the struggles of the Depression and the events of World War II, paid less attention to retaining a link with their heritage. Lovoll (1975) stated, “The decline of ethnic feeling more than anything else reveals the dwindling support of the second generation” (p. 143). To be authentically an “American,” it was then desirable to discard the language, dress, and behaviors of “old world” culture in expressing nationalism. However, the second

generation at mid-century reenergized the spirit of ethnicity in a new postwar context which was reinforced with the ethnically sensitive and political events that followed, such as the Korean War and the Civil Rights movement. For the third generation of Scandinavian-Americans, as with other ethnic groups, equality and appreciation of differences have become the mantra. Interest has increased in implementing ethnic celebrations, learning ethnic languages, and creating ethnic arts and crafts. Providentially, the role of the museum has been critical in preserving these and other artifacts of heritage.

Folk School Movement

One must also remember that artistic talent and the joy of working with one's hands are not limited to any particular class of society (Bjorkvik, 1995, p. 124).

While *folkehögskolen* philosophy in its origins is contextual to rural education, it continues to be relevant in the modern and postmodern foundations of *liberal* and *progressive* adult education in the 20th and 21st centuries. When the term *folk school* is used in this study, it encompasses either the folk college or the folk high school. These descriptions are interchangeable throughout the literature and relevant to upper secondary, vocational, and adult education philosophy and practice. The term *folk* has many meanings, but for this study, Nelson (1995) is referenced:

About ninety percent of Norway's approximately 880,000 inhabitants around 1800 can be called *folk*, people who lived from the land with some supplementary income from lumbering and fishing and who were socially and culturally distinct from an urban elite group....The rural population was one step further removed.
(p. 37)

Koch (1952), in his discussion on Grundtvig, states that the folk school “task may be defined quite briefly, in a single word, namely enlightenment ... of human life” (p. 137).

This enlightenment, which had its beginnings in Scandinavia and continued in Scandinavia, influenced artists and educators in both Europe and the United States.

Beginnings in Scandinavia

In response to the influences of 17th century “Germanic” politics and social structure, Denmark established the first folk schools. The Danes were motivated by a nationalistic faction to free the “rural underclass ... dependent upon large landed proprietors, estate owners, and government officials” (Knight, 1927, p. 11). Because it was believed that rural values, beliefs, and ethnic expression would be marginalized due to the rapid rise and power of the upper class, the mission of these schools was to retain the rural culture and nurture Danish citizenship. The folk school concept became a major social and cultural educational force, not only in Denmark, but also later in Finland, Sweden, and Norway. Kaplan (2004) stated that “the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland form not only a geographic entity but also a cultural one” (p. 179). In the early 19th century, “Copenhagen functioned as the capital of Norway, so that not only the written language, but also Norwegian culture and artistic life” were strongly affected by Denmark (Norway Cultural Profile, n.d., para. 3).

In response to changing political forces, throughout 19th century Scandinavia craft, trade, or farm workers wanted equitable educational opportunities for their sons and daughters in transitioning them from a peasantry and serfdom status to one of independence and free holding land. Their desire for equity was a reaction “against the elitism, authoritarian teaching, and rote learning symptomatic of classical education

during this time” (Harrington, Kopp, & Schimmel, 2003, p. 122). This new social consciousness created fervor for a “democratic” education that was to be “an alternative to the Germanic classical” (Jacobsen, 1982, p. 10). “These [folk] schools, which have no admission requirements, no examinations, and give no credits are said to awaken, to enliven, and to enlighten the people who attend” (Knight, 1927, p. 2).

The intention of the *folkehögskole* movement was to realize “a society of open-structured order ... to work together in harmonious disagreement” (Allchin, 1997, p. 162). Its basic principles reflected the beliefs and values of N. F. S. Grundtvig, a Danish Lutheran minister, educator, and founder. Paulston (1983) stated:

Grundtvig was deeply moved by the sense of belonging to a group or community; he didn’t think it possible to be fully human, to live a creative life, except in terms of the speech and the tradition into which one was born. If one imitated models from other cultures instead of relying on the inner spirit, the result would be empty formula, meaningless ritual, cultural decay, and death. (p. 62)

The initial folk schools that developed in Finland, Sweden, and Norway continue to be time-honored institutions that are still viable educational resources. They remain integral to adult education for “improving the quality of life of individuals and the strengthening of democratic participation” (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, n.d., p. 4). These schools bridge past traditions with modern concerns and technology. In a virtual letter from the Ministry’s State Secretary, Lisbet Rugtvedt, she provides an overview of “open learning and research” which includes a note on the subject of art and digital literacy: “Students are expected to compare various techniques in folk arts and crafts by using digital sources” (p. 2). Welle-Strand, Tjeldvoll, and

Thune (2004) discussed indicators that Norway is ideologically and politically moving from its “populist education” to the “global market [;] due to the wealth of the country (oil), it can afford to behave contrary to what is required by the international competition” (p. 3).

The pure origin of Grundtvig’s premise is dramatically changing, for folk school curriculum has been affected by contemporary cultural, social, and technological influences. There are now 21st century offerings, such as in mass media, computer education, international solidarity, and sports. International students from diverse cultures are now welcomed; courses are taught in the national language, teachers and students also speak English. Their mission as “schools for all people” and “learning for life” is sustained. Yet, most are now privately administered and partially supported with government funding.

Continuance in America

Most of the Scandinavians who immigrated to North America wanted to immerse themselves in the “American” concept. However, a faction of immigrants—city and rural—were concerned about maintaining their unique cultural values, beliefs, and symbols. In their desire to preserve ethnicity and community, these immigrants developed a number of folk schools across the United States. These schools, mostly in the Midwest area of the United States, had visions of retaining the contextual essence of their cultures by teaching their children the language and arts of their home country. Although owning and farming land in the new world was an exciting venture, the disengagement from the homeland and family was personally devastating, physically and emotionally.

These ethnic-based folk schools were healing and nurturing forces that provided familiar community and support; they helped immigrants retain Scandinavian identity during the assimilation process. For instance, when the first wave of Danes immigrated to America in the 1800s, they set up “Grundtvigian-type” organized schools: the Ashland Folk School (1882) in Grant, Michigan; the Danebod Folk School (1888) in Tyler, Minnesota; and the Atterdag Folk School (1911) in Solvang, California.

In addition to the usual academic subjects, the Danish-American folk schools taught Danish church history, mythology, and cultural practices such as folk dancing and crafts. Grundtvig’s efforts to further develop the folk school concept in North America were mostly unsuccessful. However, Myles Horton, a theology student in the 1930s, who was inspired by the folk school concept on his visit to Denmark, founded the Highlander Folk School in 1930. This institution, now titled the Highlander Research and Education Center, continues to educate “rural and industrial leaders for a new social order” near Monteagle, Tennessee (Highlander Research and Education Center: History, n.d., p. 1); its website describes the power of its experience as that which “grows within the souls of people, working together, as they analyze and confirm their own experiences” (Highlander Research and Education Center: Mission, n.d., p. 2).

Other successes are the John C. Campbell Folk School, established in Brasstown, North Carolina, in 1925 to serve “all people” and still in existence and thriving with a vast curriculum of art and craft offerings; and the North House Folk School, founded in 1997 in Grand Marais, Minnesota, to teach “traditional northern skills” in the spirit of encouraging remembrance of “where we come from” through the arts/crafts (Welsch, 2007, p. G8).

Examples of Norwegian-American group affiliations who encourage creativity in the broad range of traditional arts are membership with regional organizations called *lags* (American lodges for regions in Norway), for example, Vosselag, Hallinglag, and Sonalag; the Sons of Norway; and the Scan Weaver's subgroup of the Weaver's Guild in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Arts and Crafts Movement

Art is not nature, but it is nature transformed by entering into new relationships where it evokes a new emotional response (Dewey, 1934, p. 79).

Beginnings in Europe

Throughout Europe, guilds and apprenticeships for trades and crafts were replaced by efficient manual and specialized training for the new industrial order. However, rejection of the handmade object in lieu of machine perfection was challenged by artisans and philosophers when in 1888, during the arts and crafts resurgence in England, Charles Ashbee developed the *Guild of Handicraft* in England, where again “humanity and craftsmanship are essential” (Naylor, 1980, p. 167). John Ruskin wrote in his three-book volume, *The Stones of Venice* (1851, 1853): “Science deals exclusively with things as they are in themselves; and art exclusively with things as they affect the human sense and human soul Art does not represent things falsely, but truly as they appear to mankind” (as cited in Davis, 1995, p. 237).

Kaplan (2004) described the influence of the arts and crafts movement in Scandinavia:

Later in the century, this passion for time-honored traditions became evident in material culture—through the revival of folk crafts and vernacular architecture

The Scandinavians' deep awareness of and penchant for the British Arts and

Crafts movement went hand in hand with this approach to design reform, and each of the four countries [Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland] adopted the Arts and Crafts movement's moral aesthetics, adherence to regionalism, and glorification of the handmade. (p. 179)

Not only was industrialization a painful factor for artisans in Europe, similar concerns surfaced in America.

Continuance in America

A comparable response to reclaim the value of the handmade object was formed in the 19th century in the United States. Elbert Hubbard, who supported innovation in manual training, "took up the cause" of retaining the arts and crafts, "aggressively publicized the virtues of wood, metal, and leather handicrafts," and established the Roycroft community and business of craftspersons (Kliebard, 1999, p. 22). Naylor (1980) describes this event:

He [Hubbard] traveled to England in 1892, met William Morris, and fired by his example, returned to found the Roycroft Institution in East Aurora, New York, a somewhat eccentric version of Morris' ideals. This precursor step to "industrial arts" programs in the schools was a prosperous community of "pseudo-craftsmen" who crafted decorative objects in "wrought copper and modeled leather." (p. 114)

In "something of a Deweyan twist," similar programs became "a fixture in American schools," but "found its place only on the periphery of the curriculum" (Kliebard, 1999, p. 23). Contrary to Taylor's (1895) "Principles of Scientific Management," vocational educators Runkle (1877) and Woodward (1887) developed a "mechanical arts" pedagogy that "looked backward and forward at the same time; backward to the independent artisan

and to the dignity of the work associated with preindustrial America” (Kliebard, 1999, p. 25). As in England, American supporters of the art and crafts demonstrated their concerns in instituting the American Society of Arts and Crafts (1897), bringing together designers and workers to develop higher design and education standards.

Artistry and Folk Art

The norms of cultural practices, authorities, class, and racial identity ... shape how and what people know and thus the course of their development (Taylor, Marienau, & Fiddler, 2000, p. 11).

An object that may be merely likeable and inert at first glance can become, as one understands it more deeply, a far richer manifestation of meaning, symbolism, and communication. Yanagi (1989) expresses this perspective in simply stating that art is “good work proceeding from the whole man, heart, head, and hand” (p. 95). Tin (2007) conveys a relative viewpoint from an academic perspective: “The first forms are such patterns in the pre-scientific perception which underlies the later scientific superstructures. They are far more than ‘pure ornaments’; they are statements of existential significance” (p. 286).

Art, Craft, and Folk Art

Perspectives vary greatly as to whether the words “art” or “craft” should accompany the word “folk.” This variation in terms is contextual and can indicate differing social cultural points of view. Hemphill, Jr. and Weissman (1974), who organized an exhibition of *Twentieth-Century Folk Art and Artists*, state that the “most fitting” nomenclature is *folk art* over that of *folk craft* and that “the folk artist is often partner to the craft tradition by coming to it from another direction; that of aesthetic or creative drive alone rather than, and quite apart from, utilitarian intent or financial need”

(p. 11). In this explanation, craft and art are separately defined; the former designed for economic and practical reasons and the latter, for aesthetics alone. Nodermann (1988) stated that it “would actually be more sensible to use the expression ‘provincial art,’” defining further that objects of high quality are “made by professional craftsmen” who consciously express a “form of stylization and of the maker’s own aesthetic understanding ... in a particular social class environment” (p. 7). Bjorkvik (1995) also defined “art” as contextual and relative to social status: “The reason for the great concentration of folk material that can be categorized as art in the areas where land ownership among farmers was high must be that the people had a special relationship to the farm, its buildings, and the land” (p. 124).

The meaning of the term *art* when laden with the historical elitism in the value of one class over the other and transposed onto the object itself was found on an exhibit card at the Norsk Folk Museum in Oslo (2006):

Art, as opposed to folk art, is an academically conscious activity. Art seeks individuality, is creative and often presents a challenge to tradition, while folk art was created within a tradition through an interaction with external impulses.

What these two types of art do share and have shared throughout history is primarily creativity.

Congdon (1986) recognized the placement of “folk art” in a secondary category was in error and needed to be re-evaluated:

If folk art is to be considered traditional art, the aspects legitimately recognized as traditionally occurring should be expanded. The traditional aspects of fine or popular art should also be recognized, with the understanding that perhaps folk art

has often been mislabeled and placed in these categories for negative or misguided reasons. (p. 99)

And similar in thought, Anderses (1987) also spoke to the perceived schism of “high” and “low” art:

The most prosaic of utilitarian forms can be, and often are, imbued with aesthetic value. I believe there is more to the study of folk art than a preoccupation with the objects or an attempt to set the makers within a cultural context as simply transmitters of tradition. It is individuals who make things. (p. 8)

The disconnect between the meaning of “art” and its meaning in “folk art” has historically communicated a stronger relationship of the aesthetic in “art” and less of a relationship with “folk art.” However, there appears to be some change in this perception; in 1970, anthropologists studying historical objects from many cultures shifted from using the term *primitive art* to the term *art*, which indicates a broader acceptance of folk objects as expression of art. Croce (1965), in reaction to positivism, declared aesthetics to be that of “intuition.” “All [works of art] are original, each one untranslatable into the other (to translate with artistry is to create a new work of art) each one untamed by intellect” (p. 44). Read (1968), notable art historian of the 20th century, states that “art comes into existence . . . at the moment the artist finds the words (or other media) to express his emotion or ‘state of mind’” (p. 24). Freeland (2001) reflects this opinion in saying that art “can communicate feelings or emotions, or thoughts and ideas” (p. 149). Wollheim (1971) states “that the work of art consists of an inner state or condition of the artist, called an intuition or an expression; that this state is not immediate or given, but is the product of a process, which is peculiar to the artist” (p. 32). Langer

(1953), discussing the power of the symbol, stated that “the artist grows with his growing artistic thought, his freedom in varying, building, and developing forms and the progressive discovery of import through his own funded imagination” (p. 391). And Tin (2007) stated that art is a way “in which truth is revealed and is “a valid means for giving meaningful form to man’s world” (p. 286).

Symbols. Symbols can be seen as a “spiritual expression” in how they connect the “unconscious and symbolic processes through image, symbol, metaphor, poetry, art, and music” (Tolliver and Tisdell, 2006, p. 39). Gardner (1982) stated:

The symbol systems of the arts need to be learned just as surely as the symbol systems of history, mathematics, or science. Just like one learns to read and write, there are levels of intelligences that are ... a natural way of existing or knowing for individuals. (p. 137)

The handmade object connects with the unconscious mind or an “experience in the world ... [in which] symbolization seems to play an especially important and prominent role” (Gardner, 1982, p. 113). “Objects enable reflection, and speculation. Philosophical reflection is mobilized by the artefact [,] and through the observation of the bowl, specific histories are recalled” (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 108). Our affinity with objects is reflective of our worldview and the capability of our hands in expressing what we hold within the self. Sotamaa (1994) further explained:

The history of mankind is the story of the significance of objects, of our love and obsession with them, of our dependence on the invisible energy they reflect.

Objects are the subjects of our worship and are realized through our

craftsmanship. They are the tools of our work, symbols of power, totems, fetishes, and verse in the poetry of our minds. (p. 27)

Tin (2007), in his study on the meanings of abstract forms in folk art, describes the artist's intention as "an attempt to visualize, not to verbalize, the eternal order that man forms part of, to draw the borderline between the sacred and the profane, but only in order to bridge the gap between them" (p. 286).

Objects are the inscribed signs of cultural memory. Objects are used to materialize, concretize, represent, or symbolize ideas and memories ... and mobilize reflection on experience and knowledge. The patterns of thought, attitudes and beliefs that structure a society will be embodied within its artifacts. (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 111)

And Wennstam (1994), in her discourse on teaching design in higher education, provided insight into the ever-changing role of art in education:

Postmodern culture has fundamentally changed the role of art and the visual image in society. We are gradually beginning to understand that art can provide a broad and profound medium of education. The process of art produces experiences and meaning with a deep influence on how people see themselves and define their own position in contemporary culture. (p. 26)

Tradition. "Tradition" can be perceived as something valued in the past and as static in the present and future. However, this concept of tradition is not backed by reality. Kaplan (2004), in her discourse on nationalistic fervor, referred to Historian Eric Hobsbawm, who coined the phrase "the invention of tradition" and who described how, at the end of the 19th century and into the 20th, "the past had be manipulated, updated,

selected, or otherwise reconfigured in order to serve the purpose of national identity” (p. 17). Parsons (1987) stated, “These values change with history, and must be continually readjusted to fit contemporary circumstances Though they come from the tradition, they can be affirmed or amended only in light of our own sense of their value” (p. 25). “Tradition” evolves and changes with time and experience.

Cultural changes that affect the arts continue in Scandinavia, in both the desire to create the new and the desire to retain the tradition.

In a society undergoing constant change, experience of art, architecture, design, applied art and crafts—from past and present, from one’s own culture and from others’—provides an important frame of reference for cultural insight. Roots in one’s own culture make a secure foundation for identity and for respect for new and unfamiliar impression and forms of expression. (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, n.d., p. 1)

Respecting traditions and yet understanding the meaning in the present or contemporary context can be a creative and transformative experience.

Once tradition has died out, it is necessary for individual artists to work in place of the tradition ...to prepare the way to make a new tradition. For that reason it is desirable that they have strong social consciousness I think any work of art should not be separate from practical use, but rather harmonize with it. (Yanagi, 1989, p. 221)

Traditions are also influenced by contact with a world beyond one’s borders.

Because of Norway and Sweden’s remote geography, changes that affected other parts of Europe were more slowly assimilated in these countries. Eventually, as trade traffic from

Denmark, England, and the Netherlands increased, the cultural norms, rituals, and symbols of these countries were introduced and influenced artistic expression in Norway. Stewart (1999) writes about a Norwegian in the district of Numedal who had probably visited or come from Germany, “for in his painting he used the tulip motif frequently, along with realistic roses, five-petaled white flowers, and Germanic inscriptions. A student of his made use of reverse c’s and s’s, a continental innovation” (p. 105).

Contact with Japanese art was made through the International Exhibitions in London (1862), and travel to Paris in the 1880s encouraged direct inspiration from nature and bold asymmetrical compositions (Kaplan, 2004, p. 180). A pure Norwegian expression does not exist. This effect on Scandinavian culture became more evident in the 19th and 20th centuries when skilled workers, traders, and bourgeois brought back stylistic impressions and ideas as they more commonly traveled abroad. Holland provided new ideas for domestic and decorative goods. “Dutch furniture found its way into both rural and urban environments in Norway ... influences [which] are evident in Norwegian rosemaling, woodcarving, and wrought iron” (Bjørkvik, 1995, p. 123). Ellingsgard (1995) also discusses foreign contributions to decorative folk art painting known as rosemaling. “Its major sources were clearly in the art of an international upper and middle class urban society[;] its creation, however, occurred among the most economically disadvantaged inhabitants of rural Norway” (p. 190). Fortunately so; this genre of folk art became a source of income for the “peasantry.”

However, although there are now many contemporary avenues of artistic expression, the preservation of Scandinavian “traditional crafts” continues to garner national pride in the Scandinavian countries. In Norway, the country’s desire to capture

the romanticism of the “folk” is institutionally supported and displayed by the Kunstindustrimuseet—Museum of Applied Art in Oslo. Bjørkvik (1995) stated, “The joy of working with one’s hands is not limited to any particular class of society” (p. 124). In the 19th and 20th centuries, creating folk art was a romantic and political expression for Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes. Depending on a country’s politics and social conditions, one time period over another might be romanticized.

Both in Scandinavia and in America, the traditional Scandinavian ways of artistic expressions were altered by access to contemporary tools and methods, imported materials, new insight and meanings, and the less prominent separation between city and country. Nelson (1995) stated, “Stylistically, Norwegian folk art absorbed much from urban mainstream culture ... through its major phases from Renaissance to Baroque, Regency, and Rococo” (p. 14). When this more sophisticated ornamentation from France and England found its way to the country, it was stylized to blend into the existent forms and decorations.

Scandinavia in the 20th century was also notable for its refinement of design and continues to be so today. Influential in this culture development was the *Bauhaus*, a widely known design institution established by Walter Gropius in Germany. From the Bauhaus education curriculum emerged the *Design and Form* course developed and taught by Johannes Itten (1964), a notable educator in the lives of contemporary designers and artists.

In his book describing his preferred educational methods, Itten stated, “In no human activity is talent as decisive as in the field of education. Only the talented educator—I mean talented for education—will respect and guard the indescribable

wonder of humanity in every child of man” (p. 7). His work on color and form became famous at the 1923 Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar, Germany. Integral to his educational philosophy and methodology was the identification of typologies to articulate the fundamental elements of design, i.e., point, line, plane, space, texture, and volume. The structure and themes of his course were to free the creative powers and thereby the art talents of the students to make the students’ choice of career easier and to convey to the students the fundamental principles of design (p. 9).

Scandinavian Folk Art

In Norway, through trade influences from other countries and the sophisticated society of the city, the rural symbols of the Norwegian countryside became more stylish to those in “high art circles.” Gerhard Munthe, designer, theorist, and educator, revitalized Norwegian indigenous and decorative traditions in his more contemporary artistic expressions. He was “identified as having fulfilled the destiny of Norwegian art by restoring an indigenous decorative tradition to his national school. Munthe also published accessible articles on decorative art in Kristiana newspapers in which he articulated his singular commitment to regeneration of native Norwegian crafts” (Berman, 1993, p. 156).

Social Context. As trade activity progressed between Scandinavia and European trade centers, folk artisans were influenced by new designs, form, function, and materials. Bjørkvik (1995) stated, “This is how people from the countryside became acquainted with other environments and other cultures and how they got impulses from the art of churches, from ironworkers, from silversmiths, and from the interiors of wealthy homes” (p. 122).

Folk art, as in all other branches of art ... became interwoven in new combinations. Country craftsmen adopted new ideas from European arts and crafts but there were no fixed rules of the way in which these were fused with local trading. This is exactly what gives rural art its own distinctive quality. One of the most conspicuous characteristics of folk art is the way in which imagination transformed academic art through many stages of a vigorous local style. (Gjerdi, 1978, p. 29)

“During the 18th and 19th centuries the number of specialists and craftsmen grew in the villages. And it became ‘a form of livelihood’ for poor cotters and people without land ... and they got paid both in cash and in kind” (Ellingsgard, 1995, p.190). It was an empowering time for the artisan due to the demand and appreciations of the handmade object. Regional specializations in various trades and crafts appeared, and “many local crafts developed into cottage industries, some of which came to be controlled by traders and middlemen recruited locally or from the merchant towns” (Löfgren, 1980, p. 203). Bjørkvik’s (1995) perspective resonates in providing a glimpse into the pre-immigrant vision of rural artistry in Norway:

Many a rural craftsman showed great artistry with his knife or at the forge, resulting in richly decorated mangle-boards, chests and cupboard, beautiful metal for furniture, keys, and the like. In the same way, deft young women could dye yarn with colors boiled from leaves and heather and later weave them into coverlets with pictorial or abstract designs. (p. 122)

As the Industrial Revolution took hold, artisans were affected by the tide of modernism which gradually modified both design and form in “the slow transformation

of pre-capitalist production systems to a capitalist mode of production” (Löfgren, 1980, p.195). Nonetheless, the appreciation of the folk art tradition in Scandinavia did not entirely diminish; it continued on the local level and in the folk school curriculum.

In 1975 the Norwegian Association for Arts and Crafts, “Norske Kunsthåndverkere,” was established by Norway’s Ministry of Culture. It provides study grants for dues paying members “who work within the areas of ceramic, textile, metal, tree, glass, leather crafting and crossover areas” (Maihaugen, n.d., para. 2). On a visit to two of Norway’s folk museums, one in Oslo and one in Lillehammer, there was little evidence of customary folk art education programs. However, the Ministry of Culture in conjunction with Maihaugen, Norway’s National Museum in Lillehammer, developed the Norwegian Crafts Development (NHU—National Handverksutvikling) project “to protect, preserve, pass on, and develop crafts as skills and knowledge, as a form of expression and as a profession.” This project facilitates a national register and protection for the “passing on and development of craft skills as knowledge, means of expression and profession” (Maihaugen, n.d., para. 2). The literature supports this premise of preserving the tradition, both in terms of its technicality and aesthetics.

In Norway, the term “applied art” is mostly used over that of “crafts,” although many artisans are in a national *husflid*, meaning “hand craft,” an organization founded in 1910 that promotes handmade for preserving and expressing the artistic heritage of the country and its people. Many organization members now express the tradition within the contemporary context. Applied artists in Norway are considered on the same level as that of fine artists, such as painters and sculptors.

Norway has now extended its interests to the international forum through UNESCO in supporting its “Artists in Development” project “to reinforce the links between culture and development” (UNESCO, 2008, p. 1). In the latter part of the 20th century both “government and private run craft schools have been elevated to college (Higher Education) status, in some cases linked to Universities” (Segerstad, 1994, p.7). Examples of these professional “design” schools in Scandinavia are: in Norway, the *Statens Høgskole for Kunsthåndverk og Design*—National College of Art and Design—in Oslo; in Sweden, the *Hägskolan for Design och Konsthantverk*—Gothenburg College of Design and Crafts—in Gothenburg; and in Denmark, the *Kunsthåndvaerkerskole*—the College of Crafts--in Kolding.

Nationalism. The artist reflects the political and sociological context they live in or desire to live in. And this expression in their folk art can create or reflect a feeling and emotion in the person who uses or views the artifact.

Although Scandinavia was progressing to modern times in the 19th century, there was a strong desire for tradition and for an awakening of “pastoral” life. This perceived countrified simplicity was a reaction to the growing number of factories that mass-produced domestic goods. In contrast, the large and mid-size landholders and farmers, urban dwellers, and traders wanted handmade objects that spoke to the past. They sought to be like the elite, yet they wanted their lives to be framed in the peasant style. Löfgren (1980) provides a pragmatic depiction of developing Norwegian design and its symbols:

Even if many elements of dress, interior decoration, food habits, etc. were borrowed from these upper class settings, they were transformed or “peasantized” into local forms. Rather, this period of peasant culture stands for and intensified

local production of cultural forms. Patterns of housing, dress, and other expressive forms were elaborated and social life ritualized Growing wealth of the farmers created a market for specialists, such as musicians, craftsmen, and village artists Prosperous peasants who tried to imitate upper-class or urban lifestyles might be ridiculed or threatened with exclusion from the social life in the village. (p. 206)

Due to concerns about the loss of the “traditional,” Sweden’s and Norway’s national costumes, heritage symbols, and cultural events were nationalized in the early 20th century. Colburn (1995) described this mounting national consciousness in her writings on Norwegian folk dress:

When national consciousness was rising in the nineteenth century after Norway had been under Danish and finally Swedish rule for over four hundred years, the Hardanger region with its deep blue fjords and snow covered mountains became symbolic for all of Norway, to Norwegians and tourists alike. It was celebrated in poetry, song, painting, and theatrical tableaux. A part of its picturesque quality was its traditional folk costume in heraldic black, red, and white. (p. 157)

Grundtvig saw the human as “something national” and believed that “humanity is not an abstract idea [It is] being human in a particular place and among a particular people with its own history and its own speech” (Koch, 1952, p. 125). Although this romantic attachment appears to be pervasive throughout Scandinavia, not all observers agree. Löfgren (1980), on the romanticized life of the “folk,” stated:

The stereotype hardly reflects a “traditional” culture but rather a given segment of peasant society at a given stage of economic development. It is the emerging

strata of more well-to-do peasants of the period ca 1770-1870 which came to symbolize a peasant ideal or a timeless, “classic” cultural pattern. Thus we have to look at this lifestyle not as a “traditional” peasant culture but as a social and cultural formation which only can be understood against the background of the economic changes. (p. 205)

In the United States, Scandinavian immigrants and their descendents felt a comparable longing for the past. This sweeping enthusiasm for the assumed nationalistic Norwegian tradition emerged in America after World War I, where returning soldiers from abroad had experienced long forgotten traditions. “For many immigrants any object of Norwegian origin acquired symbolic significance relating to nostalgia, roots, identity, and ethnic pride” (Löfgren, 1980, p. 90).

Widbom, Klein, Kulturhuset, and the Museum of International Folk Art (1994) state that “the folk artist will always find the calm in the eye of the storm, making time to stand still long enough for the traces of the artist’s hands” (p. 8). However, the contextual aspects of folk art have changed: rural is no longer an isolated geography; nationalism and globalization are contradictory; time is a factor in building community; and the visceral interest in the traditional arts and crafts is changing.

Folk and Adult Education

To be educated is of value in and of itself, not because of any intrinsic motivating factors or advantages it might be considered to offer (Cross, 1982, p. 21).

In 1920 Eduard Lindeman, a former state extension director, visited Denmark and encountered the folk schools “emphasizing Danish culture” and “education as life” (Stewart, 1999, p.119). These schools, established by N. F. S. Grundtvig in 1851 and further developed by Christen Kold, were contrary to the subject-focused education then

current in the United States. In discussing Grundtvig, Koch (1952) states that the folk school “task may be defined quite briefly [as]... an enlightenment of human life” (p. 137). From the 18th through the early 20th centuries in the United States, educator perspectives were based on the theoretical assumption that “human life should be based on inquiry and beliefs that follow with certainty from premises and general principles, rather than from tradition, religion, passion, or the imagination” (Mayer, 1998, p. 125). Lindeman, disappointed by the rigidity of this philosophy, became an influential educator in the concept of *lifelong learning* and is considered the “father of adult education.”

Informal

After Lindeman’s visit to Denmark he “built his adult education philosophical frame in part on the Danish experience” (Stewart, 1999, p. 121). Lindeman, a pragmatic educator, was also influenced by Dewey and “was the earliest major conceptualizer of the progressive-pragmatic tradition in American adult education” (p. 225). And Dewey’s “insistence that education be related to all experience made it possible to consider the work not merely of established institutions of formal schooling but also of such other organizations as libraries and museums and of such forms of activity as community development, independent study, supervision, and travel” (as cited in Houle, 1996, p. 11). Adult education as a form of *informal education* is an attractive enhancement and balance to formal education. Elias and Merriam (2005) stated:

This more liberal approach to education has its beginnings in the philosophical theories of the classical Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle The emphasis of this tradition is upon liberal learning, organized knowledge, and the development of the intellectual powers of the mind. (p. 12)

In 1926 Lindeman shared his thoughts on folk schools in his book, *The Meaning of Adult Education* (1926, 1961); and regarding adult education, he said modifications were needed so that “text and teachers play a new and secondary role in this type of education; they must give way to the primary importance to the learner.” Additionally, in the text, he made mention of the manual workers of Great Britain and farmers of Denmark who “conducted the initial experiments which now inspire us” (p. 5). Also in 1926, Lindeman published a series of essays in which he articulated his philosophy:

Our academic system has grown in reverse order: subjects and teachers constitute the starting point, students are secondary. In conventional education the student is required to adjust himself to an established curriculum; in adult education the curriculum is built around the student’s needs and interests. Every adult person finds himself in specific situations with respect to his work, his recreation, his family life, his community life, et cetera—situations which call for adjustments. (as cited in Houle, 1996, p. 12)

In 1930s Germany, “adult education” appeared as “a distinct field of inquiry”; the German term for adult education, as translated into its English parallel, is *andragogy*. Malcolm Knowles in the mid 20th century was influential in a nation-wide community education movement through his work and writings: *Informal Adult Education* (1950) and *The Modern Practice of Adult Education* (1970). He sought to create a “new discipline” for the adult learner, one which recognized that:

The adult is self-directing, has much experience on which to draw, learns because of a felt need or aspiration, wishes to orient his or her education toward life experiences, and feels most deeply rewarded by such outcomes of learning as

greater self-esteem and a sense of personal actualization. (as cited in Houle, 1996, p. 27-28)

This adult education movement offered a diverse number of subjects providing “an education for all” opportunity which today still captures the attention of an endless number of students. In the 20th century, museums as well began to align their practices with this approach and developed curriculum relative to their missions in providing learning through history and its artifacts.

Museum's Role

The museum “produces a visual environment for learning where visitors deploy their own interpretive strategies and repertoires” (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 3) and stimulates reflection on various aspects of culture. “Museums today are increasingly expected to provide social inclusive environments for lifelong learning[;] this need for closeness to audiences is rapidly becoming more pressing” (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 1). Hindal and Wyller (2004) say, “We should ... not speak only of the development of a knowledge-based society, but rather promote a culture and knowledge-based society. In such a society, cultural heritage institutions, such as museum archives and libraries, play a leading role and must adapt and change with the pace of society” (p. 6). Hein and Alexander (1998), in discussing the “museum as a place of learning,” prescribe “active learning with a realist position on knowledge [,] ... a natural approach for museums, since museums value objects and learning from objects” (p. 41). Carr (2003) stated:

In libraries and museums, the favorable thing we want to have happen is the development of the learner, alone and in groups and families, whose lives are engaged with each other--embracing each other over their mutual reflections. It is

also the confirmation of observers, readers, and thinkers, nourishing and encouraging them to experience and synthesize new information. (p. 40)

The traditional and noble cause of the museum has served history and “visual culture” extremely well. Dewey’s “insistence that education be related to all experience made it possible to consider the work not merely of established institutions of formal schooling but also of such other organizations as libraries and museums” (as cited in Houle, 1996, p. 11). The museum’s role of preserving artifacts has enabled study and introspection of our past. Bjørkvik (1995) provided witness to the museum’s stewardship role:

The gains in agriculture resulting from what is commonly referred to as the Industrial Revolution also led to some significant losses. The solidarity that had developed in the working community and its social relations were destroyed. This old spirit of helping each other disappeared. Cheap, easily accessible industrial products replaced home-crafted tools, implements, and utensils. These were either thrown on the scrap heap or collected by museum curators. (p. 123)

Today, however, the museum’s role is expansive and has moved beyond the role of conservation and interpretation. Carr (2003) viewed the change in its institutional mission from a place to visit, to a place that encourages inquiry:

We observe and explore; we become apprentices to each other; storytellers, mapmakers, and craftspeople as well. We craft our own truths, we seek the outcome of own stories; we look for convivial paths and tools; we marvel whenever we are given a rare glimpse of mastery. In this way we come to understand where in ourselves mastery resides. (p. 204)

Active, self-directed, experiential, and lifelong learning methodologies are now considerations in developing museum programs. “Here the aim of adult education is both personal development and social progress ... where content is drawn from life situations” (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 69). Hooper-Greenhill (2000) described her perspectives on museum education: “Constructivist learning theory points out that learning is both personal and social; meaning is mediated through interpretive communities” (p.139), a relevant entrée to discussing adult education philosophy within the museum context.

A pertinent consideration in this 21st century is the effect of today’s rapidly changing and global society on contemporary museums. What does this mean for the organization whose mission is bounded by national identity? Is it possible that a museum with this purpose “would become redundant or ... they would become museums of themselves—sites at which to look back upon a disappearing order” of ethnic/cultural identity? (Macdonald, 2003, p. 6).

“The active postmodern museum visitor can be explained in part through learning theory, but also through theories of communication and through literacy or cultural theory” (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999, p. 67). Zipsane (2009), in his discussion on the art of pedagogy, concluded that “the conscious use of the borderland between fact and fiction and the meeting between the interpretation of other people’s work and the learner’s own creativity are the main factors in the learning process” (p. 176). As museum educators reference postmodern philosophers in planning and facilitating their education programs, the parallel to adult education theory and methodology is significant and informative for both fields. Acuirre (2004) stated, “A postmodern view of art education proposes that

comprehension consists in apprehending the system of social, political, aesthetic and cultural relations behind the work” (p. 257). Burnham and Kai-Kee (2007) aptly described this convergence:

We ask that museums be not only places where people can participate in their own acts of constructing meaning but also places where we redefine the visitors themselves from information seekers to seekers of experience, of reflection, of imagination. In the twenty-first century museum programs will turn museum galleries into places where people bring the artworks to life and, in the process, illuminate their own lives. (p. 3)

Integral to postmodern philosophy is to be liberated from the historical, to move to new paradigms in understanding the depth and the complexity of meaning—to break free of, but respect tradition. Current museum philosophy appears to align with this direction: “The challenge for museums today is to identify the character of new forms of vibrancy that are in tune with the cultural changes that herald the twenty-first century” (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 22). In facilitating this interface of self and community within a contemporary context, Read (1966) stated:

We seem to be concerned with two psychological states, one in the mind of the individual artist determining his creative activity, one in the community as a whole determining general features in art, such as style and mannerism, among which features we conclude the subject-matter as distinct from the aesthetic appeal of the work of art. (p. 83)

A direct correspondence between the role of the contemporary museum and the progressive direction of adult education provides an opportunity to enrich and transform folk art education within a contemporary context.

Artistic Knowing and Expression

Works of art that are not remote from common life are widely enjoyed in a community; are signs of a unified collective life They are also marvelous aids in the creation of such a life (Dewey, 1934, p. 81).

Following 17th century *rationalism* of, e.g., Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, and then, 18th century *empiricism* of, e.g., Locke and Hobbes, there evolved a paradigm of thought from the philosophies of, e.g., Kant, Engels, Dilthey, Hegel, and Comte in the 19th century, which posited an “interaction between the mind’s forms and the material facts of sense experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 100). The philosophies of the *Enlightenment Period* influenced an “interactionist” perspective in obtaining knowledge, which later was instrumental in the development of *constructivist* theory in “which adults construct or reconstruct meaning” (Taylor, Marienau, & Fiddler, 2000, p. 14). Kolb’s (1984; 1986) “experiential learning cycle” is exemplary the constructivist paradigm. His posit of the *dialectical* between two forms of knowledge inspired other educators next discussed in the theories of the *social constructivists*.

Ways of Knowing

In the mid 20th century the “social constructivists”--such as Lewin and Cartwright (1951), Vygotsky (1978), Rogers (1969), and Kolb (1984; 1986)--fully developed the premise that “knowledge is gained through an individual’s interaction with social process and contexts, for instance, the cultural milieu” (Taylor, Marienau, & Fiddler, 2000, p. 19). Individuals possess a “long evolutionary history of social understanding and interaction” in how they perceive the world; learning can be viewed as the process by

which a society “shapes the mind” (Falk and Dierking, 2000, p. 39). This “subjective freedom” in constructing reality is also background for the social and cognitive development stage theories of, e.g., Erikson (1959), Kohlberg (1981), and Loevinger (1976); Maslow (1971); and Piaget (1970), and is influential in the several artistic theories to be discussed later in the literature. Kolb (1984) referred to a *dialectical* way of knowing: “Just as the patterns in a fabric are governed by the interrelationships among the warp and weft, so too, personal knowledge is shaped by the interrelations between *apprehension* (external—first hand experience) and *comprehension* (internal—reflective observation)” (p. 106). This construct of two facets of knowledge is also reflected in the philosophic perspectives of Caffarella and Merriam (1999, 2000) regarding the “interactive nature of learning and the structural aspects of learning grounded in a sociological framework” (p. 2). These ways of knowing, the *individual* and the *contextual*, are also reflected in the work of Yang (2003) who uses the terms *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* to describe this “social construct” that involves “understanding about the reality through mental correspondence, personal correspondence ... with outside objects and situations” (p. 108).

“In every culture, objects are embedded in various mental fields. These fields are bounded in such a way as to enable members of the culture to place an object in some meaningful context” (Eisner, 1972, p. 217). Hooper-Greenhill (2000) stated, “The patterns of thought, attitudes and beliefs that structure a society will be embodied within its artifacts” (p. 111). “The norms of cultural practices, authorities, class, and racial identity ... shape how and what people know and thus the course of their development” (Taylor, Marienau, & Fiddler, 2000, p. 11). Chavez and Guido-DiBrito (1999) define

ethnic identity as a social construct and “an individual’s movement toward a highly conscious identification with their own cultural values, behaviors, beliefs, and traditions” (p. 41). And in enhancing the adult learner’s experience of their ethnic identity, providing active learning curriculum is integral to the transformational experience, Yang (2003) stated “We learn not only through mental correspondences but also by direct personal involvement” (p. 108).

At the annual Adult Education Research Conference (AERC) in 1999, a third knowledge and learning paradigm was proposed by Caffarella and Merriam (1999, 2000). This provocative thought, an addition to their “individual” and “contextual” ways of knowing, is explained in the conference proceedings as an *integrative* learning approach where “both the individual and the contextual perspectives are interwoven in framing research agendas and responding to problems of practice” (¶1). Yang (2003), as well, proposed a third paradigm in addition to his “implicit” and “explicit” facets of learning as *emancipatory*, which is “the affective component of knowledge and is reflected in affective reactions to the outside world” (p. 109).

Familiar to this more integrative learning approach are the “organic” education theories of Pepper (1942), Dewitt (1957), and Gardner (1982, 1990). Pepper (1942) developed a “structure of learning” quadrant for refining knowledge—contextualism, formism, mechanism, and organicism--in which “every element relates to every other in an interdependent system” (as cited in Kolb, 1984, p. 119). Dewitt (1957) identified the characteristics of organic concepts as “holistic, visually apprehended, organized aesthetically and neatly, and functionally based” (as cited in Kolb, 1984, p. 119). Gardner (1990), in his work on artistic development, states that “artistic forms of

knowledge and expression are less sequential, more holistic and organic, than other forms of knowing” (p. 42). Read (1958), art critic and educator, states that “one of the most certain lessons of modern psychology and of recent history is that education must be a process, not only individuation, but also of *integration*, which is the reconciliation of individual uniqueness with social unity” (p. 5). These points of reference to the “organic,” the “aesthetic,” and the “integrative” are terms relevant in discussing artistic ways of knowing. “It should be obvious that by integration we do not mean the intellectualization of art any more than a universal aestheticism: integration implies organic interdependence” (Kolb, 1984, p. 106-107).

Meaning and Transformation

Hooper-Greenhill (2000) stated that the emerging field of “visual culture” enables the problematisation of two further matters, the first, “the meaning of an artefact in its setting,” and the second, “the provenance of artefacts [to reveal] ... the account of the life-journey” (pp. 15-16). Visual culture communicates with a language of its own, one that interprets and transforms both artist and viewer through meaning. “Forms enable us to construct meanings that are nonredundant; each form of representation we employ confers its own features upon the meanings we make or interpret” (Parsons, 1987, p. 230). Dewey (1934), in his work on the meaning of artistic experiences, stated, “Art is not nature, but is nature transformed by entering into new relationships where it evokes an emotional response” (p. 79). The National College of Art & Design in Ireland (2007) described the creative act to be “an expression of a moment in time, a tradition, a culture, an individual [It is] not a final product, but an ever-changing player in the history of ideas and thought” (¶ 1).

Artistic expression can create a connection to a feeling, a memory, or an idea. Mezirow (1991) saw this integrative action as “the central dynamic involved in problem solving, problem posing, and transformation of meaning schemes and meaning perspectives” (p. 116). Davis-Manigault, Yorks, and Kasl (2006) described this integrative and transformative learning experience as “a holistic change in how a person both affectively relates to and conceptually frames his or her experience” (p. 27). The uniqueness of the process is in the individual: “One person may consciously engage in a self-reflective process, while another may see the journey as an imaginative one” (p. 27). Cassirer (1979) provided his perspective:

Art is not a mere repetition of nature and life; it is sort of transformation and transubstantiation. This transubstantiation is brought about by the power of aesthetic form. Aesthetic form is not simply given; it is not a datum of our immediate empirical world It is for this reason that in the realm of art even all our common feelings, our passions and emotions, undergo a fundamental change. (p. 211)

And in Yang’s (2003) viewpoint:

Transformation is a process of converting an old meaning scheme (i.e., values, feelings, ethics, etc.) into another form The key to understanding such a complicated learning process lies in its inherent force of seeking physical, psychological, social, emotional, and spiritual freedom and in the interactions between emancipatory knowledge and the two knowledge facets. (pp. 120-121)

Also supportive of the third facet of knowledge is Taylor (2006) in his descriptive statement of need for a shifting paradigm in fostering learning that goes “beyond the

traditional cognitive orientation to learning and leads to an exploration of multiple knowledge productions, inclusive of the affective and relational and the symbolic, spiritual, and imaginative domains of learning” (p. 93). Mezirow (1991) in his discussion on transformative learning spoke of “making meaning”; for the educator, this means encouraging adult students to “reinterpret an old experience (or a new one) from a new set of expectations, thus giving a new meaning and perspective to the old experience” (p. 11). Parsons (1987) validated this transformation in expressing oneself through artistic expression:

Art is not just a series of pretty objects; it is rather a way we have of articulating our interior life This inner life is not transparent to us, not self-interpreting; if we are to understand it we must give it some more perceptible shapes, and then examine the shapes. Art is one way of doing this Art is capable of layers of interpretation and may reveal aspects of its creators of which they themselves were unaware The stages of aesthetic development are levels of increasing ability to interpret the expressiveness of works in this way. (p. 13)

The aesthetic experience can be derived from popular, fine, or folk arts. The handmade object can be “integrated into every lived experience, thus contributing to ‘self-creation’.... This is the only transforming character which art and art education can possess” (Aquirre, 2004, p. 268). Goldstein and Goldstein (1954) expressed the meaning of art in everyday life: “When the person is appreciating a beautiful object, he is engaged in a creative experience, for the active enjoyment of art is a form of participation in it” (p. 3). And Lawrence (2005) in exploring artistic modes of teaching and learning stated,

“Through creating or interpreting art, we can go beneath the surface to see aspects of the self that were always present but veiled or hidden from view” (p. 76).

Developmental Stages

Developmental stage theories—psychological, biological, behavioral, social, and cognitive—are integral to exploring artistic development and based in the theories of, e.g., Erikson (1959); Havighurst (1952); Kohlberg (1981); Loevinger & Blasi (1976); Maslow (1971); Neugarten (1968); and Piaget (1929). These various perspectives take “into account historical factors, social and cultural norms, and individual differences” (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 9). The stage development philosophy as articulated in artistic development (Gardner, 1990; Parsons, 1987; Read, 1943, 1968) continues to be relevant in the postmodern era, but needs to be further explained in conjunction with a third paradigm positing an organic, non-sequential, and integrative facet of knowing as explained by Gardner (1990).

From the first artistic encounters, one gains a sense of the nature of the enterprise of creating and reflecting; this sense is never wholly lost but continues to evolve throughout one’s life, so long as one remains actively involved in artistic activities. Consistent with the developmental perspective, growth involves a deepening of this knowledge, and an attainment of higher levels of understanding, rather than the simple accumulation of more facts, more skills, or more bodies of knowledge—or, on the other hand, attainment of qualitatively very different forms of knowing. (p. 42)

Gardner’s (1990) mention of “higher levels of understanding” strongly related to the premise of artistic stage development as was also noted in the philosophy of Parsons

(1987) and Read (1968). Although Gardner expressed his philosophy in stages, he stated: “It is my belief that artistic forms of knowledge and expression are less sequential, more holistic and organic, than other forms of knowing” (p. 42). Cassirer (1979) agreed: “Artistic experience is always a dynamic, not a static attitude—both in the artist himself and in the spectator” (p. 212). In Parson’s (1987) vision, she defined the stages as “clusters of ideas and not properties of persons ... a pattern or structure of ... assumptions” (p. 11). And Aquirre (2004) discussed the essence of the stages as integral to individual and contextual development:

The aim of art education is to contribute to the development of identity. Although it is necessary to point out that when we speak of identity, we do not mean that series of traits, personal or cultural, which define us *a priori*, but that being that we make anew of ourselves, our experiences, our contingencies, our posts, each time that we face the creative act, either our own or of others. (p. 264)

Artistic Stages

The artistic stage theories of Gardner (1990), Parsons (1987), and Read (1958) inform the substance of this research in understanding the process and progression. Their stages reflect that of Caffarella and Merriam’s (1999, 2000) Aquirre (2004) contextual, social, and integrative ways of knowing which inform the educator on the artisan’s knowledge, skills, and expression development.

Read (1943), art historian and educator, first expressed his philosophy of creativity in a series of three steps: perception, arrangement, and expression (p. 23-24). He used as a reference Piaget’s (1929) four stages of “a child’s perception of their world,” asserting that the child “builds up a consciousness of itself ... by means of a

mental or intellectual construction” (p. 173). Later, Read (1968) added two more steps to his initial three, for a total of five (see Table 1).

Gardner, in *Art Education and Human Development* (1990), also made reference to Piaget (1970) in his work on artistic stage development. Although respectful of Piaget’s contributions, he further clarifies his perspective in stating that “intelligence is always an interaction between potentials and what’s available in the culture” and that “as individuals grow older they continue to have access to earlier ways of knowing” (Gardner, 2006, p. 133-134). Gardner (1990), a scholar and art educator, concurred when he stated that artistic expression “involves the use of and transformation of various kinds of symbols and systems of symbols” (p. 9) learned in early life experiences. Gardner (1990) also referred to Dewey (1934, 1944) and Read (1943, 1968) when he articulated his belief that artistic forms of knowledge and expression are “less sequential, more holistic and organic than other forms of knowing” (p. 42).

Gardner (1990) posits that artists use symbols to “write with” in creating meaning through visual representation from “intuitive” to “formal knowledge”; that “formal knowledge may either mute the equally important intuitive knowledge or exist quite apart from it” (p. 30). He further stated:

Individuals who wish to participate meaningfully in artistic perception must learn to decode, to “read,” the various symbolic vehicles in their culture; individuals who wish to participate in artistic creation must learn how to manipulate, how to “write with” the various symbolic forms present in their culture; and, finally, individuals who wish to engage fully in the artistic realm must also gain mastery of certain central artistic concepts. (p. 9)

Parsons (1987), who was influenced by Kohlberg's (1984) stages of moral development, constructed five stages of aesthetic development "that have a non-arbitrary sequence that plots the growth of our construction....[These are] analytic devices that help us understand ourselves and others" (p. 11). (See Table 1.) His perspective, similar to the stage philosophies of Read (1943, 1968) and Gardner (1990) described the progression of artistic stages as an integrative and transformative process that results in freer expression: "At stage five we make judgments on our own authority and not on that of the tradition" (p. 144).

Most notable and applicable in this review of artistic stage development are Gardner's (1990) stages three, four, and five that refer to the evolution of artistic expression from naïve to an individualistic and contextualized expression. For instance, at stage three "the beauty of the subject matter becomes secondary to what is expressed" (p. 23). Then, at stage four the meaning is reflected in the social context "rather than an individual achievement" and when "what is expressed in art is reinterpreted in terms of form and style" (p. 24). And at stage five "the individual must judge the concepts and values with which the tradition constructs the meanings of works of art" (p. 113).

Table 1

Artistic Stages

Stages	
Read (1968)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Predisposing emotional mood 2) Premonitions of a symbol 3) Mind intuitively associated with the symbol 4) Artist selects appropriate material 5) Meaning translated with mental perception
Parsons (1987)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Favoritism

	2) Beauty and Realism
	3) Expressiveness
	4) Style and form
	5) Autonomy
Gardner (1990)	1) Intuitive
	2) Symbolic
	3) Notational
	4) Formal disciplinary knowledge
	5) Skilled knowledge

Artistic Development in Postmodern Adult Education

The dialectic of experience has its own fulfillment not in definitive knowledge, but in that openness to experience that is encouraged by experience itself (Gadamer, cited in Bernstein, 1986, p. 67).

Encouraging adult students to personally interpret and trust their “authentic self” in artistic expression can be a challenge; “it is very common for returning adult students in unfamiliar fields, such as art, to try to figure out the ‘correct’ answers from experts” (McGury, 2000, p. 231). Mezirow (2000) stated, “We professional adult educators have a commitment to help learners become more imaginative, intuitive, and critically reflective of assumptions” (p. 224). Brookfield (1998) stated that in the adult life cycle, one’s task is to “bring into conscious awareness and to question what was earlier internalized” (as cited in Taylor, Marienau, & Fiddler, 2000, p. 21). An individual’s understanding of the arts emerges slowly and as a result of his or her experiences; and as they acquire a more general understanding of their selves and their context. This insight, for some artists, is reflected in how they express themselves in the handmade object.

Style, use, and placement of the object; aesthetic process, criticism, and learning mode; the individual’s sense of place, identity, and intent; and inspirational factors for the artist and the audience are important considerations in the study of

all art. How the individual adheres to or tends to break away from the accepted culture in an interaction with an art work is worthy of attention. (Congdon, 1987, p. 103)

The promotion of educational forms of learning is realized by helping students form purposes to guide their work. A work of art is typically directed by an idea that is realized in the material and through the form that the artist creates (Eisner, 2002, p. 51). “To know an object means here nothing other than determining in a definite fashion its place in space and time and thereby also establishing how it relates to other objects at other places in space and time and how it causally depends upon them” (Cassirer, 1996, p. 144).

Lawrence (2005) described “art” as “a universal language that allows us to communicate with diverse groups of people and understand their perspectives. Art connects us to our environment and opens our eyes to expanded perceptions of reality” (p. 77). Maslow (1971) stated that the arts “are so close to our psychological and biological core, so close to this identity, this biological identity, that rather than think of these courses as sort of whipped cream or luxury, they must become basic experiences in education” (p. 179). The artistic experience has created its own culture, a *visual culture*, one that communicates the artist’s experience. Lawrence (2005) stated, “Artistic forms of expression extend the boundaries of how we come to know, by honoring multiple intelligences and indigenous knowledge. Artistic expression broadens cultural perspectives by allowing and honoring diverse ways of knowing and learning” (p. 3). And as stated by Bergevin (1967):

Much work must be done in the field of adult education to bring the great stores of information contained in the arts and sciences into intimate relationships with the adult learner ... to show what is meant by responsibility for one another, freedom, discipline, and a free society. (p. 42)

Summary of Literature Review

Tradition is important, but there is also a Danish proverb that he who only holds on to tradition never comes first (Ammundsen, 1994, p. 15).

The literature presented in this review examined the relevancy and evolution of folk art education within a contemporary context. At first glance, the task seemed somewhat simple to discuss, but at a second glance, it was somewhat complex to orchestrate. But despite the rigor in synthesizing the extensive literature relative to folk art, art education, and artistic development, there emerged moments of complete gratification in the discovery of parallels and similarities in the shared perspectives of folk school educators abroad with those who influenced liberal education in America: American educators, such as Elbert Hubbard, who after meeting with William Morris of the English Arts and Crafts movement established the Roycroft Studio in the United States; Herbert Read and John Dewey, who shared a similar passion in both art and liberal education; Eduard Lindeman's enthusiastic reception to the folk school concept after his visit to Denmark; the academic influence of both Read and Dewey on the artistic development theory of Howard; and the shared language of both adult and art educators in discussing their philosophies.

Also illuminating is the discovery that museum educators are enrolled in the philosophy and practice of adult education. Relative to the instruction and recognition of artistic development, Gardner (1990, 2006) exemplifies the greatest synchronicity in

discussing artistic development theory and its relevancy to the three ways of knowing the *individual*, the *contextual*, and the *integrative* (Caffarella & Merriam, 1999, 2001). The third way of knowing, “integrative,” enlightens the correlation of artistic expression in its relativity to more organic, transformative, and integrative philosophies of postmodern theories. Yet tradition continues to be significant in developing self awareness; “with today’s growing internationalization, it is increasingly important for the designer to be aware of his origins. To follow every trend ... would not only be anathema to higher education’s rational; it would also lead to extinction” (Ammundsen, 1994, p. 13).

Chapter 3

Research Method

The purpose of this study is to facilitate through education and recognition ways in which traditional folk art expression might evolve. The research question is: How do folk artists as well as educators develop mastery in the traditions of Scandinavian art and yet express meaning within the contemporary context? Understanding artistic development and integrative learning is the foundation for knowing how the creative process evolves. In this chapter, I discuss the elements of case study methodology, the foundations of this research type, the appropriateness of its methodology, the collection of information and how it is analyzed, results, and the parameters of the researcher's responsibilities. Following this review of principles, the specific research design for the case-in-point is presented.

Case Study Research

Case study methodology will guide the research of this study. Its qualitative strategy "proposes an active, involved role for the social scientist" (Patton, 2002, p. 53) in creating understanding ("versthen") of the human experience in the social context. It is a comprehensive strategy that looks at the individual and the contextual; it believes that the "rich descriptions of the social world are valuable," in contrast to the quantitative strategy in which researchers believe "that such detail interrupts the process of developing generalizations" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 16). Case study is unlike experimental design which separates the phenomena and context in "seeking patterns of unanticipated as well as expected relationships" (Stake, 1995, p. 41).

Foundations of Case Study

This explorative form of empirical inquiry is appropriate for gathering unstructured data where “both externally observable behaviors and internal states (worldview, opinions, values, attitudes, and symbolic constructs) interact” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 48). Its methodology includes two variants: first, gathering information on the total system; and second, using more specific phenomena of a subunit or *embedded unit* within the system. “A case study is an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiples sources of information rich in context” (Creswell, 1998, p. 61). It explores “contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context” (Yin, 2003, p. 13).

Case study is considered within the constructivist paradigm, which “assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent cocreate understanding), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003 p. 33). This qualitative method of inquiry exists within the framework of seven historical moments that “overlap and simultaneously operate in the present” (p. 3). These approaches, such as participatory inquiry, interpretive analysis, and participant observation, have evolved from the traditional ways of gathering data in the quantitative, positivist modernist period to the search by humanists for a new social theory where the “line between text and context blurred” (p. 3). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) define this type of empirical research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world.”

It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible.

These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of

representations, including field notes, interview, and conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. (pp. 4-5)

Methodology Appropriateness

Although case study is not internally or externally generalizable, the process is “worth conducting because the descriptive information alone will be revelatory” (Yin, 2003, p. 43). In looking at study *validity* and *reliability*, the rigor and trustworthiness of the researcher and the research methods are at question (Merriam, 1998, p. 198). Assessing the validity and reliability of an empirical study involves examining its component parts, as you might other types of research. Validity also “deals with the question of how research findings match reality” (p. 201). Yin (2003) stated that tactics for construct validity include multiple sources of evidence, a chain of evidence; and having, if necessary, a review of reports by key informants; and for internal validity, the inclusion of pattern-matching, explanation-building, rival explanations, and logic models (p. 34). Reliability in the sense of the experimental does not have the same meaning for the qualitative approach. Merriam (1998), in her discussion on reliability, stated, “Because what is being studied in education is assumed to be in flux, multifaceted, and highly contextual ... achieving reliability in the traditional sense is not only fanciful but impossible” (p. 206). Creswell (1998) referenced the sampling philosophy of Miles and Huberman (1994) who “select unusual cases” and “employ ‘maximum variation’” in representing “diverse cases to fully display multiple perspectives about the cases” (p. 120).

Data Collection and Results

In preparing for data collection, a sample is not necessary. Case study research is not based in sampling logic and is considered irrelevant. The methods used in gathering case study data will correlate to the study purpose. And the study questions will be documented for a possible future investigation; the “objective is to be sure that if a later investigator followed the same procedures ... the later investigator should arrive at the same findings and conclusions” (Yin, 2003, p. 37).

Yin (2003) is the study’s expert resource and will be referenced for all steps in the design and implementation of the research process. The case study data will be triangulated with observation, interviews, and literature. Yin (2003) stated, “A major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence Multiple sources of evidence far exceed that in other research strategies” (p. 97). Although the qualitative method can be quite onerous and difficult to analyze, its essence, is a free spirit in a theoretical framework and emerges in the comments and in the cross analysis of the data. The themes that develop provide the information needed for the results of the study. Stake (1995) stated that in “case study, an early commitment of common topics facilitates later cross-site analysis” (p. 25).

Researcher’s Parameters

The researcher can be considered in the metaphor of a “quilt maker or jazz improviser,” moving between the dialogical tests “from the personal to the political, and the local to the historical and the cultural” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 7). Collecting data from study participants entails serious personal and procedural introspection.

Approaching the process with a cooperative and neutral perspective is critical in developing a quality relationship with study participants. “Maintaining a nonjudgmental orientation is similar to suspending disbelief while one watches a movie or play or reads a book—one accepts what may be an obviously illogical or unbelievable set of circumstances to allow the author to unravel a riveting story” (Fetterman, 1998, p. 23). In building trust and respect, “good communication and good sense require that openness and honesty also characterize the ongoing relationship with subjects, gatekeepers, and others in the research setting” (Sieber, 1992, p. 39).

In the act of data collection and analysis, the researcher acts as a “bricoleur” who pieces together a “set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation,” and the solution emerges in their interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 5). These paradigms of interpretation “also connect the researcher to specific methods of collecting and analyzing empirical materials”; for example, case study relies on interviewing, observing, and document analysis (p. 36). And “each interpretive paradigm makes particular demands on the researcher, including the questions he or she asks and the interpretations the researcher brings to them” (p. 33). As commonly occurs, the researcher’s initial observations and questions in the field “may be moderated or changed during fieldwork” (Creswell, 1998, p. 86).

When doing a study involving ethnicity, a researcher needs to be aware of both the *emic* and *etic* lenses through which he or she may observe and participate in the activities of the culture. Wolcott (1999) stated that these lens descriptors “point to differences that make a difference,” *emic*, to differences *priori* in a bounded community, *etic*, to differences critical to the investigator in making intergroup cross references (p.

37). Being vigilant of personal and subject boundaries—cognitive and affective—is important for study integrity:

Be forthright about how you happened to initiate the study and how you happened to work particularly closely with particular individuals. Be revealing in important details about how you entered the field, your first contacts. And the impressions you assume you made—or tried to make—on those in the setting, as well as the first impressions you gained of them. (Wolcott, 1999, p. 141)

In the next section on research design, Yin's (2003) expertise guided the process of this study, and from his experience, he cautions the researcher on their investment of time and energy: "The demands of a case study on your intellect, ego, and emotions are far greater than those of any other research strategy" (p. 58).

Research Design

The research design of this case study provides specific information on the case-in-point and the steps used for data collection and analysis. Yin (2003) stated that one "would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions" (p. 13).

Yin (2003) stated that a *unit of analysis* is "preferred in examining contemporary events ... when relative behaviors cannot be manipulated" (p. 7). My intention, as the researcher, was to seek information from the "facts, observations, and interviews" of the Vesterheim-Norwegian American Museum's folk art education programs. Yin (2003) noted these three sources—documents, observations, and interviews—are critical in the *convergence* of qualitative data: "The use of multiple sources of evidence in case

studies allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioral issues” (p. 98).

Case-in-Point: The Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum

Organization Beginnings. In his discussion on protecting immigrant artifacts, Lovoll (1975) described the University of Minnesota as the initial site suggested for preserving Scandinavian-American artefacts. George E. Vincent, the University president at the time, “eagerly” responded to this idea. Vincent’s plans were to create facilities at the University for each nationality--Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians—for the collection of their “documents, domestic handicraft and clothing.” And in 1913, the *bygdelag* representatives provided their approval. However, “no official action was ever taken, and opposition within the Norwegian community killed the project” (p. 107). In 1914, O. E. Rølvagg, a notable scholar at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, faculty from other United Norwegian Lutheran Church Synod colleges, and Norwegian-American newspapers supported a synod-related facility. Both St. Olaf College and Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, were seriously considered. However, the University of Minnesota’s offer “came to naught”; Luther’s establishment of a museum on its Decorah, Iowa, campus in 1877 was timelier in its preservation efforts (pp.107-108).

In the mid 20th century, the collection at Luther was moved to a facility off campus and on loan to the Norwegian-American Museum Corporation in 1965 and accredited by the National Association of Museums in 1972 as the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum. Although the Vesterheim houses the visual culture collection of the immigrants, St. Olaf College houses the archives and also the Norwegian-American Historical Association (NAHA).

Organization Establishment. Although the Vesterheim is located in Decorah, Iowa, it has a large membership throughout the United States. The museum is exemplary in retaining the traditions through its education programs and recognition of the Norwegian-American artisan. Although the museum mission emphasizes the preservation of artifacts, it is aware of the need to look more toward contemporary expression as indicated in its development of, e.g., a design class, an occasional contemporary exhibit, and a contemporary category in its National Exhibition of Folk Art in the Norwegian Tradition. Its folk art education programs attract notable folk art instructors from Norway. There is, however, need for improvement relative to its awareness of artistic expression in the contemporary context and in its application of current theory and practice in adult education.

Today, the Vesterheim holds both a national and an international presence. “For many immigrants any object of Norwegian origin acquired symbolic significance relating to nostalgia, roots, identity, and ethnic pride” (Nelson, 1995, p. 90). This enthusiastic interest in Norwegian heritage continues; when Americans reported their ethnicity in the 2000 United States Bureau of the Census, 4,641,254 Americans nationwide claimed to be Norwegian. This number nearly equaled the population of Minnesota (4,919,479). Furthermore, these figures surpassed Norway’s population in 2003, which were reported at 4,554,000 by Kongelige Norske Utenriksdepartement—Norway’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Lovoll, 2006, p. 263).

The Vesterheim’s link to the Norwegian-American community and to Norway is marking its forty-fourth year. Its current and major outreach effort is the Vesterheim’s Annual Exhibition of Folk Art in the Norwegian Tradition. The exhibit and the

museum's supporting classes attract persons mostly of Scandinavian descent. However, in the last several decades, the interest of persons from other cultures/ethnicities has increased. For instance, a significant number of persons with Japanese heritage from California have been attending both singularly and in groups.

Study Interest

I became familiar with the Vesterheim as an exhibit intern and as a participant in the museum's folk education classes and conferences. These experiences provided me with some general mission and operational information due to my interaction with students, teachers, and museum staff. On a more formal basis, in 2007, I requested the assistance of Ms. Janet Pultz, who was then the museum's director, in providing me permission to observe, review documents, and interview participants in the National Exhibition (see Appendix A). I was provided the addresses for a "one time only" mailing list of the Vesterheim "Gold Medal" artisans, many of whom are teachers in the museum's folk art program. My interviews took place at the museum and at other sites, such as a place to have coffee or a home visit; I paid all travel costs. The Vesterheim declined to support my interviews with funds, but provided space in their library to meet with study participants and a letter of introduction to the Gold Medalists.

The main unit of analysis for this case study was the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum and its *embedded* units, the folk art education programs, which "serve as an important device for focusing a case study inquiry" (Yin, 2003, p. 45), the national exhibition, the recognition awards, the exhibition judging, and the curriculum. Therefore, relevant to the research process were the (a) review of pertinent museum program

documents, (b) observation of pertinent museum program activities, (c) interviews with Norwegian artisans and educators, and (d) interviews with the Gold Medalists.

National Exhibition Description. The National Exhibition of Folk Art in the Norwegian Tradition is a once-a-year event planned to coordinate with the museum's annual Norsk Fest held in July. This several days celebration of Norwegian-American heritage includes a wide variety of activities: folk art classes, theater, parade, food and art/craft vendors, museum tours, traditional costumes, demonstrations, music, and folk dancing.

Preparation for the National Exhibition begins in the early spring through posting of the Official Rules and Guidelines for submission of artisan expressions; these rules and guidelines contain basic information on exhibit categories and the judging process. Items arrive from all over the United States, with the majority of entries coming from the Midwest area. In June, the Vesterheim announces its acceptance of entries for its exhibition; in the third week of July, the exhibition of all submissions is held; and near the end of the third week, the ribbons are presented to coincide with the first day of the museum's Norsk Fest event. The handmade objects are then on display until after the end of the event, and photos are taken and then displayed on the Vesterheim's website until the next exhibit takes place. When the artists come to pick up their objects, they are provided the judges' comments and, if appropriate, nominal prize money.

Recognition Award Description. Three varied but artistically related perspectives are represented in the three judges chosen to award the persons who submitted entries to the Vesterheim's folk art exhibit. Each judge has interacted with the folk art program either as a Norwegian teacher, as a Gold Medalist, or as a patron/generalist. They spend

several days at the museum reviewing the handmade objects and applying the criteria for the ribbon awards: white (1 point), red (2 points), and blue (3 points). These ribbons are given to entrants in each folk art category: rosemaling, weaving, woodworking, and knifemaking.

The Gold Medalist awards are given to those artisans who have accumulated a certain level of points, 8, from the various ribbons they have received over time. After receiving this honor, the medalists can continue to exhibit without points and may be selected for Best of Show or People's Choice awards. The Best of Show is awarded "to the single most exceptional piece of folk art in each judged category." And the People's Choice, voted on by exhibit viewers, is for their "favorite folk-art piece in each category" (Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, 2007, p. 4).

Education Program Description. At the writing of this dissertation, the Vesterheim folk art catalog listed 58 courses, held between January and December of 2009. Along with the usual categories of Weaving (now called Fiber Arts and including basket making), Rosemaling, Woodworking, and Knifemaking, equal emphasis is given to the category of Norwegian Food Traditions and a new category of Jewelry. Teachers include several Norwegians and one Swede who will travel to the United States; a few courses are held in Norway. On the back of the brochure's cover, one comment describing the program stood out: "Whatever your ethnic heritage, and whether you've been studying Norwegian folk art for years or have just begun, Vesterheim will inspire you to make a tradition into something new."

In the Vesterheim context, both interactive and structural learning philosophies are applied; some instructors apply active learning technology more adeptly than others.

However, the standard methodology is mostly pedagogic because of the techniques involved in staying true to the tradition. The group setting is used for classes where teacher-artisans and student-artisans work together using traditional folk art tools, techniques, materials, and design to express their Scandinavian ethnicity. Transforming meaning through arts and crafts is enhanced by group interaction as in the “guild” concept of the Middle Ages, joining together “persons engaged in the same trade or craft for their mutual economic, social, and religious benefit” (Kowaleske & Bennett, 1989, p. 474). Today, the context of Scandinavian arts and crafts learning typically takes place in an informal apprenticeship or workshop. The setting is socially constructivist in nature—constructing knowledge through a dialogical process, where participants “inquire into and respond openly” (Taylor, Marienau, & Fiddler, 2000, p. 34) in a unique synergy of individuals and their shared perspectives. The dynamics of these efforts model “implicit” learning, “a process of gaining knowledge through personal direct experience” (Yang, 2003, p. 118). A significant exchange takes place as master level artisans interact with less advanced learners in establishing an ethnic learning community, “a source of enlightenment ... in a living interaction ... in which both learn from one another” (p. 165).

Data Collection

The study’s facts, observations, interviews, and photographs are described in this section. Yin (2003) states that “evidence for case studies may come from six sources: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts” (p. 83). These steps are integral to the study timeline (see Table 2)

from the beginning through data collection. (Some delays in the initial timeline occurred when major life events interrupted the researcher's schedule.)

Prior to accessing the facts of the Vesterheim's folk art program, I participated in their weaving classes as a student and as an exhibition intern for the museum. In my intern role, I worked with Ms. Lauranne Gilbertson, the textile curator, and with Dr. Karen LaBat, textiles professor at the University of Minnesota's College of Design. After these positive learning experiences, I gave more thought to continuing my academic interests in Work, Family, and Community Education, with an associated interest in art/design education.

In the spring of 2006, I met with the Vesterheim's Director, Ms. Janet Pultz. Our meeting entailed a discussion of my Ph.D. interests and my passion in preserving the stories of the Gold Medalist artists. I knew some were quite elderly; therefore timing was pertinent. In 2007, when my proposal was accepted by the graduate school, I immediately began this research journey and started to review the literature on today's museum education philosophy and practice.

Table 2

Study Timeline

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timing</u>
Confirmed study activities with Vesterheim administration	Fall 2006
Observed judging of the Vesterheim's 2007 National Exhibition	Spring 2007
Consulted with museum staff on research interests and support	Winter 2008
Traveled to Norway to observe folk school arts and crafts education	Spring 2008
Sent letters requesting interviews of Gold Medalists	Spring 2008
Conducted interviews at Vesterheim and artist homes	Summer 2008

Interview Data were collected in one to two hour sessions. A few unique situations called for interviewing some persons together. I used a digital recorder; transcripts were transcribed and coded for themes and patterns. This convergence of data provided a textured portrayal of participant experiences.

Facts. In understanding the present connection between the Vesterheim curriculum and the national exhibition, the class catalogs and the exhibit rules and guidelines, the artistic and technical criteria forms, and the judges' comments provided an in-depth perspective of its folk art program. I followed its class offerings from 2007 to 2009 and reviewed Vesterheim documents and publications. For background on the museum's development and its Norwegian-American constituency, I studied voluminous references situated online and in hardcopy at the University of Minnesota, St. Olaf College, and the Vesterheim's library. Also, Vesterheim documents supporting its annual national exhibition were reviewed: the exhibit judging criteria, exhibit judges' comments, and exhibit rules.

As my research progressed, I sent updates and text to the museum's textile curator, Ms. Lauranne Gilbertson, who served as my contact person and generously provided me with feedback, awareness, and protocol. And when I was near finalizing the study questions, I requested feedback from her and another curator, Ms. Tova Brandt. Both expressed their concern about the use of the term "mastery"; they thought the Gold Medalists would not easily grasp its meaning. The term, however, was used and when necessary in the participant interviews, I explained its meaning as "excellence" relative to accomplishment. In my meeting with the Norsk Handverksutvikling (NHU)

representative, Atle Ove Martinussen, “mastery” was found to be a common descriptor used to express the highest stage of artistic and technical competency.

To clarify the past, present, and future of adult learning in its association to the folk school concept, specific resources addressing the philosophy and practice of adult education in Norway were drawn from its Ministry of Education and Research and its Scandinavian educational journals. These references provided perspective on the correspondence of Norway’s museum and classroom technology to that which is practiced in the United States.

Observation. For several years prior to the beginning this study, I was an informal and “participant-observer” while taking weaving classes at the Vesterheim. When I decided to include art education in my Ph.D. research, I worked as a Vesterheim intern. My responsibilities included planning for and setting up a costume display and a gallery exhibition. I directly experienced museum management in process, such as attending staff meetings, observing curators, discussing roles and functions, and viewing artifacts in storage. Yin (2003) states that participant observation provides “the ability to perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone ‘inside’ the case study” (p. 94).

After I completed my direct observation in my internship and had my study proposal approved, I requested and was granted permission by Director Pultz to observe the judging process of the Vesterheim’s National Exhibition of Folk Art in the Norwegian Tradition. And for several judging sessions, I merely watched, listened, and took notes as the judges examined the handmade objects. This process extended from initial stages of orientation, viewing the handmade objects, and making comments (artistic and technical) relative to the criteria listed on the judging form. After the

judging process was complete, I was able to review the judges' final notations on the formalized criteria. The Vesterheim curator and judges took their work very seriously and articulated their perspectives while maintaining the anonymity of the artist.

Interviews. Collecting data from study participants entails serious personal and procedural introspection. I cautiously and slowly developed a relationship with the Vesterheim over many months, providing them with information on my interests and the intent of my study. When I was ready to begin interviewing, Director Pultz wrote a letter of introduction to include with my personal letter recruiting research participants. I was allowed to send these letters to the Gold Medalist mailing list, with their stipulation that I do only "one" mailing. I was a bit taken aback and this limitation became a stressor after the labels were sent out and it was necessary to do some follow-up.

In scheduling interviews with the 41 Gold Medalists, the Vesterheim provided space in its library. I began the interview process with a review of the study purpose, its questions, the acknowledgement of University support (see Appendix B); and then proceeded with a generalized question, such as, "Tell me what interests you in participating in this study?" This enabled participants to adjust to personalizing their responses. Krueger (1994) stated, "A series of open ended questions ... [allows] the respondent to determine the nature of the answer" (p. 69).

"More than with the other research strategies ... case studies require an inquiring mind during data collection, not just before or after the activity" (Yin, 2003, p. 59). Therefore, the interview questions were seriously considered and written as a direct correlation to the research question: How do folk artists as well as educators develop mastery in the traditions of Scandinavian folk art and yet express meaning within the

contemporary context? I designed interview questions that I would ask not only to the Vesterheim Gold Medalists, but also to case study participants in Norway. Consideration was also given to the type of questions that would initiate a rich and articulate response:

- What is the understanding of “contemporary” in folk art expression?
- What changes have evolved in Norway’s folk high schools that are relevant for the present and future folk art education programs?
- What changes have evolved in adult education philosophy and practice that are relevant for contemporary folk art education programs?
- What is mastery for folk artists who are expressing themselves within the contemporary context?
- What meaning do cultural symbols from the tradition have in contemporary expression?

My first round of interviews took place on my travel to Norway where I interviewed seventeen artists, educators, and administrators. Because these questions would also be asked of persons whose first language was Norwegian, I had them translated from the English by a native Norwegian living in Minnesota (see Appendix C). Inquiry and confirmation emails generally included the Norwegian language in honoring and establishing respectful communication with each participant receiving a letter that described the purpose and process of the study (see Appendix D). At the scheduled interview, the participant reviewed and signed the study consent form (see Appendix E).

I paid the travel expenses to Norway, although I had applied unsuccessfully for several grants. The trip plans involved travel to Notodden, Rauland, Oslo, Bergen, Voss, and Lillehammer. Activities involving discussion and tours with educators and

administrators/students were conducted at the Norges Husflidslag (Norwegian handcraft association) in Oslo; the Norges Kristelege Folkehøgskole (folk school headquarters) in Oslo; Telemark University College (TUC) Faculty of Art, “Folk Culture, and Teacher Education, campus Notodden and campus Rauland; at a Norsk Handverksutvikling (NHU—national handcraft association) architectural project in Bergen; the Vestnorsk Kulturakademi (western Norway culture academy), and the Voss Folkehøgskule (Voss folk school) in Voss; and the Maihaugen Museum (Norwegian folk art museum) in Lillehammer. These conversations provided a rich background and perspective on folk art education before I interviewed the Vesterheim Gold Medalists. For what culturally occurs in Norway sets precedence and vision in the Norwegian-American community.

A total of 17 Norwegians were interviewed, 9 in individual sessions and 8 in two small groups. There were 11 men and 6 women; all were adult students within the range of 35 to 80 years of age.

Table 3

Norwegian Interviews

Role	Institution	Number of Interviewees
Educator/Administrator	Norges Husflidslag	1
Educator/Administrator	Norges Kristelege Folkehøgskole	1
Educator/Administrator	Norsk Handverksutvikling	1
Educators and Administrators	Voss Folkehøgskole	2
Educators and Administrator	Telemark University College	3
Artists/Students	Voss Folkehøgskole	4
Artist/Educator/Administrator	Maihaugen Museum	1
Artists	Vestnorsk Kulturakademi	4

Most of the interviews went to capacity and some over. It was obvious that each person relished being asked about their art and their artistic perspective. After the interview concluded, I photographed the participants with their handmade objects and requested written permission in my planning for possible publication.

Although a considerable number of interviews took place at the Vesterheim Library, the interest in participating was higher than expected; I interviewed a fair number of interviewees over breakfast, lunch, and dinner beyond what was scheduled in the Vesterheim's library. And on return from my trip to Decorah, I visited with two more participants on the way home. Other interviews took place by driving to persons' homes in and outside the Twin Cities. Each interview was truly a privilege! A total number of 43 Gold Medalists were interviewed.

Table 4

Vesterheim Gold Medalist Interviews

Artistic Expertise	Women	Men	Life Stage	Number of Interviewees
Weaving	7	1	Early, Mid & Later	8
Woodworking	2	7	Early, Mid & Later	9
Rosemaling	22	0	Mid & Later	22
Knifemaking	0	3	Mid & Later	3*
Ceramic	0	1	Mid	1**

*Knifemakers also woodworkers

** Ceramic also woodworker

Photographs. When confirming interview appointments, I asked the Vesterheim Gold Medalists to bring an artifact of their design, something that spoke to their expression as a folk artist. Merriam (1998) and Yin (2003) suggested the photograph as an optional document that is not broadly considered in the data collection process.

Certainly, the photographs provide just a moment in time; however, each snapshot has its uniqueness in seeing the connection of artist to their artifact in expressing pride, accomplishment, and self. To protect the privacy of the individuals, the photographs have not been placed in the study's appendix.

Study Validity and Reliability. Contrary to the perspectives of researchers who are strongly allied with positivistic inquiry, Denizen and Lincoln (2003) stated:

Qualitative researchers have assumed that qualified, competent observers can with objectivity, clarity, and precision, report on their own observations of the social world, including the experiences of others [They] have held to the belief in a real subject, or real individual, who is present in the world and able, in some form, to report on his or her experiences. (p. 30)

Although the process “includes the researcher's intuition and understanding” (Patton, 2002, p. 108), approaching the process with a nonjudgmental perspective is critical in developing a quality relationship with participants. Yin (2003) stated that a check for researcher bias “is the degree to which you are open to contrary findings” (p. 62). And if needed for clarity, the researcher can conduct *member checking* validating the results with the research interviewees by email or letter.

Data Analysis

Whenever I encountered a situation relative to the content of my study, I took informal notes, kept articles, contacted educators with similar interests, and just generally kept my eyes and ears alert to some new piece of information. And in achieving a reliable and valid study, I firmly kept in mind Yin (2003), who stated that “the protocol

should indicate the link between the content of the protocol and the initial study question” (p. 105).

The initial stage in my data analysis was the convergence of data: the facts, the observations, the interviews, and the photographic material (Yin 2003). And in facilitating the analysis of this data, I referenced Yin (2003) and others, such as Stake (1995), Merriam (1998), and Creswell (1998). From these references, all similar in their methodologies, I derived the following four steps:

1. Converge (fact, observation, and interview) data;
2. Analyze data for emerging themes and patterns;
3. Synthesize and interpret data themes and patterns; and
4. Draw conclusions and organize for final report.

In moving through the research process, I relied on the expertise of several qualitative researchers, such as Stake (1995), who recommends more of the researcher’s time should be spent “in direct interpretation,” and less in developing categories whose “ends are subordinate to understanding the case” (p. 77); Merriam (1998), who stated that “categories should be conceptually congruent” (p.184); Creswell (1998), who urged the researcher to create a “visual model for an analysis of the data and to frame the analysis within the tradition of inquiry” (p. 162); and Yin (2003), who expressed his concern that “to produce a high quality analysis” investigators are required “to attend to all the evidence, display and present the evidence separate from any interpretation, and show adequate concern for exploring alternative interpretations” (p. 109).

Summary of the Research Method

In this chapter, I have described the nature of case study, its methodology, its appropriateness to the case-in-point, and its need for and facilitation of convergent data. The study's case-in-point, the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum and the museum's embedded units, the folk art education programs, were also described relative to its mission, its placement in the Scandinavian community, its subunits of exhibit judging, its recognition awards, and its education curriculum.

Case study theory is quite appropriate within the postmodern paradigm of the 21st century. Its use in this study is clearly justified considering the intellect, rigor, and skill of its standard procedures. Additionally, it captures the integrative and transformative aspects of the artist's expression and its meaning in the social context.

Chapter 4

Results

You can't go in a single home in Norway or Sweden and not have a crock sitting on top of the counter [with] a whole bunch of sandwich spreaders (Allen, Gold Medalist).

The purpose of this study is to facilitate understanding through education and recognition ways in which traditional folk art expression might evolve. The research question was: How do folk artists as well as educators develop mastery in the traditions of Scandinavian folk art and yet express meaning within the contemporary context? Understanding artistic expression and integrative learning is the foundation for knowing how the creative process evolves.

The themes and sub themes that emerged from the triangulated data of this study--documents, observations, and interviews--are described in this chapter. Fifty-eight interviews were conducted in Norway and the United States among artists, educators, and administrators (see Tables 3 and 4). Integral to the descriptions that evolved from these interviewees are my review of documents relative to the Vesterheim's folk art education and recognition programs; my observation of its National Exhibition of Folk Art in the Norwegian Tradition judging process; my observation of a folk school focused on the arts in Minnesota; my observations of a folk school class in Norway; and my observations of an arts academy group also in Norway.

All persons interviewed in the American setting were Vesterheim Gold Medalists. Although the cultural emphasis of this study is the Norwegian-American community, the interviewees were not all of Norwegian descent. The persons interviewed in Norway were Norwegian citizens, with the exception of one who was Danish. The perspectives of both the Norwegians and the Americans are blended in the rich descriptions of the

themes and sub themes in this chapter (see Table 5). To ensure the confidentiality of interview participants, their identifying information was modified. The Vesterheim Gold Medalist artists and educators interviewed for this study listed in Table 4 represent “mastery” in terms of how they were recognized in the museum’s annual National Exhibition in the Tradition program. The Norwegian artists, educators, and administrators interviewed for this study represent “expert knowledge” in terms of their roles as artists, educators, and administrators of Norway.

Essential Themes and Sub Themes

Four essential themes emerged, each supported by sub themes that explained the character and meaning of the interviewees’ experiences. The first theme was about and developing one’s artistic self; the second theme indicated that sustaining the tradition is based on the emotional and the practical; the third theme indicated that artistic confidence is relative to teaching effectiveness; and the fourth theme recognized that feelings of dissatisfaction result in emerging issues. All essential themes and sub themes of this study are displayed in the following table.

Table 5

Essential Themes and Sub themes

Themes	Sub Themes
Theme I: About and developing one’s artistic self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic role enlightens self-perspective • Familial support is significant in pursuing and sustaining artistry • Community connections create interest in artistic endeavor • Cultural affiliation is acknowledged through symbols and rituals

Theme II: Sustaining the tradition is based on the emotional and practical

- Primary style of artistic expression is in traditional form
- The traditional is integral to a free style of artistic expression
- Norwegian and Norwegian-American expressions differ
- Preservation of the traditional has practical implications for the future

Theme III:
Artistic confidence is relative to teaching effectiveness

- Philosophy and methodology define teaching effectiveness
- Free style expression requires knowledge of aesthetics
- Exceptional opportunities add artistic value

Theme IV:
Feelings of dissatisfaction result in emerging issues

- Competition creates impetus for and barriers to creativity
- Awards criteria and judging process raises questions
- Culture of origin expands beyond the Norwegian-American

Theme I: About and Developing One's Artistic Self

In setting a relaxed atmosphere for study participants to describe their experiences, I first asked the Vesterheim Gold Medalists to reflect on a life experience that inspired them to become a folk artist. For some, this understanding was innate and for others, this understanding transpired through a gradual awakening or a sudden revelation. In their descriptions the Gold Medalists referred to familiar artifacts, ritualized activities, and family, friends, and community relationships. As they described their experiences, they conveyed an enlightened sense of self and belonging related to their artistic journeys.

This essential theme, “About and Developing One’s Artistic Self,” is supported by four sub themes (see Table 5). The descriptions inherent in the sub themes provide assistance in understanding the essential theme.

Artistic Role Enlightens Self-Perspective. The Gold Medalists had various ways of defining their artisan roles. Most were comfortable with the definition of “folk artist,” others thought “craftsman” or “craftsperson” appropriate, some were definite about calling themselves “artists,” and a few were not sure how they should see themselves.

Among those who considered their typology to be that of “artist” the descriptions of their experiences referred to intrinsic motivation. Jennifer, who took up weaving in her college years, explained it as a “state of being.”

Somebody told me that at one time if you’re an artist, you’re an artist in everything, every aspect of your life So anything that you go to do [sic] if we’re going to build a room or if we’re going to build a chair, or if we’re going to have a carriage, or if we are going to drive our horses, or if we’re going to nurture our child--anything, it’s you know, how can we be creative? How can we, you know, how can we look at this in a creative way?

Charles also considered “artist” as appropriate and emphasized that in carving wood his creativity comes from within. “If you are an artist, you have the ability to express yourself. Stay away from production Express yourself!”

The relativity of “artist” in the typology of “folk artist” for some was appropriate; however, for others, such as Felicia, it was not.

Artist who specializes in Norwegian folk art I don’t really think of myself as a craft person because I have a concept that craft is--well, I could put crocheting and embroidery and that kind of thing and I--some kinds of wood things, like if you’re turning plates and bowls, to me that’s a craft. Maybe an artisan if you’re really good at it. But folk artists--it’s a tunnel. You are in a very narrow area, but if you become an artist, you are looked at differently in many cases, in the world, not just in the folk art world.

Ted as well spoke of his leaning toward the term “artist” and declined to use “folk artist” for status reasons.

I guess folk art, generally, but I lean toward the artist end of it, too, because I do think that we’re artists. But I just refer to what I do, not for a living, but my profession, I say I’m an artist. I don’t always clarify it by saying folk artist. Cause sometimes folk art can be very primitive and people will downplay that a little bit more. And I think we’re artists.

Then, there was Greta who was perfectly satisfied to be included in the typology of “folk artist.” She thought this was suitable, because she did not have a formal background.

I would probably say the folk artist, because I haven’t had a lot of training and mostly it’s been self learned or from Syvilla or Lila, or you know, teachers at Vesterheim that they bring in from Norway. So, you know, I don’t have an art background.

Eileen also thought that her training did not conform to what might be expected of a “fine artist.” For Sylvia, a rosemaler, both were fitting: “‘Folk artist’ and ‘artist’ too, mainly because I think rosemaling, of all the folk art, has been developed to its highest level. It is the finest of all folk arts.”

In describing an assumed difference from “folk artist” to “artist,” Charles spoke of the functional versus the decorative.

I think that if you look at the exhibit of those chairs in the museum, the ones that were done in Norway, or even in the U. S. a long time ago, were less refined in the carving or the art/rosemaling on it, then you will find in the exhibit pieces which are very refined with very detailed wood carvings and rosemaling and at the same with the weavings, the weavings that were used for everyday use in homes were less carefully detailed than what I do. Oh, I think it has something to do with--they didn’t need to view it as an art piece; but functional. Whereas what I do needs to be a little bit more special--especially if anyone’s going to buy it.

Relative to the elitist distinction of fine art to that of other arts, Miriam provided her perspective. “Fine artists look down on this [folk art] and it is interesting because I have

had fine artists in class who will try this and say, I never knew that was so hard!”

Similarly Rose thought that both fine art and folk art were equally challenging.

Most of us are like the old Norwegians, we're not trained as fine arts artists. We don't have art degrees We have a couple painters that have art degrees; however, it doesn't seem to make a difference. If you have that passion and perseverance, I tell people anybody can learn to be a rosemaler if they want to. If they are willing to practice Why would those girls over at Mindekirken come there on their day off and work like that? And what makes me want to go over and teach them?

In the minds of some Gold Medalists, “craftsman” was an appropriate descriptor, as noted by Kirsten who stated, “I think of myself as an artist craftsman, you know, in the Norwegian tradition.” Helen and Jeff described their roles aligned with the materials used for their handmade objects. Helen said, “Fiber artist; I refer to what I do as fiber artTo me, folk art goes to a certain tradition. Fiber art takes in a lot more--I have more leeway on what I want to do”; while Jeff said, “I call myself a woodcarver That's true. I'm just a woodcarver.” Then there was Warren, who stated, “I am just an ordinary guy who had some pieces people like. I don't pretend to be anything glorified.”

Whatever typology is deemed correct for self use, Stephen spoke of the “Wal-Mart mentality.”

You cannot take the Wal-Mart mentality out of people. It's just in tuned in them, and it will never come out. You know, there's no sense, you know, and people walk by and say, oh, looking at this, oh, yeah, my son wood burns, too, he can make me that. And I'm going; you should have him do that. There's no sense in going into an explanation.

Yet, Marta thought there was some hope for changing perspectives; recently she had attracted more patrons at the art fairs.

Done it for 13 years and just in the last two years I'd say, I started selling a lot of woodcarving at the shows. Otherwise, people just walk by and look at it. Or a lot of people come and see I'm sitting there, and they'll turn and go the other way.

Familial Support Is Significant in Pursuing and Sustaining Artistry. Numerous artisans said that in order to find the time and energy to achieve a level of mastery, family support was essential. The Gold Medalists described the encouragement they received from their spouses as practical, memorable, and life enriching. A number of rosemalers appreciated the strong back-up spouses provided for their creative expression; one was Loren, who expressed great fondness for her husband who provided genuine support beyond her expectations.

He knew how to handle me. “Oh, sure, you go right ahead, you go take another class. Sure, you can go to Norway for a month. We’ll get along.” Maybe he looked back and realized I worked for three years, put him through college, and then he thought maybe he owed me something. I don’t know.

Miriam’s spouse insisted she should spend time exploring a creative effort external to their responsibilities in raising six children!

I was about maybe 37 years old, and I had six children, and I was working in a ski shop in the wintertime, part time. My husband had gone to a craft show in our area we were living in, and he came down to where I was working, and he said too bad you can’t get up to the Memorial Building, he said, there’s a woman up there from Marquette that’s painting Norwegian painting, and she’s offering classes, and I think you should go and take some classes. I looked at him like he was out of his mind. I said, and who is going to take care of the six children when I go to paint? It was always his fault. I always blamed him. I said, it’s your fault ... he encouraged me, he really did. He encouraged me all the way. And I started in ’67. In ’69, I came down here for the first time, and Nils Ellingsgard was my first Norwegian teacher.

From Janelle’s perspective, she would not have established herself as a Gold Medalist rosemalar if not for her husband. “I have a husband who is behind me 100 percent! I couldn’t have done any of this if it wasn’t for him.” Then there was Beatrice who was quite emotional about having a true partnership with her husband, which was unusual in the mid 20th century.

But you see, we have to feel good about ourselves. My husband was a very intelligent genius IQ guy, veterinarian, and I mean, he never ever--I mean academically never ever belittled me, but I know I could bake a cake, I could sew my own clothes, but when I started really being serious about rosemaling, he was so proud of that. So you see, that made me feel – I mean, not – I mean, he was his person, I was my person, together we were one, and he – in the organization he was in, he went to the top rotary, we traveled the world, and that kind of stuff. But I had, you know, I became my own person. I gave him room to grow from when we were first married to be in practice and ... I became a painter So at one of our anniversaries, he gave me a bronze sculpture of a seagull, and he says this is to thank you for freeing me.

However, the changing roles of women may also limit their ability to engage in the traditional arts. Because more women today are in the workforce, they have limited time to spend on artistry. Marta described a vast difference between the situation of younger women and women in her generation.

I think probably when they first started these classes there were a lot of older women, there were a few of us that were probably in our 30s at the time, but here again, you know, I was a stay at home mom, doing this kind of stuff on the side at home, and I think that's what a few of the other women were doing. I don't know, I think that demographic has changed. So many women now need to have a job outside the home and it's just too much to juggle to take on a hobby like this.

Community Connections Create Interest in Artistic Endeavor. Having a sense of belonging and being encouraged by others who have similar artistic interests was vital to both the Gold Medalists and the Norwegians. My observations of three artisan communities, one in Minnesota and two in Norway, reflected folk school and adult education philosophies. The artisan community in Central Minnesota, the Milan Folk School, exemplified the Danish folk school mission in its informality and education philosophy, as well as the artistic communities in Norway, the Voss folkehøgskole and the Vestnorsk kulturakademi. These artisan collectives were somewhat different in their

artistic expressions, but similar in their interests to exchange ideas and learn from one another.

I attended a folk school board meeting in Milan, MN, to observe and create a discourse related to the study questions. All artisans, the board members came from the small towns in this central point of the state. The school's mission, driven by the original purpose of the folk school philosophy, had thrived for over a dozen years; and like today's Scandinavian folk schools, the curriculum expanded to the contemporary, but still taught the traditional arts and crafts. The folk school shared resources with other organizations in the surrounding community, such as the Extension service, which was also present at the board meeting. The vigorous conversation among the board members spoke to their commitment and enthusiasm in doing all necessary to keep the school visible and viable.

On my visit to a folk school in western Norway, I experienced a day of activity among a large group of Norwegian retirees who daily gathered to create and improve their woodworking competencies. This was an event with little interpersonal interaction other than when the *kaffe* bell rang at exactly *elleve klokka om morgenen* (11:00 in the morning); on occasion, the school's instructor would cook *fiske suppe* (fish soup). The students gathered around a long table, and for the next half hour the conversation was full of energy discussing their morning accomplishments, friends in town, family, and farm activities. Martin, the instructor on the day of my visit, described the value in this community education effort.

Things are different here [in Norway] ... there is a man who was moved out of his position who had worked at the factory; instead of retiring, he is actively engaged some days each week, not a quick end for him, a transition, remarkably valuable,

a treasure to the country and the area ... not to let go of him, a whole new array of dealing with pensioners.

Then mid-afternoon, I sat with a group of four students and asked them questions on their experience and working in the style of Norwegian traditions.

In my experiences as a folk art student, I too found that my interest in weaving was supported by the interactions I had with others, classmates and instructors, and certainly with the longer term relationships that followed. The personal exchanges on design and technique were rich with stories and discoveries. We have shared memories of family, artistic experiences, cultural symbols, and long forgotten rituals and artifacts. These deeply felt connections increased my understanding of self and the social context of my childhood.

The community connections made by the Vesterheim Gold Medalists had a similar impact in their feeling supported by others while pursuing their chosen artistic expression. In the descriptions of their experiences, they spoke of how they learned and increased their knowledge and skills through the Vesterheim folk art education programs as well as in community and vocational education classes. Helen described her first few visits to a rosemaling class.

I think a friend of mine said “you should do rosemaling” and I didn’t know whether I should try it and I didn’t know what it was. I was doing ... I was running the Des Moines Art Center and taking painting there and doing...at that time everybody was doing things like abstract expressionism and I was kind of lost. People told me I was improving, and I thought well, you could fool me, I don’t know if I’m improving or not. What I’m doing, I’m just playing with the paint, and I found someone demonstrating, a teacher, the teacher actually that taught adult education demonstrated and so then I just signed up for a class, and the more I was taking, you know, regular painting classes at the Art Center and rosemaling one evening a week, and all of a sudden it dawned on me—hey, I like this rosemaling a lot better!

Esther spoke of her and her mother's introduction to the Norwegian arts in taking community education rosemaling classes. The discovery to her was momentous.

My mom was 100 percent Norwegian. She started taking adult education classes, and she lived 150 miles from me, so we would travel and I would look at what she was doing, get real excited, and wondering why after growing up in this Norwegian home, nobody had ever said the word rosemaling to me. And I was 40 and had my own family, and now I'm finally finding that wonderful, wonderful art form. So she took lessons for a couple of years, and then we got started on the River Falls one, so it's a natural inborn thing with me. I can't let my mom get ahead of me on that.

College can also create additional awareness of one's connections to an ethnic community. Greta, who began to artistically express herself through weaving, got in touch with her Norwegian roots while attending college.

Yeah, I think really my Scandinavian connections came more when I went to Luther than growing up, even though my dad had a strong Norwegian accent that I was not even aware of, because everybody in the community talked that way. I remember someone in college saying, I really like your dad's accent, and I'm thinking, my dad's accent? Then I go, well, I guess he does, but it never even occurred to me until somebody said so, you know.

Although some Gold Medalists had considerable experience, sharing and learning among other artisans kept them motivated and stimulated. Connie, a weaver, explained her rationale. "I still come here to classes. I love the atmosphere of Vesterheim. I love the atmosphere of painters, young and old." Similar enthusiasm was expressed by Beatrice, a weaver.

I met Syvilla, who is, you know, just crazy nuts about Norwegian weaving, and she's sort of been my weaving mom, I call her a mentor. Syvilla loves to talk weaving and I love to talk weaving and, you know, we--I think we learn a lot from each other, but also she was definitely a great mentor to me, especially when I was newer. Well, we get along very well, and we respect each other and enjoy each other's company, you know. But she definitely was way ahead of me when I was starting and helped me a lot and was very generous with information.

Common interests in artisan communities are a bonding factor similar to that of a “family.” Rita, an educator and rosemaler, shared her observations made over many years of teaching.

When I first started teaching, it was very interesting because I was new to teaching rosemaling, but I had taught children before. Children are there because they have to be. These people were there because they wanted to be. And I had all beginners, and I was a beginning teacher. And this continued for maybe two years, and then it started to mix. I could separate out maybe, but those that continued from the first classes on, I still had some of them in class 10 years later. They came because they were family now. When they came in the door from not being there for a week, they wanted to know how Aunt Jane was. She was in the hospital last week, how is she doing this week. And they wanted to know how that new baby is. I mean, that’s the kind of family that was created by this common interest.

As described by Olivia, watching others in class solve their technical and design problems was also a significant learning factor.

You look at everything and incorporate it into what you are doing. Think of balance and scroll this way and that way, it just develops. Not too many colors. Too many colors get messyWonderful. You meet other people and you find out what they do.

Strong conviction came from Warren when he spoke of how important the essence of community is to people’s lives.

You know, I keep coming back to this, but I really feel strongly about it. It’s a community thing. We can’t get there as individuals, we have to do it as communities. And, you know, I mean, because we have seen how this touches people’s lives and every--it brings meaning to people’s lives who--many of these people had much success in their lives. But the success has been, you know, it doesn’t feel quite as sweet as when they actually begin to create things with their hands and their families have these pieces in their, you know, I mean, we’ve touched a lot of lives.

For Kelly, a rosemaler, the essence of the community experience was a feeling of connection to heritage through others.

I don’t live in a Norwegian community. I’m probably the only one around there – in fact I know I’m the only rosemaler. But it’s a sense of connection that you

cannot explain. And I just have enjoyed the fellowship and the experiences of being with other rosemalers; the friends that I've made. Some of the experiences I have had are just incredible. I got to go to a reception at the White House, because of my rosemaling.

And just as effusive about her community experiences was Caroline, who participated in travel events arranged by the Vesterheim.

So many experiences that have come about because of being involved in the rosemaling and the culture are experiences you cannot put a price tag on them, just so wonderful, and I just think, you know, I've been on trips to Norway – study trips with Vesterheim, and getting in to ... the work of the Masters. It's just so breathtaking, and I have just really--I just have nothing but the most respect in Vesterheim, I really do.

Cultural Affiliation Is Acknowledged through Symbols and Rituals. At the initial start of the interview process, the Vesterheim Gold Medalists and the Norwegians were asked to reflect on an inspiring life experience that moved them to become folk artists. Through their reflections of childhood to adulthood, they shared events that had discreetly and noticeably inspired their interest in artistic expression. For most of these participants, their Norwegian ethnicity was integral to their desire to use artistry in communicating these revelations of shared ethnicity. However, there were also Gold Medalists who were not of Norwegian descent but who appreciated the designs and techniques of Norwegian Folk Art. As they spoke of their experiences, a range of emotion was displayed in describing associations with family, artifacts, and community.

One Gold Medalist, Evan, a woodworker, acknowledged his association with family in a description of his wood carving that reflected a childhood experience.

I just finished another carving that I haven't sent in for competition but what it is, is a Scandinavian man drinking coffee sitting on a kubbestol and a table in front of him that's also carved like [sic] and he's drinking coffee out of a saucer. He poured his coffee from his coffee cup into the saucer. He's drinking the coffee out of the saucer and on the table in front of him he has a bowl full of sugar cubes and a pitcher with cream. And so this is an idea that I came up with, because I saw

my father and other people have seen their relatives drink coffee in the same way, you know?

Parents were commonly mentioned as influential in creating an environment reminiscent of one's culture. Birgitta, a contemporary Norwegian artist and a member of an arts "akademi" in a mountainous area of Norway, referenced her father and his folktale collection by the artist and author Theodore Kittleson. Kittleson illustrated in the "old way of drawing, telling a story," and she was "100% sure they [the drawings] had inspired my expression." Several Gold Medalists also had similar stories, such as Greta, a weaver, who wistfully spoke of her homemaker mother's art and craft endeavors. Because the arts in the later 20th century were no longer integral to a homemaker's role, Greta had preserved an endearing memory of her mother.

She [mother] did everything else, the Hardanger [Norwegian needlework], the--all the [Scandinavian] baking kind of things, yeah. It was a big part of her life. So it was to be part of mine too in growing up. That's what they say--the third generation is the one that starts retrieving the cultural things that were lost by the second generation because they wanted to forget it all.

Jennifer, however, did not grow up in a home environment that modeled the home arts. But later in life she and her mother started anew by taking a community education class to learn more about the artistic expression of their Norwegian-American heritage.

My mother and father sold their farm and moved to the little town of Black Earth which is near Madison. And most of the people there have a Norwegian background. And after they were living there awhile, some of her new Norwegian friends took her to a rosemaling class. She had no idea what it was, but she would try it. And it was something that looked interesting and the first time I had a chance to take a class, I did. You know, I wasn't in that community, I was up in the Appleton/Menasha area, and I took one of those ten week three hour classes, you know, and just fell in love with it.

Not all memories are strictly visual as James, a weaver, described when he thought back on his relationship with his father and the family's annual ritual.

Whether I'm weaving or now drawing, that stuff is in my unconscious, and sometimes it comes out consciously. When I drew my father, you know, and you comment, I start thinking about all kinds of stories and this and that. Stinking up the house with the lutefisk, you know, and all that stuff, you know, comes alive.

Although "lutefisk" is thought to be a caricature of the Norwegian experience, James' reflection was evidence of its true existence.

Grandparents as well were influential in their modeling of cultural symbols and rituals intrinsic to their immigrant status. Both Pauline's parents and her grandparents spoke Norwegian and enrolled their children and grandchildren in their ethnic celebrations. From childhood through early adulthood she was immersed in and inspired by familiar Norwegian symbols and events.

My mother had a red kubbestol that I admired very much. I loved the red background and bright colors. Many things Norwegian were just a way of life, since my mother was born to an immigrant family from Hallingdal and my father was an immigrant from Lillesand in southern Norway.

Caroline, Jeff, and Sara were also beholden to their grandparents. For Caroline, a rosemaler, her reflection was about the visit she made every summer to her grandmother's home in the Red River Valley of North Dakota. It was there she would accompany her grandmother to social gatherings in other Norwegian immigrant homes. "Here I was, this little girl sitting and listening, and they'd give me a sugar cookie, you know, but I saw all the Norwegian artifacts that are in the museum, [such as] the immigrant trunk." Her memory also spoke to the senses as she recalled the "warm and sticky" milk in the "north pantry" on her bus ride to the Valley carrying "a shoe box with lunch sandwiches that smelled of leather." Jeff, a woodworker, described "the source" of his artistry in his reflection of walking in the woods with his grandfather. "We always

brought knives and we always carved ... small animals and I still do it. I never stopped.”

Sara referred to her grandfather as her creative influence in her pursuit of rosemaling.

He didn't start painting until he was--I think in his 50s. And he lived in Door County and he made a lot of oil paintings, scenes and things like that, and my grandmother had passed away, so he used to come and live with us for a month at a time, and live with all his different children. And I know when he came, I used to ... I was maybe six or seven; I think I was nine when he died. And I'd sit at the table next to him and he'd be painting. He never encouraged me. I remember that. He kind of laughed at my stuff, but still I just really wanted to paint like him.

Olivia, also a rosemaler, told of an inspiring childhood experience with her father that took place on the family farm.

In the fall of the year, the cows were allowed to graze $\frac{3}{4}$ mile down the driveway. There was a bridge; I would take paper and pencil, and my watercolor box, and would go and sit by the bridge. My father said you just go down there and make sure the cows do not cross the bridge I had a big long stick and I would touch them and they would go back. They knew what to do.

Siblings and other relatives also contributed to the initial and sustaining interests of the Gold Medalists' artistic pursuits. Kirsten, now a Vesterheim woodworking instructor, had woodcarver brothers she wanted to model after. Eileen, who took up weaving in the midst of her role as a parent, reflected on a distant memory which she thought initiated her interest in the Norwegian arts.

I think my grandmother had a couple brothers that carved tombstones. Now isn't that strange They were stone cutters. I can go through the cemeteries at home and find every, I can pick out every tombstone they cut. I think it's from the Viking times. I think those traits were handed down through the Norwegian people that are carried on through weaving, you know.

Robert, after he married, was mentored by his father-in-law who was a woodworker. He became immersed in the art of woodcarving to the extent his carving tools and bench are in his living room.

It started with my father-in-law. He is the one that got me into woodcarving. And that's been 50 some years ago; then later on, our neighbor across the street. Her dad owns a clothing store here in Decorah. And they wanted to know if I'd put my stuff in their window for the Nordic Fest display. And then from there, and then that following year, Jack Vanberia, he wanted to put stuff in there for display, and then for me to come and sit down there during Nordic Fest and carve. So we've done that for a couple years. And then they invited me to carve for the Nordic Fest. So I would come down every Nordic Fest and carve up in the museum.

Most Gold Medalists identified with the cultural symbols that had been present at one point in their life. For later, they created their handmade object with these symbols in mind. Beth knew just why she developed her rosemaling talents and explained the nature of her inspiration.

I'm interested in handwork, and I can remember when I finally came to the conclusion ... don't be a jack of all trades, master of none. And that's when I decided I was going to stick with rosemaling because of that early influence from my grandmother and her artifacts that she had. So that is kind of it in a nutshell, I think.

In describing the source of his creative efforts, Warren at first had some difficulty in explaining why he is a woodcarver, but eventually provided a brief and to the point description: "There's just something about wood, I just, little scraps, and I can't even throw them away." Evan's description was lengthier and the story behind it was significant; he noted the uniqueness in one representation of Norwegian folk art, a small butter knife with a big story.

Norwegian culture is an add-on, you know, we make a generic spoon and do a little Norwegian do-dad on it; I mean it's the heart and soul of the whole spoon. And the mere fact that we're making a sandwich spreader, why on earth, I don't know of any other culture that used sandwich spreaders. I mean that's kind of a weird term. And you don't go to Mexico or California and ask to buy a sandwich spreader, but when you eat sandwiches twice a day there's a rich array then of wooden sandwich spreaders. You can't go in a single home in Norway or Sweden and not have a crock sitting on top of the counter where your kids in school or whoever made a whole bunch of sandwich spreaders and those are gifts to this very day.... I have this sort of little, little cache of spoons, goofy as it

sounds, I've made about half of them, about three or four of them, and the others have been gifts from people that they've made, wooden spoons or horn or bone spoons, and I just won't use a metal spoon. I just grab one of those for absolutely everything. I have my blueberry spoon and I have my ice cream spoon and the one that I eat oatmeal with because there's a little bit of something that I've done or something that, you know, when I eat with this I think of Fred.

Summary. The Gold Medalists described how integral belonging is in learning more about one's self and developing one's artistry. In discovering similarities through cultural affiliation the self is mirrored in the symbols and rituals of childhood. A re-discovery of these cultural identifiers can occur with new connections to ethnic community in the quest for artistic expression. As the artisan commits time, talents, and energy to this pursuit, family support becomes significant in sustaining the creative endeavor. And through this artistry, meanings develop between the self and the social context.

Theme II: Sustaining the Tradition Is Based on the Emotional and Practical

In describing factors that influenced their folk art expression, the Gold Medalists spoke of their initial and developing interest in the application of Norwegian symbolism and technology in their choice of artistic expression. From their descriptions emerged varying perspectives on the value of the tradition in artistic expression. The Norwegians provided their perspectives on how the Norwegian-Americans have preserved elements of the tradition in their artistic endeavors and have developed a unique expression that evolved from the first immigrants and the generations that followed.

This essential theme, "Sustaining the Tradition Is Based on the Emotional and the Practical," is supported by four sub themes (see Table 5). The descriptions inherent in the sub themes provide assistance in understanding the essential theme.

Primary Style of Artistic Expression Is in the Traditional Form. Gold Medalists who first take classes at the Vesterheim are generally taught Norwegian traditional designs and techniques. And for many medalists this continues to be the chosen mode of expression. The tradition is rooted in what is commonly considered the Nationalistic Period, from the mid 18th century to the mid 19th century.

Karin, a weaver, described how committed she is to replicating traditional weaving patterns: “I’m probably a traditionalist. I kind of follow traditions, by designs and color.” Concerned about veering from a given style, Lenore too found satisfaction in the tradition when drafting patterns to weave on the loom. She thought it important to preserve their truth.

For me a lot of what’s driven my weaving is that I just want to know how that works, how to weave that particular structure, you know. It’s – it comes out in knitting too, you know, I found out about twine knitting. I had to learn how to do that, you know, because it’s a historical – I think I’m connected to the historical techniques and some of them have been lost for awhile and come back; and some of them are in danger of being lost, so I think it’s always good to – to have that curiosity, to learn about it.

And despite creating a number of handmade objects reflecting the tradition in a freestyle form of expression, Luke, a woodworker, found that most of his patrons are attracted to the handmade objects that are traditional in form and decorated with symbols, often descriptive of the Norwegian region their family came from.

In describing how the Gold Medal “traditionalist” applies historical designs, Eve provided an example of how she finds designs in various books.

I look in the books and see lately--this is pretty much what we’ve been doing and it’s kind of the same flowers, and I thought, well, gee, let me find some--really search through these books and find flowers that I haven’t really seen painted here. So this was on a trunk, these footballs we call them. I’ve seen them, you know, with these things coming out of the top of them, and this is a very old painted way of painting a tulip, that you see on trunks, old, old trunks, these milk

Pods or whatever you want to call them. And this is a very old type of thing. This is--this, too. That's very old. This one was on a pulpit, and I just love that flower.

Robert, who designs without a specific pattern in mind, described how he allows the tradition to reveal itself as he carves for his patrons.

When we get an order, we draw from our roots I don't know where I'm going with this, but I'm not necessarily trying to create something Scandinavian or, you know, for my client. I'm trying to create something they need, but it's from the roots that I already have.

Although the Gold Medalists had varying viewpoints on folk art style within the tradition, Beatrice thought it "primitive" in nature.

I think some of the old should be kept intact. And allow people to explore, expand, and do things with it, but there should always be a point or a place that you could go to, to see the old, to draw from that. It's more primitive than what we do now, but I love the primitive people, drawn straightforward. I think if we can keep that feeling of child-like drawings, I like that I think they were drawing it the best they could. That's what it looked like to them. Draw what you see.

And Helen explained that an artisan needs to draw what is most valuable from these "old" designs.

So the work needs to reflect--you need to still do originals, but it needs to reflect the rosemaling that was done in that time, so what we usually do is, you know, I always tell my students to study the works of the masters, the old masters in the style. Not just old--just because it is old, doesn't mean it was good. Study the work of the masters of the style, and then glean out from that. I like this flower from this person. I like the scrolls the way they were carried out in this one. I like the colors of this one. Put it together.

Luke, whose expression went beyond his woodworking to Norwegian Fjord horses, described the resurgence of this interest in Norway.

Fjord horses are thought of much like carving is thought of right now in Norway, and that it's so ordinary, so mundane, that Norway being a modern oil country--but many people don't have any time for that anymore. It's just so old, such old fashioned stuff that--so if you can connect that--so if they see that the Americans are interested in these things, then all of a sudden they become a little bit more

interested because they get more worthwhile—it has status Yeah. Status is very important in Norway.

Eileen spoke of a similar occurrence in the loss of traditional weaving patterns and the efforts of an American weaving group to keep these viable.

Some of the Norwegian teachers had said, you know, you're doing a better job at Vesterheim saving the traditions than we are in Norway. So I mean, that's I guess not just my perspective, but based on, you know, something of their perspective. And some of the Norwegian weaving teachers have, you know, lost their weaving jobs because there is less interest in learning the traditional and they're closing some of the folk schools. They're closing programs and I think here it's probably a relatively small community that has the interest to keep things alive. Like the Flesberg study group that we did a few years ago and danksbrogd study group that we've done, you know, those are relatively unknown techniques or little known techniques.

From my observations and discussion with a group of “pensioners” at a folk school in western Norway, the entire class spoke to being steadfastly satisfied “copying” from the tradition. A few of these adult students had tried a more innovative approach, but were quite unhappy with the results. For them, the design and techniques of the tradition were primary, and “that’s the way it should be.” Their traditional way of creating was also reflected in the ritualistic activities of the day and the formality in their socialization.

In addition to visiting the folk school, I held interviews in various places convenient to the Norwegian artists, educators, and administrators who were participants in this study. Although Norway’s artisans generally have moved on to contemporary expression within the country’s colleges and folk schools, there is a constituency in Norway’s Ministry that works to retain aspects of the tradition, design and technique, for present and future use. As reflected in the Norwegian participant interviews the tradition

continues to exist. Erik, a woodworker, spoke of his father and the significance of the handmade object.

My father, he is what we call a carpenter teacher in a folk school his whole life. When he finished, it seemed like a few students wanted this subject. I remember when I was a small boy they made traditional Norwegian furniture. The parents came at the last day and they were very proud of what their children would bring back home. It meant something for the students and their families—to put in their house—very concrete.

In Norway, the significance of geography, such as a regional pattern, can be imbued in traditional expression creating a sense of belonging. Anders clarified this emotion in his statement:

Even in 2008, it is important to know your own local area, your Hordaland County, and your Voss. Young people travel all over, but there is a little piece that is mine. It is where they grow. What is with me who is grounded here in this God forsaken place. I live here But still this is my home.

The Traditional Is Integral to a Free Style of Artistic Expression. A number of the Gold Medalists found it important to create within the tradition but in some way to make it more distinctly theirs. Although there were many who desired to be “freely expressive,” the traditional symbols and rituals were still relevant to the design and form of the artifact. Kirsten described the changes taking place in America that called for more attention to the contemporary context.

So there are more generations now in between there and people less interested in, you know, filling their house with Norwegian things.... I don't think we no longer feel like we want to be professional ... it's starting to hurt us rather than help us. It's a step more away from it. People want a nice portal, they don't want a Norwegian portal anymore They want a nice piece of art. They don't need a connection with Norway.

Understanding that objects representing Norway's past are now being supplanted by more contemporary objects, Ted thought educators should take a different tact.

There was a period of time to be taught to repeat certain forms so that people understood the correct way of doing things ... and yet there should be a point where you become more creative ... classic training in the folk arts ... you need to have someone like the impressionists and say let's do it this way.

In developing awareness of a free style form of rosemaling, the Vesterheim created an exhibit for rosemalers to create "on the edge." Sigrid was smitten with this concept.

Well I thought the Rosemaling on the Edge [Vesterheim exhibit] was successful and I'd like to see that maybe somehow incorporated in the annual exhibition that they have, maybe a class or a category for people who want to do something a little different. Well, yeah. I would just like to see the spontaneity come back into rosemaling, to put it in one sentence.

Similarly, for Marianne, the information provided at the exhibit symposium gave her a new perspective on the assumptions of perfection necessary for her rosemaled designs and techniques.

It [rosemaling] has lost a lot of that spontaneity. It's gone because we've gotten to the point where competition has made us want to do everything perfectly. So that the judge will see that, you know, the technique is perfect, the design is perfect, the colors are perfect, and I think it has taken away somewhat from the original idea of rosemaling and that was one reason we had our symposium a few years ago and had this creative exhibit of things that you could do with rosemaling. Whatever!

How to be freer in their expression was a concern. Although some Gold Medalists understood the artistic language of art, there were others who spoke of needing this knowledge and skill, such as Marta: "Let me say this, about myself: I don't think I can come up with an impressionistic fantasy on my own; I'd have to be taught. And that's okay." Yet, having the basics is still necessary, as articulated by Beatrice.

I think it's nice to take a structure and kind of work with it, and then, you know, if we have beginning weavers, and we have very skilled weavers, and I think, you know, I think it's wonderful for the newer weavers to just learn a technique, learn how it's done, and maybe the year that we're working on it, they won't push it

very far other than learning what it is, but they have that skill and that knowledge now, and later they can--they can push it to another level if they want to.

James' sense of freestyle was articulated through his interest in the artistic aspects of photography.

It's true in anything, but ...where you consider something to be a work of art, like if you look at a photograph that someone takes, if you look at it you can see that it's an excellent photograph but you don't want to look at it again, and it's an excellent photograph. You don't want to look at it again, but when that photograph is artistic, you look at it and then you turn around and you want to look at it again and then you look at it again and you see something in it that makes you want to keep on looking at it, and then pretty soon you're reading into it, and you see things about it and you begin to love it, and that's what makes this photograph a work of art and another photograph just to be mechanical.

Karin spoke of how she would challenge herself to make even a small change. "I wonder what would happen if I did this. How can I make this? What if I change this threading a little bit?" Becoming "relaxed" is how Esther defined her attempts to become more free.

Well, yeah, it [the tradition] could be relaxed more. And I'm probably just as guilty as many, because I think it's difficult, but when you paint a flower, you can paint it in a traditional way, but it doesn't have to be stiff. Can you visualize what I mean?

For Rita, this spontaneity did accidentally occur and coincidentally was rewarded by the exhibition judges.

They said my detail was very good. And one of the reasons is because we were going out that evening I guess, and I was downstairs painting. My husband kept saying, will you hurry up, you know, don't be so exacting, and so it was so much freer.

And for Robert, his creative effort began with doing his carving upside down. "Most people--they'll start at the top and do the head first. I'm just the other way around; I start from the bottom and go up. I do the feet first and then go up."

“Tweaking the tradition” is how some Gold Medalists referred to making stylistic changes to traditional folk art. Clarence, who taught a number of woodcarving and knifemaking classes, provided his educator insight.

I think teaching creates a foundation for people to take it wherever they want to. I think it’s really hard to teach people to go beyond the traditional. I think it’s easy to encourage people to do that, but I think that’s a direction people kind of have to take on their own.

A teacher may not be obvious in their encouragement to go beyond the tradition.

However, Caroline said that in a collection of exhibition pieces the teacher’s effort was evident.

You still need the tradition, but if you are familiar with the artists that are exhibiting here, I can walk around and I recognize who did it because of what and how they put their lines or strokes together. You will see the teachers that came from Norway this year; they will have pieces in the exhibit next year that were influenced by those teachers. Um, thinking back to the year that I judged here, there was a teacher that had been here and her work was very unique, very different from anything, and--that we’d ever had here before, and I couldn’t believe the number of pieces that were on exhibit from that particular teacher. It was something new and something we had not seen before.

Connie described how important it was to learn the traditional techniques before moving on to a more free style expression.

I feel like I’m still learning that technique and I feel like it’s really valuable to take, you know, one of the virgins or whatever and weave it as closely as I can to what it was woven before. It helps me understand how that technique is done. If I hadn’t done some of that, I don’t think I can then take it to a different level and still have the, you know, the same understanding of the technique.

Miriam articulated her interest in setting aside the tradition, but recognized the importance of its presence.

[Tradition] influenced by it and I don’t want to be thought of as stealing somebody else’s design. I’d rather be so far removed from that, that I can create without having that in the back of my mind a picture of what--because I’ve seen enough of it over the years and I kind of have a mental picture anyway of what they do.

And Miriam also made note of how she inspired her students to find their uniqueness in a collective experience.

I had 37 students [Taiwanese in Taiwan]. They all painted [rosemaled] violins. They all started out with the same design, but they did freehand the design based on what I had shown them.

“Going further” with the tradition doesn’t mean the ethnic symbols should be unrecognizable; most Gold Medalists believed that incorporating elements of the tradition was important to artifact integrity. Beth noted her belief that keeping the essence of original symbols determined authenticity.

The one thing I’m trying to do is to keep it authentic, but still to move with a design, but to keep it authentic to the age. A lot of rosemaling has gone way beyond--like if you’d walk up the stairs here--see these big things hanging, and it’s like doing something that’s almost giving kids paint.

Olivia said that moving on to free expression is not only limited by the interests and talents of the artisan, but also by the uninformed patron.

So we go to Vesterheim, we look at the things, we sketch, and then we go back and try to figure out, okay how can we do that, what can we--of course we copied the old to begin with, but then we springboard into the new as much as we can. And that’s always--then you’re always on thin ice because people say well that’s way too bright colors to use for rosemaling, for example; you know you don’t use straight lines in rosemaling.

However, in Robert’s situation, a patron surprised him by purchasing his artifact, which he thought was quite a stretch beyond. “And I put an antler handle on it. I donated it to the auction and ... I got a letter in the mail after the auction that this lady bought it for \$700. I said what idiot would buy that for that much!”

To ease his classes into free style expression, Ted, a woodcarving teacher, described his approach in stating, “I try to use folk culture as a springboard into something that’s going to help them [find the relevance in] their lives.” Eileen, who also

taught at the Vesterheim, similarly stated, “If it doesn’t go someplace, I feel that if it stays static it’s going to become fossilized I think ‘breaking from the tradition’ is close ... but I would rather say expanding on or using the tradition in a different way.”

And Janelle made note of how exhilarating free style is to the artisans who are saturated with the old patterns.

I think there is a need and a place for all of it. I really do. There are some people who cannot be confined to traditional things. And I’m thinking particularly rosemalers--people who--very free spirits and so forth can hardly stand to paint Rogalund or Hallingdal--they are symmetrical in nature, just feel confined by it.

Sara, however, was concerned about what happens when the artist goes way beyond the tradition.

I think there are people who really need to have the freedom to go beyond the boundaries and just be expressive on its own. I’m not sure we can necessarily call it the same art then; for instance, I’m not sure we can necessarily call it rosemaling if it’s gone beyond, you know, a lot of the traditions. If it’s gone over the edge rather than staying within its boundaries.

Kelly had similar thoughts and stated, “You can’t go entirely away from the tradition and still call it rosemaling if, you know, I face this all the time ‘cause I do Dutch folk art too.”

Pauline, also a rosemalar, was on the same path as Kelly and Sara. “So I feel if we keep doing that [moving beyond the tradition], you’re just going to lose what rosemaling is.”

Norwegian and Norwegian-American Expressions Differ. The Norwegian participants spoke of a distinct Norwegian-American expression. From their viewpoint, the Americans include lighter and sometimes humorous elements in their style. Eve noted what she thought was uniquely Norwegian-American in her artifact.

Sigmund thought that we should put our quotations in English; you know the things we write on the bowls. We always would get in these big discussions with people because a lot of Norwegians--you know, a lot of people from the United States didn’t think that. They wanted to put their things in Norwegian, but I didn’t have any Norwegian blood, so I always put mine in English.

Although one folk art style was thought to be from Norway, a Norwegian thought it was “American.” Helen told of her Norwegian instructor who immediately saw a rosemaled pattern as having a distinct American touch.

Because she’s been asked to teach the old Rogalund and the Rogalund style here was developed by a woman in Stoughton who was also a decorative painter, and when Arseth [Sigmund] came to the first exhibit here to judge ... and he walked in and, of course, most of it was Rogalund, or as we say now American Rogalund. Because he looked at that and he said, “What is this? This isn’t rosemaling.”

And how Americans contribute to their own Norwegian-American style was stated by Kelly in her comparison of painting methods.

And they [the Norwegians] do accuse Americans of being ... I mean, we’re too careful. Everything has to be just so, but that’s the way to paint. We want it to be just so, and they are more relaxed. If they get a little whoop, it stays.

Although the Gold Medalists perceive they are working within the Norwegian tradition, the Norwegian artists and educators who visited America saw something unique in the Norwegian-American expression that most artisans had yet to discover.

Karl, a Norwegian woodcarver and administrator, described his experience as an instructor with the Vesterheim.

I was a bit surprised, my wife and I were at the class there, woodcarving, certain techniques; most were all in the American tradition like Anders Johnson and his friends. I was surprised they were not afraid, for example, to use colors; among a lot of classes in Norway of men who 50, 60, were hesitant to use bright colors You [Americans] are copying the comic aspect of the culture because you are not living in it, living in another country.

Another Norwegian woodcarver, Erik, described his visit to America when he attended the annual Norwegian Hostfest in Minot, North Dakota, a heritage fair where numerous Norwegian-Americans exhibit and sell their arts and crafts. He explained what he thought was representative of the stylistic uniqueness of the Norwegian-American

artisan. “It is a picture of a boy and a bucket of wood and the lutefisk smells, and Norwegians know it does not smell ... turned to something different.” Similar in his perspective of the existence of a Norwegian-American style, Allan, a Norwegian knifemaker and woodcarver, provided his opinion.

I saw the Kubbestol [historical Norwegian chair made from a tree trunk]. It was very easy to see the object development [which] has a certain fingerprint on it part of his [unknown] work is not attached to the Norwegian tradition but attached to the American.

Preservation of the Traditional Has Practical Implications for the Future. There are other reasons to preserve the tradition beyond the values of the visually expressive object. Preserving the tradition is of serious concern to Norway’s Ministry of Culture for both practical and technical reasons. Atle, a Norwegian culture administrator, described his involvement in documenting centuries old techniques for use in today’s technology. In describing the intent of the program he stated, “We can say we don’t need it now, or we can say it is important for our identity, important for the young people to know this has been done for a thousand years.” He explained his full-time occupation as finding these “masters” or “sveins,” documenting their work and setting up mentoring programs.

I do a lot of documentation, recording research as a project leader. We have others that have been taught in the NHU [National Handverksutvikling] I have someone whose hands were damaged, who now works with me ...for a year as a documenter. Because all the time we are working, how can you make documentation for what is going on? It is action borne knowledge and it doesn’t have words, action borne learning. One thing you should know, that anyone who should document for my institution needs to have the experience and take part in the work. We have students who can document the theoretical, but you have to be involved in the action—follow the process.

He provided an example of a recently lost and highly useful tradition.

I also discovered, the most common of fishing knots were made of natural fiber till the 1950s. It was discovered in the Czech Republic and it was dated 27,000 years back ... But in the 1950s you get synthetic fibers; the knot is changed

forever. You [society] have tossed out generations of transmitted knowledge and skills.

Articulating how the tradition can be retained and used for today's purposes, Atle described how the "masters" or "sveins" pass on their expert competencies to others whom he termed "tradition bearers." And these "bearers" enable continuity and use for modern industry, such as in modern architecture and engineering.

"Svein" [term for master] is the master after 3 years. I have to find a craftsman to function together with the old person. It could be a person 70 years, lived in the rural district all of his life and learned skills from father/grandfather; an unbroken line. We try to find the person in the area where the craft goes a long way back This is today's model and the old medieval model It is a market for knowledge. This new person goes out in the market with traditional skills. When I see the possibility that his actually could be a business, I contact the regional market and help him make connections to find work.

In providing clarity on how this program works, Atle described a workshop that took place in public on the wharf in Bergen to attract attention and provide education.

Last week I had nine of the students from the academy at the Bryggen [shipping dock]. We made a special course for them, they learned to down a tree by axe and how to split the tree with wooden wedges, trained in axing, planning It is both theoretical and practical studies ... theory on traditions, culture traditions in the area, building construction, building traditions We are trying to get this as a formal education. We are working now with the politicians and the ministry to try to have it as a formal education At present there is no higher education in Norway based in skills You have to put down your tools and read and work your way as a craftsman through a theoretical education I would not call them folk artists We have lost old techniques without tradition bearers [Meaning for today] is good for rural development, good for young people growing up, knowing the region traditions. It is the "mother of society."

And Atle also provided information on a global approach in retaining traditions for contemporary applications. "In 2003, UNESCO [United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Association] held the convention of intangible heritage. The most important thing is not to preserve objects, no matter how rare and beautiful. The most important thing is to pass the knowledge on."

Further consideration on the practicality of the tradition for the future was expressed by Jon, a Norwegian artisan and educator. “We share a fear that the [Norwegian] tradition will die in America. We won’t have the meaning of the traditions to go forward.” Marguerite, a Norwegian musician, said that the community radio station which played traditional Norwegian music had closed down, despite community efforts. “There was a lot of protest. Some people say it is typical for our time that we value less our tradition. I think there is still fighting between the traditional and the contemporary.” She also described what she thought was a significant difference between that of Norway and America when it comes to “old things.”

Norway, my parents bought a house and stayed there. And when we bought a home and then sold it, it was not understood. I packed up and brought my things with me. In America they have garage sales to get rid of old things and then, get new things. Still the Norwegians bring the things they have with them.

In Norway, the Husflid [home industry] schools that catered to the traditional arts and crafts are now expanding to a four-year program that will prepare the student more broadly in the academic and design sense. Arvid, a Husflid administrator, provided a description of how this organization has changed over time and is adjusting its programs to the needs of the present social context.

The Husflid School that started in 1910 included books with designs for people to get a better life and [then] everything turned into a more theoretical approach and for every reform, political. Schools now have a general education option, vocational, for two years schooling; then two years of practice—not strictly commercial. First year general, 2nd year study design of textiles, 3rd year, perhaps, hand weaver classes. Colleges are to make this offer; of course, there are only a small handful of persons who might be interested. Expense is also a factor. We don’t know yet how this will work out. This is part of the new reform. Husflidslags have the largest number of craft courses in Norway—counteracts the school system. The last five, seven years we have been forcing our regions to do classes for children; the mantra “children and youngsters.” Because we think that if children have positive experiences, positive reminding, maybe not in the teen

years, but in the twenties might plant a seed for later on ... an economic structure that provides some one hundred crowns for each child to the local group.

The Gold Medalists also provided their thoughts on the demise of Norway's traditional design and techniques. Marianne, who over many years brought her rosemaled objects to art fairs, noted that traditional expression may be more prevalent in American than in Norway. "Some people have said that they see more of that ... this type of Scandinavian culture in the United States than you do in Norway now." Charles spoke of a Norwegian's visit to his workshop in America: the visitor purchased several woodworking objects and said, "We can't get this anymore." Jeff, artist and educator, was asked to teach his traditional style of Norwegian woodcarving because in Norway there were no teachers who carved in his style.

When I go to Norway, and I do that pretty much every year to teach, and somebody asks me, "well where are you going?" "Well I'm going up to Rauland." "Oh, yeah, of course at Rauland everybody knows how to carve up there." It isn't true, there isn't anybody. I mean I teach a class up there and there are 75 year old men in the community who take the course because yes the tradition was alive and well, but it died. It's like any garden that if not tended and nourished it's going to die.

Connie similarly expressed her concern that few Norwegians are creating their weaving designs from the old patterns.

From trips to Norway, and when we've visited with Norwegian weaving teachers, they have said that in Norway the traditional weave structures are not considered all that wonderful. They're kind of old hat and old stuff, and there's less interest in them than I think there is at least in the Vesterheim-inspired community. I think [groups like] Scan Weavers [weaving group] have a big interest in the traditional techniques, and wanting to learn them and understand them, and then take them to another place. I think in Norway there's more emphasis on modern and something new.

On my visit to a satellite location of a large Norwegian campus, Marguerite, a college administrator, provided information on her college program, the only one of its

kind in Norway. “It’s of enormous importance that we [University of Telemark] have the possibility to take the Bachelor and Master of Folk Art at the Institute of Folk Art, Notodden [town in Norway].” She also noted that the curriculum for both can be focused in either the traditional or contemporary context.

Summary. Both the Gold Medalists and the Norwegians described how influencing factors in artist expression are based in meaning. For some of the artisans, staying within the tradition is their primary style of expression. Looking at the practical aspects of the tradition is of concern in Norway, and globally, for use in the contemporary context. For artisans who are interested in a freer style of expression, the tradition continues to be an integral artistic factor. And from the Norwegian perspective, the Norwegian-American expression is unique in what its artisans assume to be the tradition.

These factors contribute to the interests in Norway and American for retaining the tradition in both its artistic and practical form. In this theme emerged the meaning of the tradition of artisans, educators, and administrators.

Theme III: Artistic Confidence Is Relative to Teaching Effectiveness

The Gold Medalists and Norwegians who participated in this study variously described their student and educator experiences. Some were seasoned and adeptly described their philosophies and methodologies in educational language; others described their ways of teaching in terms of what did and did not work. Their descriptions included references to lifelong learning, *action borne*, and experiential learning strategies. Self-directed learning, learning styles, and community learning were referenced as fundamental factors. Having a mentor provided an exceptional and life-enhancing

opportunity to develop long-term relationship. And Gold Medalists who had an opportunity to be taught by a Norwegian artist they admired also described exceptional learning opportunities.

This essential theme, “Artistic Confidence Is Relative to Teaching Effectiveness,” is supported by three sub themes (see Table 5). The descriptions inherent in the sub themes provide assistance in understanding the essential theme.

Philosophy and Methodology Define Teaching Effectiveness. The Gold Medalists and the Norwegians similarly articulated their experiences and understanding of effective teaching philosophies and methodologies. At times their descriptions displayed a sophisticated understanding of what, how, and why they use certain strategies and at other time, simply, just what worked.

Gustaf, a Norwegian educator, and other Norwegian educators to follow, recognized the affective and effective aspects in successful teaching:

Yes, learning for life, being good for your neighbors. To be a person who benefits society. Good for all of us If you start to educate in the aesthetics from childhood, I think you have more and more of this aesthetic knowledge. You have to have good teachers who understand this philosophy.

Advice was also given by Mads who stated, “As I always said, you know, take classes from everybody. You’re going to learn something new, but you know something? Every class I taught I would always learn something from my students.” And from Martin, “Before you start teaching you would have a broad experience of taking classes, so you would see what works.”

The Gold Medalists are generally revered as teachers; their medalist status mirrors what could be assumed, that each is a “master” of their chosen artistic expression.

Warren, a woodcarver, made this clear in his description of his positive experience and his assurance that he had been taught by the most qualified.

When I first got started I heard about two relatively famous woodcarvers, Harley Refsal and Hans Sondheim, so I went and I took a week course with Harley at Fletcher Farms in Vermont and then I went for two weekends at Yorktown Heights with Hans Sondheim and learned some things there. So from Harley I learned all of the tricks for figure carving and from Hans Sondheim I learned what I needed for acanthus carving and that was it. I never took anymore ... sat with any other teachers. You know when I tell people if you want to learn something, learn from the Gold Medalists.

Miriam too thought her best resource was a Gold Medalist in rosemaling and would often seek out a particular medal winner's opinion; the feedback was simple but valuable:

“Ethel helped me on a lot of stuff [rosemaling technique and design]. She would say ‘I don't like it.’ She would tell me how she would like to have it done. I am essentially self-taught.”

Other characteristics important to the Gold Medalists in selecting a teacher are as diverse as the medalists. However, certain universalities were threaded throughout the interview responses, such as attention to teaching style, basics, and process. Violet, a seasoned rosemaler, provided her advice on what a novice should know in selecting a teacher or mentor.

Sometimes you relate to one teacher better than another, or you relate to one teaching style better than another. And some teachers have more knowledge than others. Others are very cognizant, starting with the basics and working up, and those are all things that are important.

Charles too described how important it was to provide the student with a firm foundation of knowledge and skills in teaching woodworking; and with encouragement for building confidence.

I think giving them good foundations in techniques and education about how they were used can then lead people to, you know, explore different materials, and

explore creating their own designs. I think that kind of comes from within each individual. I think it can be encouraged and nourished. I think the main thing for education is to provide the foundation, and then encourage the growth from there to be individual.

Greta spoke to the fact that the student can't move forward until they learn that which comes before. "Learning the structure well, be competent at weaving that structure, and then you can take it to a different level--you can make it your own." And integral to this understanding is to recognize that the pace of learning crosses class demography. Sara described how this works in her rosemaking classes.

No assumptions. I start every class out like that, and then we go from there. Now there are some, who are experienced painters already that are still going to absorb a whole lot of things that you're saying, and they will move faster, and I can work with them on a faster mode. But stay with those that are just beginning, because you don't want to frustrate them at all ... I have not had one student, even an advanced student who has said to me, oh, this is so basic, you know, why in the world are you doing this to us? Never! They are so thankful.

Warren's first project with his students is to familiarize them with the material before they start carving.

The main focus of the first year is to teach the students the basic connection between the technique and the material, what kind of wood is good for the object, how did they do it in the old days, learn from it. You have to go out in the woods and find what they used before. We don't buy, they learn from raw materials.

For Evan the "process" was the priority when he taught his beginning classes. He believed that using an established design allowed the student to be well versed in the technique before trying to create something new.

I said that they were involved in the process and some of them were going to be creative. Some of them are going to continue to copy. But they're involved with the process. That's success. Not that they have to do everything perfect. Those people aren't interested in perfection, I don't think, I think they're involved--the importance is that we keep people involved in the process. Although most people aren't going to be able to create something real new, because with the carving, it's one thing to carve and it's another to design. That's two different things. And in

the beginning--they can't handle both. So we provide the design. We even cut out the pattern, and they carve it. And it's wonderful!

Janelle also provided a description on how she worked with her rosemaling class to ensure their understanding of the basics.

I take a beginner, and we go step by step by step, very simple, because not everybody learns the same. After maybe the fourth week, the ones who are more ready, or more aggressive, they take off quicker. But you might have some back here that are still step by step by step, and I take a Telemark design and break it down and you have your scroll. They learn that. You have your flower and they learn that. You learn your lines. You learn that. Then we put it all together. Very simple!

In acquiring the foundation for artistic expression, novices are intense in learning the "right ways," which at first can be overwhelming and discouraging. Eileen, an experienced teacher, advises her weaving students not to get too ruffled over a mistake and to keep moving forward.

I want people to enjoy what they're doing and you know, and to learn that, you know, if you do make a warping mistake, it's fixable. Might take a little time, but it's not the end of the world or if a warp breaks, that's fixable, we can deal with that and to not make that a big pressure issue if there's, you know, people have some problems with that kind of thing cause, you know, I can warp a loom and still find a mistake about, you know, usually it's after you've woven a couple inches, and you say oh, yeah!

Kara spoke of time and patience as instrumental in accomplishing the basics. "I tell people, especially beginners, if you really want to learn strokes and how to get started, you need a week. You've got to immerse yourself totally into it." More advice on patience was given by Calvin, along with the understanding that the process is integral to development. "I carved this horse first, and it didn't turn out exactly the way I liked it. And so I sat down and carved that one, and that's the one that took the Gold Medal." Rose spoke of the process as key to becoming more knowledgeable and skillful as a rosemaler. "Every time I butchered something, I knew not to do it. You learned

something. I imagine that happened to a lot of painters.” And Greta profoundly described the core of “the process” as instrumental in building an artisan’s self-esteem.

The process will lead them to where they should be. Success is that they continue on, that they actually produce something, they make things, or it could also be that they, I mean, they’re not going to produce things but that they become interested Success is that their family and their friends benefit from their process, it enriches their lives.

Teaching philosophy and methods applied by the Gold Medalists were universally understood. For Jennifer, the teacher as role model was primary in developing a solid relationship with a class.

Besides teaching basic skills to the student, it’s important for the teacher to become a role model or a mentor, that the teacher sit in front of their students and do these things in front of them, you know, so you become the role model or the mentor, and if the student has basic talents, eventually an artistic expression could evolve from.

In the interviews of both the Gold Medalist and Norwegians participants their descriptions articulated an understanding of differing learning styles—for self and for the classroom.

Eileen, a self directed learner, described how she taught herself mostly through observation.

I think a lot; I think especially in color use, you know, like in a Krokbragd rug or Rutevev class. Students look at what somebody has done, and think oh, that’s really an exciting color combination. I need to do something with that later. I’m sure that we all learn from others, and the more, more you see, the more you’re going to learn, and not that that’s a direct copy of somebody else, but that it inspires like, well, I never thought of using that poison green with purple, but I really like the way that looks, you know, that kind of thing.

Eileen also spoke of her drive fueled by inquisitiveness. “I learned a lot from that piece, and I, you know, I do think that learning and satisfying curiosity really is a lot of what drives me in doing the weaving.” Atle, who is administering the “svein” mentoring

program with the University of Bergen and the Norwegian Ministry, also supports the validity of hands-on learning in his statement: “You have to be involved in the action—follow the process!

You get ten women and a man, and you start them out, and some will take off quicker than others, but you can't make them feel any lesser of a talent. Some people come for sociability in a class. I learned that teaching at the YWCA. They said you must realize there are people who come here because the doctor said get a hobby, and they really have no expression of anything, and I've met lot of them, but you have to make them feel good. You have to make them feel good ...with kids, thinking they haven't got talent. If you convince them, you know, you can do this, maybe at your pace. And never compare your work with your neighbors. Women do that all the time. Someone is fast, someone is better, and then they feel bad. So I always say, just put on blinders, work in your own area.

Understanding learning style is a major factor in teaching effectiveness. A savvy folk art educator knows to keep the curriculum flexible for students who may not be as adventurous as others. Patricia reminds herself of this issue at every rosemaling class she teaches.

I see sometimes in a class, and I know exactly who the engineers are because I'll have a model there, you know just kind of as an idea, and out comes, you know, the loop, and they're measuring the width of each facet and they're saying I got mine too wide, and I'm just creating by going swoosh, swoosh, swoosh, like that, and so there are different personality types and some are comfortable with just letting her rip and others--I understand that others need to copy and there is nothing wrong with either one.

Several of the Gold Medalists spoke of their self-directed learning style. They provided descriptions on how they had taken it upon themselves to learn the basics through reading, visuals, and demonstrations. Marianne described how her perseverance in looking at pictures facilitated her rosemaling.

I would spend hours and hours studying those pictures with a magnifying glass and make sketches from them I've got big, big sketch pads full of all these sketches and as a teacher, oh boy, do I encourage people to do that.

Yearly Loren would go to the Norwegian-American festival, the Norsk Fest, in North Dakota. This was her learning forum for ideas and techniques.

Although some students may lack an opportunity to participate in classes, they do seek out ways to learn on their own through books, demonstrations, and pictures. I was never able to take a class there [Vesterheim], and when I would go to Nordic Fest ... and watch demonstrations and I would take pictures of everything in the exhibits that I liked, especially if there was anything that was Telemark.

And from this sole experience, a few Gold Medalists had developed and published learning materials to share with other budding artisans.

Free Style Expression Requires Knowledge of Aesthetics. A consideration in free style is the knowledge a student or teacher has on the artistic principles. Such knowledge is not a common part of the folk art curriculum, but integral to both traditional and contemporary expression. Does understanding art or design principles make a difference in one's creative expression and does it make one a better artist? Luke spoke on both issues from his perspective as a woodcarver.

To buy the tools, how to keep them sharp ... these are just basic things that you can teach I think that the teachers at Vesterheim or the teachers at lodges or wherever they teach, they can teach skills, but they can't give to the student the basic talent that's necessary to enable an art form to evolve from that person.

Understanding creativity and its language may not be a skill that either students or instructors have, such as Sara.

We don't have discussions such as that, but do have the "what if" discussion, and I learned about the "what if" from Nancy Morgan. Red and blue, start and wind it forward, what if you do something else? And I found that was one of the major clues to get people to think--think outside the box. What can they do? I do not discuss creativity as such. I don't know enough to discuss it.

In applying the art and design principles, Beth described how she integrated the art principles in teaching rosemaling.

I didn't used to use those particular terms, but they are fine art terms, and never thought about it until I was working with these other people, and they all refer to these so I had to take my rosemaling apart. We do an S stroke off the back of something, but that S stroke fits into a landscape with a stream. It's got an S that will pull your eye into the design. So it's – that's the process we're going to go through This time I'm going to insert some of the so-called fine art terms.

Karin engaged the students in the principles when discussing weaving patterns.

I think more of what I think about when I'm deciding is color, value, balance, movement, and in pieces like Krokbragd or the more traditional other coverlet, giving the eye places to rest and places to be alert, be drawn to, moving the eye around a piece, getting nice balance and value so it doesn't just turn out to be a muddy piece, choosing colors that please me.

The Norwegian educators felt strongly about using the principles in their work with students. Anna spoke of their use as “very valuable; the simple things can be very complicated.” Erik stated, “We still use [Bauhaus concepts] as a methodology. But I mostly use this transformative learning by William James, Frière, etc. in teaching the philosophy.” And Martin, for understanding and retention, has his students learn by doing. “If I am talking about volume in the picture, if they don't understand, let them do it.”

Discussing teachers who emphasize technique over good design, Marta said she believed this caused delay in the artisan's ability to move toward contemporary expression.

The teachers from Norway come over here and pound people with technique. They [Vesterheim students] get so taken with technique that they can't get beyond that to create new designs and to have self expression. You know, that's the big problem that I've experienced for 30 years. We're just bound by this--it's easy to teach technique It's really difficult to pass on design, sensibilities, and to be creative.

Similarly, the Norwegians were conflicted about not having been taught design, but only traditional techniques. Kara, a metalsmith, described her difficulty in moving on to freer expression without the design background.

I wanted to work with my hands in a computer generation; I went to jewelry school in Bergen and Oslo; after three years at the bench, and no design; never discussing with the teachers design. Frustrated and started work as a jeweler and constantly looking around, where is the creativity, the beautiful? You have an idea and you make it happen, really; there can be a big gap between the vision and what is accomplished; if you are wandering in the forest, but not sure where you are going, you can make beautiful things, but it is not cohesive; you can have an intention and the skills to realize; all the skills in the world and not have a quality result.

Stephen said this lack of knowledge has made it difficult for some Gold Medalists to educate their students in moving beyond traditional styles and technique.

Well, you know, I kind of avoided talking about design, but I think, you know, for me, I'm driven by teaching technique I think and a certain skill at that, and then encouraging the design. But I think other teachers may have more of a flare for teaching design and encouraging that. It's not that I discourage it, but I don't know that I have the skill level to teach it as a class. I think I bring it in all the time. I will talk about it when I'm teaching the Krokbragd class at the Guild this fall because you have to think about color, you have to think about balance and movement and values.

Marguerite, a Norwegian educator, described how her college facilitates using the tradition within the contemporary context.

We have a good model, the students ... can do both [traditional and contemporary art]. They should exercise something and create something We have these students who are very modern and very artistic. They create their art based on something they found. She is using her family's old textiles, her father's jacket that he has used when young, her mother's dresses; her grandmother's curtains from the 1950s. She is very attached to her family and history ... the signs of her past, in new objects For her masters, she has to reflect on the tradition. She has to say why she is going so far out.

When the handmade object is uniquely created, its meaning becomes reflective of its context and the artist who designed it. Evan references this perspective in his description of the artifact's presence within the contemporary context.

Do you think that perhaps when you make something, whether it's a traditional piece or something totally unique to yourself, it may take on meaning, but it also becomes kind of a reminder ... But I know when I made this, I know what was going on in my life and the people that reacted to it. I know where this piece is. I

know the people that purchased from me. You know, whether it's a traditional piece or not, the very fact that you made it, where you made it, when you made it in your life I don't think so much of the pieces, I remember this lady.

Anna, a Norwegian and folk school administrator, spoke of the importance of retaining the tradition within the contemporary context:

They need to be exposed to a lot of different ... whether it's jazz or classical or folk or whatever. And then when that becomes a part of their soul or essence, and they're doing it and doing it and practicing, so they got that foundation. Then somehow--how do you turn their soul loose so that it becomes an art form? You know. That's where the artist comes out. It's not a talent. It's more or less their essence of their being of an individual. How strong the need to express. But it's got to be nurtured.

From James' perspective, personal conviction is a crucial element in making the artisan's expression unique.

I never really cared anyway what somebody else thought just as long as I was doing my own thing. And I think that's part of being an artist, you really aren't trying to please the public, you're not trying to win something, you're basically painting because you have a feeling you need to create.

And when that conviction does not exist, Beth described a classroom situation of hers that ultimately could not advance to that beyond the well defined pattern: "I was to teach free hand Telemark to these people They were so frustrated with it that they couldn't stand it. They couldn't go at it from my point of view."

Exceptional Opportunities Add Artistic Value. The Gold Medalists highly valued the exceptional opportunity in having Norwegians as teachers. They described these experiences as unique, motivating, and inspiring. Simply living in Norway was in itself unique and provided a link to the Norwegian culture. Pauline described her experience of having a Norwegian teacher who exuded an aura of the country, enriching her learning as he spoke of his country and through his expression. "His love for his country, Norway ... his expression was just a big influence on how he painted." Warren, who learned

from many of these visiting educators, described his woodworking student experience. “You know, we had so many teachers from Norway. We were so lucky! The Museum provided the best instructors. And we had to take whatever we could from each one and learn from them.” For Sylvia, a rosemaler, having teachers who knew first hand about the diverse and regional styles of the homeland was helpful to her in building new knowledge and skills.

I think for one thing in Norway, they’re more apt to, like we’d say, stay in their own area. And they didn’t know what the painter was doing on the other side of the mountain. So they tend to do what is traditional in their area, say Telemark, Valdres, [or] Ost painters. And then they have found that we have knowledge of all of them, because we’ve had teachers from each area. So that we were blessed to have the best teachers come to us, and we could paint in all these different styles.

Several Gold Medalists were strongly influenced by a particular Norwegian who encouraged his classes to be more freely expressive. Violet said, “Yes, he has his own style. Yes. He is not a traditionalist, in any way He has encouraged people to go beyond their limitations to try something new. And that’s all right!”

Being authentically Norwegian provided added value to the student experience in how they were perceived as the experts in their chosen expression. Miriam said she used the Norwegian rosemaling “masters” as models for excellence in expression and technique.

Many of the things that I will teach I’ll say ... put a dot and connect your leaves. Nils Ellingsgard says you always connect your leaves; you don’t let them fly away. So I’ll bring in their names--this isn’t my idea, it’s come from the Master from Norway. And Sigmund’s scrolls, a C, stems, and an S, make them worthy of the flower. Just those little statements from the master painters, you know, it just makes a difference in your piece.

And Helen, although not a Norwegian instructor, understood that her students would be influenced by a cultural connection; as part of her curriculum, she provided second hand experiences through visuals and music of Norway.

I am always telling my students the most important thing is not the painting itself, but behind the painting, so I always explain that old masters or show picture and about Norway's culture, that music, that is very, very important, so I always--I have many books here. I always show my picture to my students and this for me is to Norway, or you know, rosemaling, which I think important to my students.

Another exceptional learning opportunity was to develop, beyond the classroom, a mentor and mentee relationship, with either a Norwegian or an American educator. In Janelle's situation she and her mentor developed a 30-year friendship during which they continued to correspond about rosemaling related events.

One year I sent her some pictures that I'd taken in Norway. I think that's how I got started. I just thought she would like to have them. I think I met her and I thought she'd like to have these pictures and I sent them to her and you know, she was older by that time and didn't get to travel, and oh, she just remembered that forever. Just loved those pictures, and I know she used them in her rosemaling, and we started writing, and so I would write things to her and she'd write, and I saved every one of her letters because they were so interesting. Things that she has said about, you know what her opinion was on different things. Well, like for one thing when they would give out the ribbon awards, you know, she would tell me what she thought. She would always order the pictures if she couldn't go. I remember one year she said she thought the rosemaling was terrible and the wood was much better.

Summary. In the descriptions of the Gold Medalists and Norwegians, experiential learning emerged as a primary style of teaching and learning. Educator understanding of learning styles and pace of learning were integral to success. Some of the Gold Medalists were self-directed and taught themselves through observation and seeking information. Some participants who wanted to be freer in their expression described the importance of having aesthetic knowledge and skills. Many of the participants had exceptional opportunities to be taught by Norwegian instructors which facilitated their connection to

Norway's culture. And those that were able to establish mentor and mentee relationships with a Gold Medalist described the experience as life enhancing.

Theme IV: Feelings of Dissatisfaction Result in Emerging Issues

The artistic journey of the folk artist who seeks recognition at the highest level requires fortitude in moving through the approval of teachers, peers, and judges. How these artisans moved through this extensive process of preparing for and participating in the Vesterheim's National Exhibition of Folk Art in the Norwegian Tradition was variously described in their interviews. The challenges they surmounted included competition, the entry criteria and judging process, and the judging results. Reactions to these challenges varied from Gold Medalist to Gold Medalist. A large number of participants were satisfied with their experience and, a smaller number, concerned about needed changes that would affect future involvement.

This essential theme, "Feelings of Dissatisfaction Result in Emerging Issues," is supported by three sub themes (see Table 5). The descriptions inherent in the sub themes provide assistance in understanding the essential theme.

Competition Creates Impetus for and Barriers to Creativity. Some Gold Medalists felt quite comfortable with the "competitive" dynamic of the Vesterheim's annual exhibition and some did not. However, most agreed that the competitive factor contributed to their competency by creating challenges requiring them to do their very best. Certainly this was the situation for Loren, a rosemler, who eventually received a Gold Medal.

I'm not real honor driven or reward driven, and I don't enter a lot of pieces in shows or things. I'm very satisfied with weaving a piece that I want to weave, or learning a technique that I want to learn, and that's the satisfaction for me rather than ... I'm not driven a whole lot by that. I mean, it's not that I wasn't happy to

get my Gold Medal and, you know, part of why I entered in Vesterheim is because it challenged me to get pieces done, and I always enjoyed going to see the weaving, so I wanted to support that, too. So that, you know, that's kind of why I kept entering.

Finding the positive in the competitive aspects of the National Exhibition was expressed in various ways; "fun" was one element, as noted in Evan's description: "It's kind of fun to take part and see how you do." Rita described the element of unanticipated surprise in saying, "You can't enter something this big and expect to get a ribbon, but it's nice when you do." And for Kirsten, the yearly process before she received her medal went faster than expected.

I was amazed when I would get ribbons, but in 1992 I sent something for the first time and knowing from experience that it's difficult to get points for that Gold Medal because some people just try for a lifetime and if they get one or two points, you know, they're very happy with it, and I couldn't believe it when I had a second place the first time I sent something.

Awards Criteria and Judging Process Raises Questions. The Gold Medalists who had experienced rejection during the years they continued to submit exhibit artifacts shored themselves up by taking a neutral stance about the exhibition process. Robert had a rationale that worked for him. "I mean you can't take it too personally. I always had the attitude--well the judges just liked another piece better than mine. There's nothing wrong with mine necessarily, but they liked another piece better." Janelle displayed great patience in her years of effort.

I got my Gold Medal in 2001, but I had tried for many years. It was something that was very important to me to work toward. Whether I got it or not wasn't necessarily the issue, it was more the--I just felt like I was so drawn to it, you know.

James also applied patience in entering the exhibition many times over; he believed the process would eventually single him out.

My theory is, if you enter long enough you're going to get ...you know, if you're a good artist, you're going to get your Gold Medal, you're going to get ribbons if you enter long enough. I mean, overall if you have three different judges every year, you're going to be okay.

Contrary to feeling relaxed about the exhibition and awards process, there were Gold Medalists who described a less than satisfactory experience for themselves and others. Violet spoke of the downside of competing against others.

There are people out there that are wonderful rosemalers that don't have a Gold Medal and it's because the competition is fierce. They are highly skilled painters. ... It is actually harmful to some people. It becomes their whole focus. When they don't get those ribbons they become, actually one became violent once.

An insightful response from another Gold Medalist spoke about how isolated artist/craftspersons are in their specific medium and wondered whether this sets a competitive example or at least stifles the full options of creativity.

The folk arts are a language. And if you only have a small limited understanding, you don't have the whole vocabulary. And what we've done is we've split them off, and so the weavers don't pay much attention to the carvers, and the carvers don't pay much attention to the painters, andThat's the way it was. It's a puzzle, it's a whole picture. You don't get an understanding of the whole picture. We've cut off parts ... don't you see what I'm saying? That's what Rauland [University of Telemark] does. At Rauland you know, they have the silversmiths there, they have the carvers there, they have the musicians there, and the dancers are there. Everybody is there on that campus. Everybody gets better, you know, when a carver sees a weaver, he gets better.... Folk arts weren't in the academic realm until just recently.

Helen recalled a statement by one of her Norwegian instructors in professing his thoughts on the benefit of competing.

[Our instructor] told us, it probably was in a class ... he said deep in my heart I don't think folk art should be in competition, but then he said, look at how much better rosemaling has gotten since they have had competitions. So he said, you know, I have mixed feelings on it.

The Gold Medalists described their first-hand experiences and expressed their opinions on what they believed was needed to progress to the level of Gold Medalist.

Elements to consider are how colors, style, and working within the tradition are perceived and ranked in submitting an entry.

For competition, make sure that you use the colors and styles and everything that are traditional. You don't want to be expressive beyond tradition if you're going to enter the competition. Cause part of that--part of the testing when you enter a piece in competition is your knowledge; it's not just a skill, it's your knowledge. And if you're, for instance, putting Valdres designs in a Telemark piece, the judges know that. You don't know your history.

Choosing to veer from the tradition when adding a realistic design appears to be an issue for both judge and artist.

I know there are some feelings about not having realistic paintings on this older art form, and that should be settled if this is acceptable or not because some judges will say this is--this is cute; not compatible I always comment on the beauty of what they have done, but it is a traditional 1750 to 1850.

Also, following the criteria for exactness in style and technique can be seen as confusing and limiting to creativity.

I haven't found myself to be restricted. However, if you use acanthus carving then you are restricted. Like the acanthus carving that I would have to send there is what's called Baroque acanthus because that's the kind of acanthus that Norway has used. It's Baroque, it's not Renaissance or there's another one. I can't think of it right now. See, the Baroque acanthus is very strong and thick and powerful. It isn't lacy like, and it's symmetric.

Although the Gold Medal had been received, there were still some unresolved issues and perplexities with the process and results of the competition. Stephen spoke of his experience in winning a blue ribbon when he least expected it.

I felt very good about this piece, and I felt it was so good for the time that year. And I thought boy, if ever I got a--I never got a blue ribbon--and I felt, well gee, maybe I have a chance this time, and the one that did get the blue ribbon, I couldn't believe it. But I won't go into what it was.

Similarly, Charles described his moment in receiving the Gold Medal as somewhat unexpected.

When you enter stuff you don't know who you're going to be up against. Like when I got my Gold Medal, I was up against what I would call two of the best carvers in the whole country and then the year after there wasn't that kind of competition, so it all depends, you know, on who enters when.

For the artists/craftspersons new to submitting exhibit rosemaled entries, Caroline suggested obtaining experience in other competitions.

We encourage everybody, even if they're just starting, to participate because outside of Nordic Fest and the national level where there are not categories of skill levels, for example in Wisconsin you have two big rosemaling associations, both very old, in Stoughton and in the Milwaukee area, and they have categories starting with beginners and so the advantages entering even if you're a beginner is you are going to get the critiques from the judges saying--why don't you try this, you know, ways in which you can improve, and if before the next one you try it and find that it works for you, you've taken a huge step forward.

The "contemporary" category in the exhibition was established not so long ago. And both artist and judges appear to have struggled in defining its meaning. Therefore, at times exhibition entrants leave the category submission decision to the Vesterheim staff as to how their exhibit entry should be classified.

Now since I'm a Gold Medalist, I don't really have to categorize my pieces, they're more just to have some pieces in the show, so I always let Lauranne [curator] decide if she's going to call it contemporary or traditional, cause I think mine kind of balance in between often, like this year I put the little virgin that I wove in down for the show. Well, it's very traditional in its technique and its structure, but the colors are a little wonky for traditional, so I don't know. I would call it traditional. She might think the colors are nontraditional I don't know if she has to put it into a category, so I just sort of leave them blank. And this piece, too, I would think this would probably be contemporary, but a lot of people would think it looks very traditional, so, it's hard to determine.

Despite the rigor and challenges of entering the National Exhibition, the Gold Medalist comments described great value in the overall process. The experience for many was motivating and confidence building. As stated by James, it was an opportunity to get honest feedback.

Sometimes it isn't easy to get the reviews from the judges, you know. It's a learning experience. It gives you something that you don't get normally because your friends are going to say oh, it's beautiful. They aren't going to tell you you got a bare warp in there, you know; I mean, they're going to be much kinder. You know, they don't want to step on anybody's toes.

Jennifer also valued the feedback which moved her to make improvements in her weaving designs.

Here at Vesterheim, the judges always gave feedback, and I learned from that ... It doesn't work for somebody to tell you it's wonderful, when it's not I could tell from what they said that what ... you did was pretty much a repetitive pattern, and basically what they said was very well done, you know, well woven, but not much variety. They didn't quite say it was boring, but--if you want to really attract attention, you don't keep repeating the pattern.

The Gold Medalists expressed concern that some exhibition judges did not have adequate background knowledge of the artifacts they were judging. Luke's statement reflected this concern: "You have to bring judges in that know what they're looking at. It would help a whole lot." Kelly as well was put off by feedback she had received.

I don't know who I asked, what happened or why, you know, I thought I had a good chance. Well, the teacher--one of the teachers that judged said well, we don't put scene with rosemaling. What? Open a book, lady.

Luke's situation also described a lack of knowledge on the judges' part and a lack of finesse in providing feedback.

Their idea of the critique was--I know this is your style, but I really hate it. And then they would go on to say--the kind of rosemaling you're doing, which some of them had never seen because they didn't look at those old books, and they would say, well, if they had seen it ... and therefore it wasn't good.

Because the judges had no knowledge of Helen's style of expression, she believed this to be the reason for receiving a dismal number of award points.

To me, rosemaling is a very sophisticated type of folk art. I mean, it is considered folk art. For example, one year I entered a piece at the Norwegian...you know, at the Vesterheim show, the national exhibition, and it was the year that Nils had come out with his new big book on all the different styles and I had taken his

class in February and I painted a trunk in the Ost style. I realized later that none of the judges understood what Ost style was because the highest grade you can get is a 1 and the worst grade you can get is a 10. All the judges had given me a 9.

Knowing how to provide constructive feedback was also an issue for the Gold Medalists. Sigrid spoke of her ideas for improving what and how comments are made by the judges.

Try to write good comments. Not necessarily bad comments; maybe some suggestions for improvement, but certainly find something that's good in what they've done and say, you know, that's really nice what you've done, so that they don't feel that they're being crucified. A lot of people, not a lot, but some people wouldn't enter anymore because they felt that they were terribly criticized.

And Marcy thought the judges should be skillful in balancing the positive with the negative.

I've gotten critiques that have hurt instead of helped. So maybe--maybe it would help just to instruct the judges a little more clearly before they start. One wise thing to do is always start with something positive when you're writing about the piece. Maybe it's the shape of the piece. If the rosemaling is bad, maybe it's good colors or whatever. But start positive. And then it would be better to do thus and so.

The number and expertise of the judges was a concern for some. Luke stated that having judges with differing interests had been a problem in how the award results were perceived.

I know there have been years where there were arguments and practically people coming to blows....That's the year that a lot of Hallingdal pieces got in, because Sigmund liked the Telemark and the other artist liked the Rogalund. I like the Rogalund.

Greta expressed concern about what she perceived to be a decrease in participation based on the quality of the exhibition judging: "We're losing people. We lose people all around here. They get discouraged because ... you know, a judge writes a comment that they don't like and that's it."

Flexibility, innovation, and exclusiveness were concerns of some Gold Medalists.

Warren felt that exhibition participation was down because of what he considered a reaction to the exclusiveness existent in the Vesterheim culture.

Our exhibits continue to decline and I think that we've lost a lot of people because they've been turned off in some way because, I mean, it's this technique thing. And that's the difference between what's happening in North House and what's happening in Vesterheim. They're inclusive--very inclusive. This is an exclusive thing. You're excluding people until they--you get their status.

And Connie had similar thoughts and stated, "I don't know, there just doesn't seem to be much initiative there to change things. I think they [the Vesterheim] kind of let it go where it wants to go and not worry about it, you know."

Interest in coming to see the yearly folk art exhibit for Eileen was not what it used to be. For now she perceived the exhibit entries as repetitive in technique and design.

And more and more every year it doesn't take, like I say maybe 10 minutes because you stop and look at the weaving and see what the other people are doing in the other crafts, but the rosemaling is pretty static I think. I think it's pretty much the same old, same old.

Rita, who has gone on to be a free style artisan, described her thoughts on what she perceived to be a "done that been there" presentation.

But you won't see my rosemaling at Vesterheim Vesterheim never expressed an interest in having any of my rosemaling there. It's like the show yesterday, I probably spent 10 minutes in there and I do a quick walk through and say is there anything here that really stands out as being very interesting and different.

A number of Gold Medalists thought that improvements in the exhibition process were possible and provided their ideas. Ted wanted artists to be involved in some way.

"I do not think that the artist should be able to interfere with the conversation of the judges, but they definitely should be in on the judging. That's just how I feel." Looking at "relaxing" the exhibit guidelines was noted by Rose.

I believe that it is very possible for art to be produced within the current regulations at Vesterheim, but it would be very interesting to see what would be produced by the artists if more of the restrictions were to be relaxed, thereby allowing the artists the ability to express themselves more freely.

Loren noted that attracting the younger generations by “trying something new” would also invigorate the Vesterheim’s mission.

When they offered these classes in the old days they were full and there was a waiting list. Well, that’s changed. Well that has a lot to do with women working now Now whether if they change things it would pull in young people with an artistic background or who wanted to try something new and different or whether it would still pull in the old retired folks that are looking at it more as a hobby, well there might be some older artists out there, I don’t know, they’ve just got to experiment a little and break out of the mold.

And Sylvia expressed concern for herself and other Gold Medalists that the number of years participating in the yearly exhibitions had taken a toll on the level of enthusiasm to continue on.

I think most, once they’ve gotten their Gold Medal, don’t really want the challenge competing again anyway. Yes, sometimes I hear it takes a long time. You’re probably a little worn out. Wondering, picking up the phone, and did I win a ribbon, and you probably don’t want to go through that too many more times.

Although some participants had need for exhibition improvements, satisfaction was threaded throughout the interviews, such as articulated by Connie.

Being associated with Vesterheim and, you know, I always try to get something down to Nordic Fest. That’s a good deadline and a good, you know, motivation, and always when we have the study groups, I try to participate in them. That’s good, you know, motivation, if I’m interested in them at all, and usually I am, because of the curiosity. And then like the textile conferences, too, I think are really important when the study group projects come together and you see what other people have done, and then when you have like the Women in Weaving exhibit that’s going to come up, I mean, that’s good motivation. It’s fun to see what people come up with and, you know, that kind of keeps me going. One of your questions was about challenges in creating the artist expressions. I think it’s making time. The time is there, but I can fritter it away doing stupid things There’s always inspiration and curiosity, and I always have big plans, but they

don't always get done, so having those deadlines and exhibits that you want to get things in, it's just good motivation.

And Olivia, whose artistic work with the Vesterheim programs was pure pleasure and self defining, expressed her pleasure.

Oh, it's just been wonderful! And you know, I say that rosemaling decorates my home, but it also decorates my life because it is just such a part of it. It really defines, you know, after my faith and my family, it defines who I am.

Culture of Origin Expands Beyond the Norwegian-American. It is commonly perceived that an artisan immersed in the Norwegian-American arts of this study would be Scandinavian. However, there are many exceptions to this among the Gold Medalist grouping and Vesterheim participants; many non-Scandinavians who participate just because of their interest in the Norwegian and the Norwegian-American style of expression.

Stephen stated that when asked about his heritage he says, "I'm not Norwegian. And when people ask me--you know, if I'm Norwegian, and I say I'm not, but I should be by osmosis. You just absorb." Janelle, who said her interest was to create within the Scandinavian style, uses the Norwegian-American expression for income purposes.

See I do Swedish painting too--I do Swedish folk art. So I have done it. The reason I don't do more of it is probably because ... I like it very much but there's no market for it No there's just not a market for those Swedish things.

Calvin made light of the situation in how he explained his interest in not being a Norwegian-American.

I am a frog in the room, I am not Norwegian; my family is not Norwegian; but I have an emotional, spiritual connection; my experience is not from my family; what happened is my grandparents and parents traveled extensively; for some reason the Scandinavian things they brought home were memorable.

And Sylvia was just taken with the aesthetics of her chosen expression which she has practiced for thirty years.

I never heard of rosemaling till I moved to River Falls which was in '79. And a friend said, let's take a class and I said what's that? Cause I'm not Norwegian at all; German and English Just the beauty of it, I just loved it from the first class I took.

Quite surprisingly, there is a growing number of Japanese and Japanese-Americans who are regular students in the Vesterheim rosemaling classes. Helen spoke of how she became involved in the Vesterheim programs soon after her immigration to America.

I came to this country [from Japan] in 1983 and just after that I took I saw local newspaper ... and it said Vesterheim ... so I took one class and that was the beginning and I saw many rosemalers Then my interest to rosemaling grew year to year and I, you know, had a membership in Vesterheim Museum and by visiting ... learning more about rosemaling since 1985.

And she also provided what she thought might be the premise for her submitting her artifacts and receiving the Gold Medal. Her efforts also gave her the experience to become a sought after teacher.

I think Norwegian and Japanese have some co-mixing mentally. Well, many Japanese like rosemaling very much I have many friends here because I am teaching here in Irving [CA], and they are Japanese and they like rosemaling very You know, I have 18 Japanese students. They are all crazy, crazy about rosemaling.

A large number of these Japanese-Americans reside in California, where there is a growing number of persons earnest about the traditional style of rose painting. The social context they generally reference is the romantic and nationalistic period of Norway. A Japanese educator provides this rationale:

I always telling my students the most important thing is not the painting itself, but behind the painting, so I always explain old masters or show pictures about

Norway's culture, that music, that is very, very important, so I always--I have many books here.

How the Japanese and Japanese-American heritage will affect change in the Norwegian and Norwegian-American styles sparks interest in a future study. One very astute Gold Medalist appears to grasp this concept of "borrowing" culture in her statement:

Whatever it is ... purity is, that's not where it's at because we are, not only in America, but the whole world is a world of loaners We borrow from each other. The winds blow seeds back and forth.

Summary. Competition is relative to intention. Striving for an award requires perseverance and the ability to handle rejection. This challenge is motivating for some while others merely bear with the process. However, many of the participants considered the steps to receiving broader recognition integral to their learning experience. Because the experience is varied from Gold Medalist to Gold Medalist, their descriptions contain numerous perspectives, from satisfaction to expressing need for changes in exhibition guidelines, criteria, and judging competencies. Meanwhile, participation in the National Exhibition, as well as in other Vesterheim activities, has expanded beyond those of Norwegian or other Scandinavian descent. People of various ethnicities newly embrace the traditional Scandinavian folk arts.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Handcraftsmanship, if it be alive, justifies itself at any time as an intimate expression of the spirit of man (Yanagi, 1989, p. 97).

The purpose of this study was to facilitate through education and recognition ways in which traditional folk art expression might evolve. The research question was: How do folk artists as well as educators develop mastery in the traditions of Scandinavian folk art and yet express meaning within the contemporary context? Understanding artistic development and integrative learning is the foundation for knowing how the creative process evolves. The case-in-point was the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum and its embedded units, the folk art education programs. And the study vision was to provide feedback for future museum education and recognition programs.

Case study, the research methodology used for this study, was suitable for the explanatory nature of the study's research question because it is appropriate for gathering unstructured data where behavior, psychology, and cultural symbols interact. The data for this case study were collected from artisans and educators in the United States, mainly in Decorah, Iowa; and from artisans, educators, and administrators in Norway who were interviewed in the cities of Oslo, Notodden, Rauland, Bergen, and Voss. All of the interview participants had knowledge of the Norwegian folk arts through their involvement in the following organizations: Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, Milan Folk School, Voss Folkehøgskule, Norges Husflidslag, Norges Kristelege Folkehøgskole, Oslo Folk School, Vest Norsk Kulturakademi, Norsk Handverksutvikling, Maihaugen Museum, and Telemark University.

Summary of the Study

The challenge for museums today is to identify the character of new forms of vibrancy that are in tune with the cultural changes that herald the twenty-first century (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 22).

As an intern and participant in the folk art education programs of the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, I observed a growing interest in its staff and stakeholders to further define the Norwegian-American artistic style and to rejuvenate its National Exhibition in the Tradition. On an annual basis, the museum's National Exhibition in the Tradition reflects the knowledge, skills, and creativity of the museum's Folk Art Education Programs. For some Gold Medalists, their artistic journey is integral to understanding the meaning of their Scandinavian ethnicity and their place within the Norwegian-American community. Chavez and Guido-DiBrito (1999) defined ethnic identity as a social construct and "an individual's movement toward a highly conscious identification with their own cultural values, behaviors, beliefs, and traditions" (p. 41).

The review of the literature in this study included expert sources on the Scandinavian folk school movement, England's arts and crafts movement, progressive adult education philosophy, naive and fine artistry, ways of knowing, and artistic expression. And these sources consistently supported the study's question in defining what is meant by "contemporary" in folk art expression; what the changes are in Norway's folk high schools that may be a precursor for folk art education in America; what progressive theory and practice is applicable to teaching folk art in today's context; what symbiosis exists in folk art symbolism that is evident in artistic expression; and what is meant by stages of artistic development.

Modern and postmodern theories are the lenses through which the triangulated data of this study— literature, observation, and interviews—were analyzed and synthesized. In Chapter 2, the literature review, philosophical constructs that apply to the intent of this study both modify and strengthen the perspectives in this Chapter’s discussion. Enlightenment philosophers, such as Descartes and Kant, and the modernist and postmodernist philosophers whose names follow are integral to the themes that emerged from the study’s data. These philosophers include authors relative to the folk school movement, such as Koch (1952) and Paulston (1983); to the adult and progressive education movements, such as Dewey (1934, 1944) and Lindeman (1926, 1961); to the arts and crafts movement, such as Hooper-Greenhill (1999, 2000) and Davis (1995); to modernist/postmodernist ways of knowing, such as Cranton (2000, 2006), Kolb (1984, 1986), Merriam (1998), Merriam and Caffarella (1999, 2000), Mezirow (1991, 2000), and Taylor (2006); and to the relativity of these theories in artistic expression, such as Cassirer (1979), Hein and Alexander (1998), Gardner (1982, 1990, 1996, 2006), Parsons (1987), and Yanagi (1989); and to the alignment of adult education practices to those of museum education, such as Burnham and Kai-Kee (2007), Carr (2003), and Falk and Dierking (2000).

Overall the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum had and continues to have great value to Norwegian-Americans, as well as people of other ethnic heritages who take part in its Folk Art Education Programs: “These are the institutions and settings doing the formative cultural mediation ... the practical work of civil society” (Carr, 2003, p. 39). Its museum and programs have a fair amount of visibility throughout the United States. However, in conducting interviews in Norway, the awareness of the Vesterheim’s

mission was limited among the Norwegian study participants, except for the few Norwegian educators and artisans who had taught for the museum and judged for its national exhibition.

When interviewing the artisans and educators who had achieved sufficient competency to be awarded the Gold Medal, I found participant understanding of their artistic development to be at different stages in how they described their level of knowledge, skill, and confidence. What the majority of participants did share was significant appreciation for the artistic opportunities the Vesterheim has provided and for the preservation of Norwegian-American culture and its artifacts and rituals. The elements of Norwegian ethnicity are as Reagan (2005) states, “an extricable and essential component of both individual and social identity” (p. 32). Yet, there was a fraction of interview participants who indicated a lack of confidence in the process and results of the Vesterheim’s recognition program, the National Exhibition in the Norwegian Tradition. Specifically, some participants expressed little understanding of the rationale and criteria for how the ribbon points for the Gold Medal Award are granted and how judges are selected.

My somewhat brief immersion into the perspectives of the Vesterheim Gold Medalists was a privilege and life enhancing experience. As I spoke with one person after another, I felt tremendous respect and honor for their willingness to share sometimes private thoughts and feelings of their artistic journeys.

Essential Themes and Sub Themes

The essential themes of this study inform artisans, educators, and administrators on the present state of Scandinavian folk art education and its evolution within the

contemporary context. The first theme, “About and Developing One’s Artistic Self,” described the Gold Medalists’ experience as enlightening in learning more about themselves through their cultural and artistic journeys. The second theme, “Sustaining the Tradition Is Based on the Emotional and Practical,” explained the aesthetic and practical value of the tradition and its preservation. The third theme, “Artistic Confidence Is Relative to Teaching Effectiveness,” reflected ways in which education philosophy and methodology is relative to artistic knowledge and skill. And the fourth theme, “Feelings of Dissatisfaction Result in Emerging Issues,” illuminated the Vesterheim artisan and educator experiences and their suggestions for program improvement.

Theme I: About and Developing One’s Artistic Self

In this section, the findings of the essential theme, “About and Developing One’s Artistic Self,” are discussed in concurrence with the supporting literature within each of the four sub themes. The sub themes are Artistic Role Enlightens Self-Perspective; Familial Support is Significant in Pursuing and Sustaining Artistry; Community Connections Create Interest in Artistic Endeavor; and Cultural Affiliation Is Acknowledged through Symbols and Rituals.

Artistic Role Enlightens Self-Perspective. It could be assumed that “folk art” is analogous to “art”; therefore, the person who created the art would be called “artist” or “artisan.” In asking the Gold Medalists what nomenclature aptly described their roles in the folk art setting, perspectives were varied. Several participants who were confident about their status as “artists” believed they made “meaning through art.” A few Gold Medalists used terms that more distinctly related to their chosen expression, such as

“woodcarver” and “fiber artist.” Some were quite unsure of any link to “art,” such as Warren who, despite having received the Gold Medal, said, “I am just an ordinary guy who had some pieces people like. I don’t pretend to be anything glorified.” And to further confuse what the appropriate term is, on my visit to the Norsk Folkemuseum—Norwegian Folk Museum—in Oslo (2007) I copied an exhibit card that read:

Art, as opposed to folk art, is an academically conscious activity. Art seeks individuality, is creative and often presents a challenge to tradition, while folk art was created within a tradition through an interaction with external impulses. What these two types of art do share and have shared throughout history is primarily creativity.

What is art and what is not art has been debated in the literature for centuries and persists in the findings of this sub theme from the Gold Medalists’ reflections and limited understanding. Presently, the rifts among the terms and meanings of “art,” “fine art,” “folk art,” “folk craft,” and “craft” are unresolved. Commonly “folk art” is thought to be of a primitive nature, a “craft,” lesser than “art” or “fine art” (Congdon, 1986; Freeland, 2001; Jones, 1987; Read, 1943, 1968; Hemphill and Weissman, 1974; Wollheim, 1971; Yanagi, 1989). Historically contributing to this divisiveness was the higher value placed on urban life and schooled artisans rather than that of agrarian life and unschooled artisans whose handmade objects were mostly utilitarian due to necessity and cost (Bjørkvik, 1995; Ellingsgard, 1995; Gjerdi, 1978; Löfgren, 1980). In Norway, the owners of the large farmsteads were wealthy and could afford to commission artisans to mirror the more sophisticated artifacts of the city dwellers.

Supporting a philosophy of artistic inclusiveness is evident in the philosophies of Wollheim (1971) who stated, “The work of art consists of an inner state ... [and] is the product of the process” (p. 32); Anderses (1987) and Bjørkvik (1995), who considered all

forms, utilitarian or non-utilitarian, to be aesthetically innate due to the nature of the individual who creates the handmade object; Parsons (1987), who described the purpose of art as “to express someone’s experience” (p. 23); and Yanagi (1989), who believed that art or craft “depend upon the personality of the artist rather than the character of the ‘craft’” (p. 199). Jennifer too, a Gold Medalist weaver, subscribed to this perspective in her description of her creative expression as a “state of being.”

Familial Support Is Significant in Pursuing and Sustaining Artistry. Early adulthood and mid life were described by the Gold Medalists as times when life was full with school and family; which meant it was a challenge to find time to be an artisan. Certainly, for many of the study participants the desire to create was strong and the value of handmade objects appreciated. Warren, an educator, described how intrinsically “sweet” it was for both family and artist when his students gifted their artifacts: “You know...we’ve touched a lot of lives.”

The findings of this sub theme did show that spousal support was a critical success factor in artistic confidence and development; possibly more unique than in the present generation. The role of women in much of the 20th century was traditional in terms of raising children and maintaining the household. The Gold Medalists who were encouraged to pursue their artistic interests were quite aware of their good fortune. For example, Miriam, a rosemaler who had six children underfoot, thought her husband was “out of his mind” when he suggested she find a creative outlet outside of the home; with his support she did, “to great success.” Beatrice, also a rosemaler, provided an exceptional instance that spoke more to later generations than hers. She and her spouse

gave each other space to grow. And symbolic of their equal partnership, he gave her a bronze sculpture of a seagull as a gesture in saying “thanks for freeing me.”

The choice to develop artistically provided the Gold Medalists with a more holistic sense of self. Lawrence (2005) stated, “Through creating and interpreting art, we can go beneath the surface to see aspects of the self that were always present but veiled or hidden from view” (p. 76).

Community Connections Create Interest in Artistic Endeavor. Both the Gold Medalist and the Norwegian participants said having a sense of belonging and being encouraged by others who had similar artistic interests was “vital.” The artisan communities I visited in both Minnesota and Norway displayed a liveliness reflecting that of folk school and adult education philosophies. Although Norway and America are contextually diverse, the persons interviewed had similar passions in their sharing of childhood and family memories, artistic experiences, cultural symbols, and long forgotten rituals with their artistic cohort. As Kelly, a Gold Medalist, said, “It’s a sense of connection that you cannot explain.” For the synergy that developed among classmates and between student and teacher not only inspired creativity but also the development of long-term friendships and mentor relationships. Rita, an educator and Gold Medalist rosemaler, described the community experience as “a family” in how the participants bonded to one another; this sentiment provides a living example of Grundtvig’s philosophy of belonging and community as instrumental in living a “creative life.”

The findings of this sub theme show that as mid life advances into later life, there is greater recognition of the artistic endeavor as integral to the life process and increased understanding of cultural symbols. During and following the child-raising years, artistry

did contribute to one's self perception; as the participant artisans matured they tended to reflect more on their heritage as integral to the life journey. Additionally, continued engagement with the Vesterheim artistic community was stimulating and provided a sense of belonging.

This personal and organic process of self development as the intent of adult education is reflected in the literature by the progressive education philosophers, such as Lindeman who articulated the essence of the adult education experience and its curriculum as pragmatic and "built around the student's needs and interest" (as cited in Houle, 1996, p. 11). And Dewey, who was resolute about the purpose of adult education as a "democratic" experience, stated that "education is related to all experience beyond that of formal schooling [including] libraries, museums" (as cited in Houle, 1996, p. 11)

Norway's educational institutions continue to honor the country's folk art traditions in elementary, secondary, higher education, and adult education. Some examples are the teaching mandate that all K through 12 students have access to crafts and design classes; the folk school experience as more relevant, not an alternative, to higher education and its open door to pensioners; the offering of a bachelor and a masters in Traditional Norwegian Folk Art at the University of Telemark; the establishment of the National Handverksutvikling, a registry of Norwegian artisans developed and maintained by the Ministry of Culture; and the collaboration among the Ministry, the Maihaugen Museum, and Norway's University of Bergen in setting up mentoring partnerships for apprentices to learn from "tradition bearers."

The invitation of the folk schools to pensioners speaks to the value place on older adults as continuous learners and artisans. In visiting the Voss Folkehøgskule in the Hardanger Fjord area, I spoke to the woodworking teacher, Martin, and his older adult students, now retired, who spend four regular days a week at the school. It was immediately recognizable that his class was highly significant in these pensioners' transition from work and for many a break from daily farm chores. And working in the tradition was in itself meaningful. They were not only proud of their accomplishments, it was important to retain the tradition for their families and the townsfolk who came to their yearly exhibits.

Cultural Affiliation Is Acknowledged Through Symbols and Rituals. The findings of this sub theme revealed personal moments, from childhood to later life, in the cultural discoveries of the Gold Medalists; times when they first understood their ethnicity as reflected in the symbols of their heritage. For example, when Pauline was six years old she assimilated the Norwegian symbols that later developed in her rosemaling designs: "Here I was, this little girl sitting and listening, and they'd give me a sugar cookie, you know, but I saw all the Norwegian artifacts that are in the museum, [such as] the immigrant trunk."

This recognition of cultural identity in Pauline's experience was rendered by Reagan (2005) as "an extricable and essential component of both individual and social identity" (p. 32). Tin (2007) also recognized this integrative and transformative relationship between the contextual symbol and one's personal identity. "The first forms are such patterns in the pre-scientific perception which underlies the later scientific superstructures. They are far more than 'pure ornaments'; they are statements of

existential significance” (p. 286). Luke, who designs without a specific pattern in mind, told of how he allows the tradition to reveal itself as he carves for his patrons. For him the process is organic in how it evolves from his Scandinavian roots to an artifact that speaks of his relationship to the symbols and his personal and artistic development.

For the artisan, the cultural symbols are “spiritual expression” in how they connect the “unconscious and symbolic processes through image, symbol, metaphor, poetry, art, and music” (Tolliver & Tisdale, 2006, p. 39). And as the artisan learns more about self in the discovery or re-discovery of cultural community, new meanings evolve and create interest in further artistic expression.

Read (1943, 1968), Gardner, (1990), and Parsons (1987) in the review of the literature discuss the significance of cultural symbols in the artist’s expression, both as personally revelatory and integral to artistic meaning. In the progression of artistic development stages proposed by these philosophers, generally stated, the artisan moves through the stages of intuition, imitation, conception, expression, and transformation. Gardner (1990) cites this intellectual and emotional growth as an “activity of the mind . . . that involves the use of and transformation of various kinds of symbols and systems of symbols” (p. 9). In one Gold Medalist interview, the participant described a situation when she was drawing a portrait of her father; she remembered the smell of lutefisk cooking on the stove in her childhood house. This moment in time was for her both meaningful and consoling.

Mezirow (1991) stated, “Symbols are a way of interpreting what we know and [a symbol] is re-recognized when it appears in our experience again” (p. 28). They mediate the mental processes of what was acquired in childhood and carried into adulthood.

Gardner (2006) noted, “Artistic perception and production involves the use of symbols--a deployment which may well constitute the hallmark of human cognition” (p. 98). When asked whether the Scandinavian symbols had particular meaning, only a few Gold Medalists understood the question and had given thought to their significance. Symbols, according to Gardner (1982) need to be understood as a person learns how to read and write. Learning more about the symbols used in artistic expression would bring the artist beyond the “notational” to a more sophisticated understanding and creative freedom.

Theme II: Sustaining the Tradition Is Based on the Emotional and Practical

In this section, the findings of the essential theme, “Sustaining the Traditional Is Based on the Emotional and Practical,” are discussed in concurrence with the supporting literature within each of the four sub themes. The sub themes are Primary Style of Artistic Expression Is in the Traditional Form; The Traditional Is Integral to Free Style of Artistic Expression; Norwegian and Norwegian-American Expressions Differ; and Preservation of the Traditional Has Practical Implications for the Future

Primary Style of Artistic Expression Is in the Traditional Form. Despite modernization in America, there continues to be strong interest in obtaining and creating traditionally representative objects that symbolize the past of immigrant families, a past lost for many in the second and third generations. For example, Luke, a Gold Medalist woodcarver, said that his patrons at art fairs commonly ask to purchase something “special” from the Norwegian region their family came from, such as Trondalag, rather than his more unique and individualized expressions.

On my visit to the Milan Folk School in Central Minnesota, I discussed with its board members the survival of its traditional classes, such as rosemaling, weaving,

woodcarving, knife making and jewelry. And the school's courses are similar to those offered in Northern Minnesota at the North Home Folk School. Both organizations struggle for viability due to economy stressors, but in good faith continue to sustain remnants of a folk school culture in Grundtvig's vision: "to awaken, to enliven, and to enlighten the people that attend" (Knight, 1927, p. 2).

In Norway, exemplary of adult education philosophy--e.g., Caffarella and Merriam (1999, 2000), Darkenwald and Merriam (1982), Knowles (1950, 1970), Kolb (1986), Lindeman (1926), Mezirow (1991, 2000), Rogers (1980), Taylor, Marienau, and Fiddler (2000); and Vygotsky (1978)--which emerged from the tenets of folk school methodology, the Voss Folkehøgskule is a timeless model. It opens up its woodworking shop to a daily influx of Norwegian pensioners who come to socialize, drink coffee, eat fish stew, and create traditional objects. In my informal discussion with the students, I asked about their interest in freer expression. They were solidly not interested, as exemplified in student Gustaf's statement about the tradition: "It is good enough!" Although the instructor had encouraged freer expression, there was considerable resistance. Therefore, each year they continue to hold an exhibit of their traditional objects at the town hall, proudly reflecting the artistic statement of their ancestors.

In the findings of this sub theme, most of the Gold Medalists who created their handmade objects within the tradition were aligned with Norway's period of "Nationalism." The 2010 Vesterheim's National Exhibition in the Norwegian Tradition Guidelines described this nationalistic time period as "from about 1700 to 1875." However, the literature asserts that this tradition is not backed by reality, but is reflective of the political and social context one desired to live in. Löfgren (1980) described this

mid-18th century to later 19th century perception of nationalism as “unrealistic” and a “stereotype” of “a given peasant society at a given stage of more well-to-do peasants of the period ca 1770-1870” (p. 205). Nodermann (1988) was also concerned about setting Norwegian artisans in a singular context “as simply transmitters of tradition.” He further stated, “It is individuals who make things” (p. 7).

The Traditional Is Integral to Free Style of Artistic Expression. Although the findings of the previous sub theme, Primary Style of Artistic Expression Is in the Traditional Form, spoke of the Gold Medalists’ strong interest in creating artifacts representing the style of Norway’s “Nationalistic” period, there were a number of Gold Medalists who expressed interest in learning how to learn to express themselves more freely. This changing interest of Scandinavian folk artists in America reflects the progressive education guidelines of Norway’s Ministry of Education and Research in stressing contemporary design over that of folk art in its K through 12 schools, vocational, college, and folk schools.

The contextual aspect of traditional folk art has been altered: rural is no longer an isolated geography, nationalism and globalization are contradictory, and the visceral interest in the traditional arts and crafts is shifting. However, the symbolic meanings of the tradition are still psychosocially relevant, integral in Norwegian culture, and sought as a foundation for creativity within the contemporary context. As Birgitta, a contemporary Norwegian artist, stated, “My father collected these fairytale books and folktales [I’m] 100% sure it has inspired my expression.” However, not all the Norwegian artisans I interviewed were aware of their creative influences. For example, an artisan I visited in Voss was not aware that the colors of her contemporary ceramic pieces clearly reflected

the national colors in Norway which people used to paint their homes and which reflected the colors in the surrounding topography.

The findings in this sub theme expressed a strong interest by many Gold Medalists to move toward a freer style of expression. The literature asserted that a “pure” Norwegian style does not exist; historically, Norwegian expression was influenced by other cultures through trade and war. Although Norwegian-Americans consider their work to be in the Norwegian tradition, Norwegians recognize the American influence in the colors and sense of humor present in many Norwegian-American artifacts. One very astute Norwegian silversmith appeared to grasp this concept of “borrowing” culture in her recognition that throughout the world artists borrow from one another: “The winds blow seeds back and forth.” And mirroring this willingness to explore beyond the traditional, a number of Gold Medalists spoke of their eagerness to be “freely expressive” in their artistic endeavors; one expressed a desire for spontaneity, “to a point where you become more creative.” They wanted to create something that would be more distinctly theirs and relative to other cultures.

Several Gold Medalists were strongly influenced by a particular Norwegian who encouraged his students to be more freely expressive. “Yes, he has his own style. He is not a traditionalist, in any way He has encouraged people to go beyond their limitations to try something new. And that’s all right!” Marguerite, a Norwegian educator, described how her college facilitates using the tradition within the contemporary context. “For her [a student’s] masters, she has to reflect on the tradition. She has to say why she is going so far out.” Being exposed to music and other sense experiences was also noted as a way to inspire new creativity.

The interest of the Gold Medalists in their artistic growth is considered in the literature to be “organic” and to reflect stages of personal development. The artisans who have the ability are in essence “entering into new relationships” that “evoke an emotional response” (Dewey, 1934, p. 54); the aesthetic of the artistic expression is “how a person both affectively relates to and conceptually frames his or her experience” (Davis-Manigaulte, Yorks, & Kasl, 2006, p. 27). Educational philosophy confirms this belief that artistic expression evolves from the artist’s experience in an interdependent relationship between the individual and the social context; and that this “way of knowing” influences artistic expression toward integration and transformation (Aquirre, 2004; Caffarella & Merriam, 1999, 2000; Gardner, 1990, 1996; Lawrence, 2005; Mezirow, 1991, 2000; and Read, 1943, 1968).

Norwegian and Norwegian-American Expressions Differ. In the findings of this sub theme, the Norwegians spoke of a distinct Norwegian-American style that emanates from the traditional expression. In their viewpoint, some of these artifacts include a lighter and sometimes humorous element, not always obvious, but noticeable to the outside eye. Obvious examples, amidst a traditional rosemaled pattern, are caricatures of trolls unlike any in the Norwegian folk arts, signs that comically designate the individual as Norwegian, and plays on the smells of lutefisk. And all of these examples are once removed from what would exist in Norway. These sometimes subtle and not so subtle examples do appear in some of the Gold Medalist artefacts. A Norwegian artisan, educator, and administrator provided his perspective of the Norwegian-American woodworking style.

I was a bit surprised, my wife and I were at the class there, woodcarving, certain techniques; most were all in the American tradition like Anders Johnson and his

friends. I was surprised they were not afraid, for example, to use colors; among a lot of classes in Norway, men who 50, 60, were hesitant to use bright colors You [Americans] are copying the comic aspect of the culture because you are not living in it, living in another country.

Sara, a Gold Medalist, became aware of the distinct difference in American rosemaking through the feedback from the Norwegians.

And they [the Norwegians] do accuse Americans of being ... I mean, we're too careful. Everything has to be just so, but that's the way to paint. We want it to be just so, and they are more relaxed. If they get a little whoop, it stays.

The literature indicates that the contextual is a major factor in artistic expression; art education in today's postmodern era recognizes the value of the students' "apprehending the system of the political, aesthetic, and cultural relations behind the work" (Aquirre, 2004, p.257). New paradigms must be realized in the development of artistic expression, breaking free of, but respecting the tradition. "The challenge for museums today is to identify the character of new forms of vibrancy that are in tune with the cultural changes that herald the twenty-first century" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 22). And yet, as Parsons (1987) recognized, the fast changes of society are a secure foundation for the new.

Preservation of the Traditional Has Practical Implications for the Future. There are practical implications for preserving the tradition along with valuing the visually expressive object; and the practicality and the technicality of the tradition are of serious concern to Norway's Ministry of Culture. The National Handverksutvikling (NHU) developed by Norway's Ministry of Culture exemplifies the country's commitment through its research and "tradition bearer" program in a guild like environment; in partnership with the University of Bergen, bringing the folk school concept to the University level.

The project objectives are to register Norwegian craftspersons, document their knowledge and skills, and actively preserve cultural heritage for use in contemporary technology, such as civil engineering and architecture, through mentoring programs. The methodology at hand in this project is relative to what the Norwegians call “Action Borne Learning,” the official terminology used in the Norwegian Ministry’s progressive education guidelines and similar in effect to the American term “Active Learning.”

After I observed the tradition bearers in Norway building an historical and wooden structure on the Bergen Wharf, I interviewed Atle, the NHU consultant for this project who said, “We can say we don’t need it now [retention of cultural heritage] or we can say it is important for our identity and important for the young people to know this has been done for a thousand years.” He also described a specific example of the NHU’s effort to retain the technical knowledge of a unique and extremely strong knot which had vanished, yet exemplified the NHU’s mission “to maintain and strengthen crafts that are considered to be rare and worthy of protection” (Maihaugen, n.d., para. 1).

The literature discussed the Arts and Crafts Movement in England and its corollary movement in the United States. In the late 1800s the Industrial Revolution that swept throughout both countries rejected the handmade object. This rejection, in lieu of machine perfection, was instrumental in the collapse of guilds and apprenticeships. The response from American and European educators was a convergence of philosophy and methodology to affect renewal in the “glorification of the handmade” (Kaplan, 2004, p. 179). Among these notable change agents progressive in their approach in championing the arts as an integral force for knowledge and emotional development were John Dewey,

Elbert Hubbard, Christian Krogh, William Morris, John Ruskin, Eduard Lindeman, John Runkle, and William Woodward.

The findings in this sub theme explicated the rationale for practical use of the tradition in the manner of “craft” and “art,” craft here defined as technical but also expressive, with the individual’s artistic sense integral to process and design. In the literature Yanagi (1989) noted the harmony that must exist between function and form; they should not be separate entities:

The problem is not a matter of either hand or machine, but of utilizing both. He must in the first place, know beauty at sight; then it is essential that he should understand the principles The best of course, probably, is that handwork and the machine should co-operate and supplement each other’s shortcomings. This had already happened in the industrial arts in Denmark Both handwork and machine will go astray if there is not spiritual preparation. (p. 108)

Theme III: Artistic Confidence Is Relative to Teaching Effectiveness

In this section, the findings of the essential theme, “Artistic Confidence Is Relative to Teaching Effectiveness,” are discussed in concurrence with the supporting literature that relates to each of the three sub themes. The sub themes are Philosophy and Methodology Define Teaching Effectiveness; Free Style Expression Requires Knowledge of Aesthetics; and Exceptional Opportunities Add Artistic Value.

Philosophy and Methodology Define Teaching Effectiveness. The findings in this sub theme reflected the thoughts and feelings of the Gold Medalists on their experiences both as students and educators. Their chosen artistic expressions were varied; and their understandings differed as to the type of knowledge and skills necessary for competency.

However, from their years of accumulated experience, they collectively understood the necessity for a solid foundation and the needed encouragement to “grow from there.”

The Gold Medalists thought it important to be a role model in demonstrating the appropriate aesthetics and the skills; to understand the diverse learning styles of adult learners; to provide experiences for the active learner who desires to learn through trial and error; to manage the learning experience for adults who are lacking in self-confidence; to engage the learner in new experiences when desired; and to allow for class interaction and socialization.

The views of the Gold Medalists correspond with many facets of the literature review in how they teach and expect to be taught. Lindeman (1926, 1961) defined adult education in terms of building the curriculum in accordance with student needs; that growth is the “goal of life.” He further described this goal as striving for “power, knowledge, freedom, enjoyment, creativity” (p. 128). Knowles (1950, 1970) also spoke of education as integral to life experiences and self-actualization. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) found that adult development occurs through the influence of others and their cultural norms. Caffarella and Merriam (1999, 2000) described the facets of adult learning as the “individual” and the “contextual”; and posited a third, that of the *integrative*. This integrative learning and organic approach is also a primary component in the theories of educators such as Dewitt (as cited in Kolb, 1984, p. 119), Gardner (1990), Parsons (1987), Read (1943, 1968), and Yang (2003). Cranton (2006) states that Habermas’ theory of *emancipatory knowledge* is relative to art-based learning activities in cultivating transformative learning that challenges “our previously held views about ourselves and the world around us” (p. 18).

The literature discussed changes in museum education, from that of strictly interpretive to incorporating active, self-directed, experiential, and lifelong learning. Museums are generally more conscious of adult education strategies and their application. Because there is more understanding of the active learning environment, Burnham and Kai-Kee (2007) stated, “We ask that museums be not only places where people can participate in their own acts of constructing meaning but also places where we redefine the visitors themselves from information seekers to seekers of experience, of reflection, of imagination” (p. 3). “Constructivist learning theory points out that learning is both personal and social: meaning is mediated through interpretive communities” (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 139).

It was evident in the literature that Norway is highly committed to their artisans. Throughout the country, art and craft curriculum are offered at all levels of formal schooling, primary through college, as well as informal adult education. And as established in the later 20th century, the Norwegian Ministry’s reform strategies emphasized creativity through experiential learning and new electronic technology: “Students are expected to compare various techniques in folk arts and crafts by using digital sources” (Norway’s Ministry of Education and Research, 2007, p. 2).

In the comprehensive findings of this research, meaning making was a constant in the Gold Medalists’ descriptions of their chosen expression, their community, and their heritage. The literature showed this understanding of meaningful aesthetics in the philosophies of Gardner (1990), Parsons (1987), and Read (1943, 1968). Their theories define artistic development as a series of stages that reflect the concept of cognitive, behavioral, psychological, and biological stages. And all of which are relative to the

three learning facets as posited by Caffarella and Merriam (1999, 2000), the individual, the contextual, and the integrative.

Each stage of artistic development is progressive but not necessarily linear. To exemplify this concept, Gardner (1990) is referenced in the literature. He suggested the existence of five diverse kinds of knowledge that must be mastered and integrated, the first *intuitive*, the second *symbolic*, the third *notational*, the fourth *formal conceptual*, and the fifth, *skilled knowledge*. At the fifth stage the artisan independently constructs meaning not relying on the tradition. Parallel to the findings, the Gold Medalists similarly articulated their understandings in the descriptions of their artistic journeys: knowledge through interaction; knowledge of symbol systems; knowledge of application; knowledge of concepts; and knowledge of skills. Cassirer (1979) stated, “Art is not a mere representation of nature and life; it is a sort of transformation and transubstantiation” (p. 211). Cranton (2006) also spoke to this depth of learning and expression in her statement, “We know that transformative learning involves a deep shift in perspective But we cannot say what kind of learning experience will promote this shift in perspective in any person or context” (p. 17).

Reflection, meaning making, and transformation are integral to the theory of artistic development. As artisans become confident in their knowledge and skill, they can freely engage in reflection, meaning making, and transformation. In the creation of the handmade object the Gold Medalist variously described their awareness of this progression. They defined reflection, meaning, and transformation in how their chosen expression mirrored personal values, beliefs, and relationships. One Gold Medalist

instructor stated, “You turn their [students’] soul loose so that it becomes an art form”; and another said, “I start with traditional and push it a little bit off balance.”

Free Style Expression Requires Acknowledgement of Aesthetics. In the findings of this sub theme the Gold Medalists and Norwegians who moved beyond traditional techniques and traditional Norwegian symbols generally had knowledge of and used the principles of art and design. Learning these applied concepts facilitated the problem solving integral to the conceptive and expressive stages of artistic development. Marta, a Gold Medalist woodworker, said for thirty years she wanted to go beyond learning new techniques and “create new designs and to have self-expression.” She wasn’t the sole spokesperson for this issue; several more Gold Medalists had a similar perspective. They thought the lack of principled knowledge held them back. Conviction, as well, was described as an element in making the artisan’s expression unique; that is, detaching from expectations and replacing that with emotion. Congdon (1986), in her research on folk art education, noted the importance of recognizing the aesthetics present in folk art that are also present in fine art. In doing so, she thought this perspective would alleviate the misplacement of folk art in less than worthy categories.

It was found that a small number of Gold Medalist participants did have the formal background for providing the knowledge and skills to create a freer style of expression. Although the interviews displayed some general understanding of art and design principles, only a handful of educators had the competencies to comfortably teach and apply them in the classroom or when mentoring. Beth, a Gold Medalist, said she did use fine art terms in her rosemaling classes, such as when her students were making an

“S” stroke that pulls the eye into the design. Karin, a Gold Medalist, uses terms such as “balance,” “value,” and “movement” in teaching weaving.

The Norwegian educators felt strongly about using art and design principles in teaching folk art. Anna spoke of their use as “very valuable [for] the simple things can be very complicated.” Erik stated, “We still use [Bauhaus concepts] as a methodology. But I mostly use this transformative learning by Paulo Frère, in my teaching philosophy. Martin, in using active learning methodology, has his students formally apply the principles in the act of creating: “If I am talking about volume in the picture and they don’t understand, let them do it.”

The literature supports the application of art or design principles as a framework in facilitating creative expression and the creation of a visual language. The architects of these principles (Itten, 1975; Wong, 1988) were influenced by Walter Gropius, who established the Bauhaus and its education curriculum. Itten, who developed the “basic course,” created a language that articulated what he considered essential and that continues to be the world wide foundation for art education. These principles provided objectivity in which “subjective and objective problems of form and color ... interact in many different ways” (Itten, 1975, p. 8). Gardner (1990) stated that beyond learning about the language of cultural symbols and for total artistic engagement, “artistic concepts” are significantly fundamental.

Exceptional Opportunities Add Artistic Value. The Gold Medalists highly valued their exceptional opportunity in having Norwegians as teachers, as was often arranged by the Vesterheim. In the findings they described these experiences as unique, motivating, and inspiring. Traveling to visit Norway for classes provided a direct link to Norwegian

culture. Pauline described her experience of having a Norwegian teacher who exuded an aura of the country, enriching her learning as he spoke of his country and through his expression. “His love for his country, Norway ... his expression was just a big influence on how he painted.” Warren, who learned from many of the Norwegian educators, described his woodworking student experience. “You know, we had so many teachers from Norway. We were so lucky! The Vesterheim provided the best instructors. And we had to take whatever we could from each one and learn from them.”

For Sylvia, a rosemaler, having teachers who knew first hand about the diverse and regional styles of the homeland was helpful to her in building new knowledge and skills: “We were blessed to have the best teachers come to us, and we could paint in all these different styles.” Several Gold Medalists were strongly influenced by a particular Norwegian who encouraged his classes to be more freely expressive. “Yes, he has his own style. Yes. He is not a traditionalist, in any way He has encouraged people to go beyond their limitations to try something new. And that’s all right!”

Being authentically Norwegian provided added value to the student experience in how they were perceived as the experts in their chosen expression. Miriam said she used the Norwegian rosemaling “masters” as models for excellence in expression and technique. Her students responded with more fluid and expressive rosemaling patterns. And Helen, although not a Norwegian instructor, understood that her students would be influenced by a cultural connection. Therefore, as part of her curriculum, she provided a “meditative experience” of music to enlighten her sense of culture and personal connection before her students would paint.

The cultural experiences described by the Gold Medalists are indicative of the 21st century museum in moving its focus from the passive visitor to the active learner. Hooper-Greenhill (2000) described the new role of the museum as an interpretive community in providing constructivist learning experiences relative to its exhibits and programs. Encouraging inquiry is how Carr (2003) described the museum's contemporary purpose. Burnham and Kai-Kee (2007) thought that integral to its mission of cultural heritage, the postmodern museum should provide their patrons with opportunities to experience, reflect, and imagine.

The findings in this sub theme were rich with commendations on the support and inspiration the Vesterheim provided for both the Gold Medalists and Norwegian visitors. Since the Vesterheim developed travel workshops in the later part of the 20th century, a significant number of artisans have taken part in first-hand experiences of Norwegian art and culture. Astounding cross cultural relationships were formed that for many participants have continued for over 30 years. And simply having the Norwegian instructors take up temporary residence in Decorah when they came to teach provided additional opportunities to socialize and carry on beyond scheduled class time.

Sometimes a teacher and student relationship would renew itself through correspondence and occasional travel to both the United States and Norway. Often the relationship grew into a valued and collaborative partnership. In one situation a rosemaking artisan described her work with her Norwegian mentor as both learning from each other while doing shared commissioned projects. These cross-cultural experiences were inspiring and influential in the individual's deeper connection to another social context; and significant for reflective and transformative expression. Mezirow (1991)

recognized the strength and meaning in these experiences as similar to trying on something new and seeing yourself in a different way in the development of “meaning schemes.” Mezirow said, “It should be understood that there are different degrees of comprehension and mindfulness regarding becoming aware of one’s thought. Knowing how you know involves the awareness of context...of our interpretations and beliefs of others” (p. 7).

Theme IV: Feelings of Dissatisfaction Result in Emerging Issues

In this section, the findings of the essential theme, “Feelings of Dissatisfaction Result in Emerging Issues,” are discussed in concurrence with the supporting literature within each of the three sub themes. The sub themes are Competition Creates Impetus for and Barriers to Creativity; Awards Criteria and Judging Process Raises Questions; and Culture of Origin Expands Beyond the Norwegian-American.

Competition Creates Impetus for and Barriers to Creativity. Despite positive feelings for the Vesterheim, most Gold Medalists in this sub theme recognized their discomfort with the competitive aspect of the national exhibition; one stated, “If I win, does that mean you lose? Or if you lose, does that mean I win? And I’m thinking, no, it means each of us did the best we could, so you can’t expect any more out of people.” Even though many Gold Medalists had reservations about the competition itself, most were enthusiastic about receiving a ribbon award. The ribbon process, however, caused angst among a significant number of artisans. However, at the same time they were pleased to have succeeded in obtaining sufficient points for the gold level. One Gold Medalist expressed her thoughts and elation by describing how she, for many years,

persisted and finally received the Gold Medal. She described her interest as more in the pursuit than being drawn to the competitive process.

Most Gold Medalists considered the ribbon process a prime occasion to learn more about how they were developing as artists and the judging to be instructive in learning more about folk art technique and style. In the perspective of one Gold Medalist, “I’m not competitive ... [but I thought] I should probably try and get my work somewhat critiqued ... and so that’s when I entered competition, and I made it in five tries.” Other Gold Medalists just bore with the process, but some expressed concerns about the competencies of the judges. The backgrounds and qualifications of the judges were generally questioned by participants who had disagreed with comments on their exhibit evaluation forms. Emma, for example, had felt confident about her entry and dismayed and angry with the narrow—and she felt incorrect—verdict of the judge: “One of the teachers that judged said, ‘we don’t put scene with rosemaling.’ What? Open a book, lady.”

This issue of competition in folk art is contrary to the idea of art from the people for the people; and dynamically opposed to the essence of the creative spirit. The literature found that the handmade object is an existential part of the self. Tin (2007) in the literature described the symbolic as “an attempt to visualize, not to verbalize the eternal order that man forms part of, to draw the borderline between the sacred and the profane, but only in order to bridge the gap between them” (p. 286).

Awards Criteria and Judging Process Raises Questions. The findings of this sub theme provided significant feedback for both the education and recognition programs of the museum. As the Gold Medalists described their experiences as artists, educators, and

students with Vesterheim's programs, issues surfaced with the National Exhibition in the Norwegian Tradition judging process. Overall, the findings recognized great enthusiasm for both the museum's education and recognition programs, and if these issues are attended to, increased interest in these programs could be re-generated.

Concerns in the findings made reference to the exhibition judges' preparatory training; the results often showed they were short of understanding the chosen expression and the meaning of the criteria. The Gold Medalists were satisfied with the three-person judging configuration that included diverse perspectives. However, they wanted all judges trained in knowledge and skills information before they represented the criteria. They thought the community judge was appropriate, but wanted that judge to have an art background. And many explicitly noted they wanted the Vesterheim to select or prepare judges to have sufficient competencies in the folk art categories to be judged. They also said the museum needed to train the judges on how to write productive and specific comments on the evaluation forms they would receive. One Gold Medalist described her frustration in the number of critiques "that have hurt instead of helpful" and suggested they should "always start with something positive."

The Vesterheim's national exhibition categories and the criteria for these categories have been expanded to include contemporary expression. Based on my observation of the judging process and my review of judge evaluation forms, as well as my review of the interview data, there needs to be much greater clarity in what is meant by "contemporary." This clarity is essential for all involved: judges, exhibitors, and educators. It is also evident that the Gold Medalists who have moved or are moving on to the more conceptive and expressive stages of artistic development (Gardner, 1990;

Parsons, 1987; Read, 1943, 1968) were the most vociferous about needed improvements in the judging process. Although their responses were constructive, these Gold Medalists expressed a discontent that could cause them to consider less involvement in the Vesterheim's folk art program. And although the total number of Gold Medalist artisans and educators who expressed discontent is relatively small, the impact of their loss of interest should be considered in the Vesterheim's short- and long-term strategic planning.

The seriousness of this issue is validated in the following comments of a participant:

Our exhibits continue to decline and I think that we've lost a lot of people because they've been turned off in some way because [of] ...this technique thing. And that's the difference between what's happening in North House and what's happening in Vesterheim. They're inclusive--very inclusive. You're excluding people.

Culture of Origin Expands Beyond the Norwegian-American. This sub theme indicates an expanding interest in the Norwegian artistic expression. Many of the Gold Medalists were not of the Scandinavian culture and yet developed a strong interest in the forms and patterns of the tradition. The socialization aspect was also an attractor in gathering at the Vesterheim, in taking community education courses, and in being taught by Norwegian instructors. In the last decade, the interest of Japanese and Japanese-Americans in rosemaling at the Vesterheim has developed, particularly in California. Helen, a Gold Medalist said, "I think the Norwegians and Japanese have some co-mixing mentally....You know, I have eighteen Japanese students. They are all crazy, crazy about rosemaling!" And in the classes this instructor provides background on Norway's culture, including music and old master paintings. How the Japanese and Japanese-American heritage will affect change in the Norwegian and Norwegian-American styles sparks interest in a future study.

Understanding that artistic expression is not static, but fluid, Ellingsgard (1995) discussed the origin of foreign contributions to rosemaling in saying, “Its major sources were clearly in the art of an international upper and middle class urban society[;] its creation, however, occurred among the most economically disadvantaged inhabitants of rural Norway” (p. 190). This transference of traditions, a historical phenomenon, is recognized in the literature in discussing what transpired in Norway when trade increased contact with Europe. For instance, the influence of Parisian art and its bold asymmetrical designs at the 1862 International Exhibition in London likely influenced Norwegian rosemaling, particularly in the Telemark region.

Implications for Research and Practice and Conclusions

Artistic forms of expression extend the boundaries of how we come to know, by honoring multiple intelligences and indigenous knowledge (Lawrence, 2005, p. 3).

Dare to know (sapere aude)! Have the courage to use your own understanding (Kant).

The information in this study has implications for artisans, educators, and administrators in the evolution of folk art education within the contemporary context; particularly, the case-in-point, the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum and its embedded units, the folk art education program and the national exhibition. This case study was influential in discovering essential themes that provided understanding and meaning to the significant implications of the findings.

The findings of this study recognized similar experiences for the Gold Medalists and Norwegian participants in their development as artisans within the tradition; their interest in moving to a freer style of expression; the effective teaching philosophies and methodologies that encourage and support their artistic journeys; and their perspectives

of their involvement with the Vesterheim's folk art education programs. Also in the findings was the knowledge that primary to artistic expression are the symbols of culture, the visual language of art inherent to making meaning in explicating that of the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral persona of the artisan. Additionally, a remarkable number of artisans described little awareness of their objects as "art" and little awareness that they may be perceived as "artists."

Researcher Reflections

The single design to strip one's self of all past beliefs is one that ought not to be taken by everyone (Descartes).

From the beginning to the conclusion of this case study, I have moved through the research process in a manner similar to that of one going through artistic stage development as discussed throughout this study. My journey has taken me from the first stage of *intuition*, when I visited the Vesterheim and connected with the symbols of my heritage; to the second stage of *imitation*, when I took the museum's folk art classes and became familiar with the traditional symbols and technique; to the third stage of *conception*, when I started to create with the symbols in mind; and to the fourth stage of *expression*, when I now design a weaving to reflect the tradition within the contemporary context. The stage of *transformation* is to come next when I intend on using my design intelligence to make a more abstract statement.

At the heart of this discussion on *The Evolution of Scandinavian Folk Art Education within the Contemporary Context* is valuing the tradition and appreciating the Vesterheim and the Vesterheim artisans in preserving and transforming the creative efforts of Norwegian-American culture. To example their remarkable contribution, in the early years of Norway's National Handverksutvikling's (NHU) list of "tradition bearers,"

there was only one “continued purveyor of Norwegian figure carving.” This person’s place of residence was in Decorah, Iowa. A sole Gold Medalist American keeping the essence of the tradition vital to artistic expression!

Implications for Research

I am thinking of education through art not because it turns out pictures but because I think it may be possible that, clearly understood, it may become the paradigm for all other education (Maslow, 1971, p. 57).

The implications for research that follow could provide museum educators with further insight on adult education as applied to artistic development. It would also enhance understanding of the relationship of the artisan to the handmade object.

The implications for research:

1. Should the Vesterheim apply the stages of artistic expression to their education and recognition programs, my recommendation is to follow up with a study on the results. The effects of a mindful implementation would be of interest, not only to the Vesterheim, but to other museums whose missions include the cultural arts.
2. The design of a similar study with another museum of interest would be instrumental in further clarifying the substance of and movement through the stages of artistic expression, both theoretically and methodologically.
3. Research conducted with a cross section of artisans, a cohort, might indicate the effectiveness of its contributions to individual growth relative to changes in their artistic expression. The follow-up would be, upon reflection, to surmise and further discuss influence and development.

Implications for Practice

The implications for practice that follow provide an opportunity for artisans, educators, and administrators in the folk arts, specifically those of the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum's education and recognition programs, in improving the quality of its folk art programs.

The implications for practice:

1. Administrators and educators are encouraged to acknowledge the various stages of artistic development in developing and implementing education and recognition programs.
2. Projected outcomes of the artistic curriculum could be more clearly aligned and articulated with the exhibit recognition criteria.
3. Judging of artistic expression could be improved with more definitive knowledge of the artistic categories, understanding of art and design principles, and knowledge and application of constructive feedback.
4. In the education and recognition programs, "folk art" could be replaced as a descriptor with an alternative term.
5. Opportunities, such as groups and conferences, could be initiated where artisans of different expressions could share philosophy, knowledge, and skills.
6. Universal principles of art and design could be assimilated into class curriculum and reflected in recognition criteria.

7. Educators should encourage reflective thinking and meaning making as a method for freer expression in making artistic connection to the contemporary context.
8. The progression of Heritage symbols could be taught in understanding the levels of visual intelligence integral to the design and form of the handmade object.

In conclusion:

In museum education, I recommend the use of artistic stage development theory (Gardner, 1990; Parsons, 1987; Read, 1968) as a foundation for artistic expression in teaching adults; and in the development and implementation of education and recognition programs. Its philosophy and practicality provide an opportunity for conceiving curriculum and results reflective of the purposes integral to its mission. Although it appears ideal to encourage students to move through all stages of artistic development, it is imperative to understand that artisans have different abilities, cultural perspectives, and understanding of aesthetics. There is no fast track through the stages. The role of the educator in this proposed experience would be to support and encourage the students in the process by providing appropriate learning tools. It is then the role of the artisan to discover and re-discover through reflection and, for some, conception. This insight of stages and accomplishment is based on the belief that art can be nurtured and learned and has no boundaries of class and nature. “The future seems promising as long as Scandinavian design remains based on the premises established early in the century: respect for tradition, quality production, and functional and social effectiveness” (Selkurt, 1988, p. 10). And from the results of this research study, both literature and data, I posit

the following visual (see Table 6) as a descriptor of adult artistic stage development derived from the thoughts and terms of modern and postmodern adult education philosophy.

Table 6

Artistic Mastery in Adult Education



The conclusion in respect to the case-in-point for this study, the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, is the need for change within its education and recognition programs. Using the foundations of aesthetic theory, postmodern adult education methods, and stage development philosophy to re-orient and expand its education and recognition programs will foster artistic development and educator competencies. Through this effort rejuvenating old experiences with new experiences could establish more flair and individuality in Norwegian-American expression. Cassirer (1979) spoke of art as giving depth to our human understanding:

We cannot speak of the aesthetic form as part or element of nature; it is a product of a free activity. It is for this reason that in the realm of art even all our common

feelings, our passions and emotions, undergo a fundamental change. Passivity itself is turned into activity; mere receptivity is changed into spontaneity. (p. 211)

References

- Allchin, A. M. (1997). *N. F. S. Grundtvig: An introduction to his life and work*. Oakville, CT: Aarhus University Press.
- American-Scandinavian Foundation. (1963, March). Arts and Crafts. *American-Scandinavian Review*, *LI*(1).
- Ammundsen, K. (1994). The Danish college of design: Copenhagen. In S. Wennstam (Ed.), *Higher education design and crafts in the Scandinavian countries* (pp. 13-17). Gothenburg, Sweden: Gothenburg University Press.
- Anderses, M. O. (1987). *Exploring folk art: Twenty years of thought on craft, work, and aesthetics*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press.
- Aquirre, I. (2004). Beyond the understanding of visual culture: A pragmatist approach to aesthetic education. *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, *23*(3), 256-269.
- Bergevin, P. (1967). The adult, his society, and adult education. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.), *A philosophy for adult education* (pp. 37-45). New York: Seabury Press.
- Berman, P. G. (1993). Norwegian craft theory and national revival in the 1890s. In N. B. Bowe (Ed.), *Art and the national dream* (pp. 155-168). Dublin, Ireland: Irish Academic Press.
- Bernstein, R. J. (1986). *Philosophical profiles*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bjørkvik, H. (1995). The social and economic background of folk art in Norway. In M. Nelson (Ed.), *Norwegian folk art: The migration of a tradition* (pp. 119-124). New York: Abbeville Press.

- Burnham, R., & Kai-Kee, E. (2007). Museum education and the project of interpretation in the twenty-first century. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 41(2), 1-3.
- Caffarella, R. S. & Merriam, S. B. (1999, January 1). *Perspectives on adult learning: Framing our research*. Paper presented at the 1999 Adult Education Research Conference (AERC). Retrieved February 11, 2007, from <http://www.adulterc.org/Proceedings/1999/99caffarella.htm>
- Caffarella, R. S., & Merriam, S. B. (2000). Linking the individual learner to the context of adult learning. In A. L. Wilson & E. R. Hayes (Eds.), *Handbook of adult and continuing education* (pp. 55-70). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Carr, D. (2003). *The promise of cultural institutions*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Cassirer, E. (1979). *Symbol, myth, and culture: Essays and lectures of Ernst Cassirer 1935-1945* (Verene, P.V., Ed.). New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Cassirer, E. (1996). *The philosophy of symbolic forms*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Chavez, A. F., & Guido-DiBrito, F. (1999). Racial, ethnic identity, and development. In M. C. Clark & R. S. Caffarella (Eds.), *An update on adult development theory: New ways of thinking about the life course* (pp. 39-47). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Colburn, C. H. (1995). Norwegian folk dress in America. In M. Nelson (Ed.), *Norwegian folk art: The migration of a tradition* (pp. 157-169). New York: Abbeville Press.
- Congdon, K. G. (1986). Finding the tradition in folk art: An art educator's perspective. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 20(3), 93-106.

- Congdon, K. G. (1987). Toward a theoretical approach to teaching folk art: A definition. *Studies in Art Education, 28*(2), 96-104.
- Cranton, P. (2000). Individual differences and transformative learning. In J. Mezirow and Associates (Eds.), *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 181-204). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cranton, P. (2006). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Croce, B. (1965). *Guide to aesthetics* (P. Romanell, Trans.). Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill. (Original work published 1913)
- Cross, N. (1982). Designerly ways of knowing: Design discipline versus design science. *Design Issues, 17*(3), 49-55. Retrieved February 16, 2009, from <http://www.mitpressjournals.org>
- Darkenwald, G. G., & Merriam, S. B. (1982). *Adult education: Foundations of practice*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Davis, P. (Ed.). (1995). *Selected writings: John Ruskin*. London: Everyman.
- Davis-Manigaulte, J. A., Yorks, L., & Kasl, E. (2006). Expressive ways of knowing: Design discipline versus design science. In E. W. Taylor (Ed.), *Teaching for change: Fostering transformative learning in the classroom* (pp. 27-35). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2003). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York: Minton Balch.
- Dewey, J. (1944). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: MacMillan.
- Eisner, E. (1972). *Educating artistic vision*. New York: Macmillan.
- Eisner, E. (2002). *The arts and the creation of meaning*. Harrisonburg, VA: R. R. Donnelley & Sons.
- Elias, J. L., & Merriam, S. B. (2005). *Philosophical foundations of adult education* (3rd ed). Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing.
- Ellingsgard, N. (1995). Rosemaling: A folk art in migration. In M. Nelson (Ed.), *Norwegian folk art: The migration of a tradition* (pp. 190-238). New York: Abbeville Press.
- Falk, J.H., & Dierking, L. D. (2000). *Learning from museums: Visitor experiences in the making of meaning*. New York: Altamira Press.
- Fetterman, D. M. (1998). *Ethnography: Step by step* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Freeland, C. (2001). *But is it art?* New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gardner, H. (1982). *Art, mind, and brain: A cognitive approach to creativity*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Gardner, H. (1990). *Art education and human development*. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Center for the Arts.
- Gardner, H. (1996). The assessment of student learning in the arts. In D. Boughton, E. W. Eisner, & J. Ligetvoet (Eds.), *Evaluating and assessing the visual arts in education* (pp. 131-155). New York: Teachers College Press.

- Gardner, H. (2006). *The development and education of the mind*. New York: Routledge.
- Gjerdi, T. (1978). Norwegian folk art. In L. Lincoln (Ed.), *The art of Norway* (pp. 27-86).
United States: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Seattle Art Museum, and Elvehjem
Art Center.
- Goldstein, H., & Goldstein, V. (1954). *Art in everyday life* (4th ed). New York:
MacMillan.
- Harrington, C., Kopp, T.W., & Schimmel, K.S. (2003). Lessons from the Norwegian folk
high school tradition [Electronic version]. *International Education*, 4(2), 121-136.
- Hegard, T. (1995). Collecting, researching, and presenting folk art in Norway. In M.
Nelson (Ed.), *Norwegian folk art: The migration of a tradition* (pp. 239-247).
New York: Abbeville Press in association with the Museum of American Folk
Art, New York, and the Norwegian Folk Museum, Oslo.
- Hein, G. E., & Alexander, M. (1998). *Museums: Places of learning*. Washington DC:
American Association of Museums.
- Hemphill Jr., H. W., & Weissman, J. (1974). *Twentieth-century American folk art and
artists*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.
- Highlander Research and Education Center. (n.d.). *History-1930-1953: Beginning and
the labor years*. Retrieved April 12, 2007, from
<http://www.highlandercenter.org/a-history.asp>
- Hindal, S., & Wyller, E. H. (2004). The Norwegian archive, library and museum
authority: Our role in a society based on knowledge and culture. *Library Review*,
53(4), 1-8. Retrieved July 30, 2007, from
<http://www.emeraldinsight.com.floyd.lib.umn.edu>

- Hooper-Greenhill, E. (1999). *The educational role of the museum* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Hooper-Greenhill, E. (2000). *Museums and the interpretation of visual culture* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Houle, C. O. (1996). *The design of education* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Itten, J. (1975). *Design and form: The basic course at the Bauhaus and later* (Rev. ed.). New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Itten, J., & Bauhaus. (1964). *Design and form: The basic course at the Bauhaus*. New York: Reinhold.
- Jacobsen, K.M. (1982). *Adult education in the Nordic countries*. Kungälv, Sweden: Nordic Academy of Adult Education.
- Jones, M.O. (1987). *Exploring folk art: Twenty years of thought on craft, work, and aesthetics*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.
- Kaplan, W. (2004). *The arts and crafts movement in Europe and America: Design for the modern world*. Los Angeles: Thames & Hudson in association with the Los Angeles County of Museum of Art.
- Kliebard, H.M. (1999). *Schooled to work: Vocationalism and the American curriculum*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Knight, E. W. (1927). *Among the Danes*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Knowles, M.S. (1950). *Informal adult education*. New York: Association Press.
- Knowles, M.S. (1970). *The modern practice of adult education: Androgogy versus pedagogy*. New York: Association Press.

- Koch, H. (1952). *Grundtvig*. Yellow Springs, OH: Antioch Press.
- Kohlberg, L. (1984). *The psychology of moral development: The nature and validity of moral stages* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kolb, D.A. (1986). *The critique of pure modernity: Hegel, Heidegger and after*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kowaleske, M., & Bennett, J. M. (1989). Crafts, guilds, and women in the middle ages: Fifty years after Marian K. Dale. *Signs*, 14(2), 474-501.
- Krueger, R.A. (1994). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Langer, S. K. (1953). *Feeling and form*. New York: Charles Scribner's Son.
- Lawrence, R. L. (2005). Artistic ways of knowing: Expanded opportunities for teaching and Learning. In R. L. Lawrence (Ed), *New directions for adult and continuing education* (pp. 91-95). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lincoln, L. (Ed.). (1978). *The art of Norway: 1750-1914*. United States: Minneapolis Institute of Arts and University of Minnesota.
- Lindeman, E.C. (1926). *The meaning of adult education*. Montreal: Harvest House.
- Lindeman, E.C. (1961). *The meaning of adult education* (2nd rev. ed.). Montreal: Harvest House.
- Löfgren, O. (1980). Historical perspectives on Scandinavian peasantries. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 9, 187-215.
- Lovoll, O. S. (1975). *A folk epic: The bygdelag in America*. Boston: Twayne Publishers.

- Lovoll, O. S. (1999). *The promise of America: A history of the Norwegian-American people*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Lovoll, O. S. (2006). *Norwegians on the prairie: Ethnicity and the development of the country town*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Association.
- Macdonald, S. (2003). Museums, national, postnational and transcultural identities. *Welcome to Museum and Society, 1*, 1-16.
- Maihaugen (n.d.). *Norwegian crafts development*. Retrieved January 27, 2009, from <http://www.maihaugen.no/en/Norsk-Handverksutvikling/>
- Maslow. A. H. (1971). *The farther reaches of human nature*. New York: Viking Press.
- Mayer, M. M. (1998). Can philosophical change take hold in the American art museum? *Art Education, 51*(2), 15-19.
- McGury, S. (2000). Being the art critic. In K. Taylor, C. Marienau, & M. Fiddler (Eds.), *Developing adult learners* (pp. 228-231). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S.B., & Caffarella, R. S. (1999). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S.B., & Caffarella, R.S. (2000). Linking the individual learner to the context of adult learning. In A.L. Wilson & E.R. Hayes (Eds.), *Handbook of adult and continuing education* (pp. 55-70). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. (2007). *Art*. Retrieved August 18 & 27, 2007, from <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>
- Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. (2007). *Folk*. Retrieved June 13, 2007, from

<http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. (2008). *Guild*. Retrieved May 26, 2008 from

<http://www.m-w.com>

Mezirow, J. (1990). Conclusion: Toward transformative learning and emancipatory education. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.), *Selected writings on philosophy and adult education* (2nd ed.) (pp. 123-136). Malabar, FL: Krieger.

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. & Associates. (2000). *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

National College of Art and Design in Ireland. Introducing NCAD. (n.d.). *About visual culture*. Retrieved August 17, 2007, from

<http://www.ncad.ie/faculties/visualculture/about.shtml>

Naylor, G. (1980). *The arts and crafts movement*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Nelson, M. (1994). *Material culture and people's art among the Norwegians in America*. Northfield, MN: The Norwegian-American Historical Association.

Nelson, M. (1995). Norwegian folk art in America. In M. Nelson (Ed.), *Norwegian folk Art* (pp. 89-99). New York: Abbeville Press.

Nodermann, M. (1988). *Nordic folk art: Nordiska musset*. Stockholm, Sweden: Grafiska Gruppen.

Norway Cultural Profile. (n.d.). *Introduction to Norway*. Retrieved March 5, 2007, from

http://www.culturalprofiles.net/norway/Directories/Norway_Cultural_Profile/-5.html

- Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. (n.d.). *The subject and educational aims*. Retrieved March 6, 2007, from http://www.udir.no/L97/L97_eng/art/art2.html
- Norwegian Embassy: British Council of Norway. (n.d.). *Applied arts*. Retrieved April 17, 2007, from <http://www.culturalprofiles.net/Norway/Units.html>
- Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. (n.d.). *The development of education: 1991 to 2000*. Retrieved March 6, 2007, from <http://www.odin.asap-asp.com/kd/english/doc/reports/-220012/hov002-bn.html>
- Parsons, M. (1987). *How we understand art*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Paulston, R. G. (1983). *Other dreams, other schools: Folk colleges in social and ethnic movements*. Pittsburgh: University Center for International Studies, University of Pittsburgh.
- Piaget, J. (1970). Piaget's theory. In P. Mussen (Ed.), *Manual of child psychology: Vol. I* (pp.703-730). New York: Wiley.
- Read, H. (1943). *Education through art*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Read, H. (1958). *Education through art* (3rd rev. ed). New York: Pantheon.
- Read, H. (1966). *Art and society*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Read, H. (1968). *The meaning of art* (New & rev. ed). London: Faber and Faber.
- Reagan, T. (2005). *Non-western educational traditions: Indigenous approaches to educational thought and practice* (3rd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Rogers, C. (1980). *A way of being*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

- Schultz, A. (1994). *Ethnicity on parade: Inventing the Norwegian-American through celebration*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Segerstad, U. H. A. (1994). Scandinavian design culture. In S. Wennstam (Ed.), *Higher education design and crafts in the Scandinavian countries* (pp. 5-9). Gothenburg, Sweden: Gothenburg University Press.
- Selkurt, C. (1988). *Beauty and function: Scandinavian modern design from postwar to present*. Mankato, MN: University of Mankato.
- Sieber, J. E. (1992). *Planning ethically responsible research: A guide for students and internal review boards*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Sotamaa, Y. (1994). Art, craft, and design in Finland. In S. Wennstam (Ed.), *Higher education design and crafts in the Scandinavian countries* (pp. 13-17). Gothenburg, Sweden: Gothenburg University Press.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stewart, J. S. (1999). *Folk arts of Norway* (3rd ed.). Hong Kong: Nordhus Publishing.
- Taylor, E. W. (2006). The challenge of teaching for change. In E. W. Taylor (Ed.), *Teaching for change: Fostering transformative learning in the classroom* (pp. 91-95). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Taylor, K., Marienau, C., & Fiddler, M. (2000). *Developing adult learners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Tin, M. B. (2007). *De første formen: Folkekunstens abstrakte formspråk*. Oslo: Instituttet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning.

- Tolliver, D. E., & Tisdell, E. J. (2006). Engaging spirituality in the transformative higher education classroom. In E. W. Taylor (Ed.), *Teaching for change: Fostering transformative learning in the classroom* (pp. 37-47). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- UNESCO. (2008, July 14). *Worldwide*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://portal.unesco.org/geography/en/ev.php>
- Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum. (2009). *Lifelong learning*. Retrieved March 9, 2009, from <http://vesterheim.org/learning/index.php>
- Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum. (2007). *Lifelong learning: Celebrating 40 years of folk-art education* [Catalogue]. Decorah, IA: Vesterheim Museum.
- Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum. (2007). *National exhibition of folk art in the Norwegian tradition: Rules and guidelines*, 1-8. Decorah, IA: Vesterheim Museum.
- Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum. (2010). *National exhibition of folk art in the Norwegian tradition*. Retrieved May 14, 2009, from http://vesterheim.org/exhibitions/general_rules.php
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Welle-Strand, A., Tjeldvoll, A., & Thune, T. (2004). Norway moving away from populist education? *Acta paedagogica vilnensia*, 12, 1-13.
- Welsch, C. (2007, January 19). Hand-made vacation. *The Star Tribune*, pp. G1, G8.
- Wennstam, S. (1994). *Higher education in design and crafts in the Scandinavian countries*. Gothenburg, Sweden: Gothenburg University Press.
- Widbom, M., Klein, B. S., Kulturhuset, & Museum of International Folk Art. (1994).

Swedish folk art: All tradition is change. New York: H.N. Abrams in association with Kulturhuset, Stockholm.

Wolcott, H. F. (1999). *Ethnography: A way of seeing.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Wollheim, R. (1971). *Art and its object: An introduction to aesthetics.* Cambridge University Press.

Wong, W. (1988). *Principles of two-dimensional form.* New York: AltaMira Press.

Yanagi, S. (1989). *The unknown craftsman: A Japanese insight into beauty.* Japan: Kodansha International.

Yang, B. (2003). Toward a holistic theory of knowledge and adult learning. *Human Resources Development Review*, 2(2), 106-129.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zipsane, H. (2009). Lifelong learning through heritage and art. In P. Jarvis (Ed.), *The Routledge international handbook of lifelong learning* (pp.173-182). New York: Routledge.

Appendix A

July 5, 2007

Janet Blom Pultz, Director
Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum
523 West Water Street
P.O. Box 379
Decorah, IA 52101-0379

Dear Director Pultz and Museum Staff:

RE: Study on the Preservation and Transformation of Scandinavian Folk Art
Education: Historical and Contemporary Education Philosophies and Practices

The intent of this letter is to introduce and summarize the purpose, background, context, process, and timeline of the research project we have discussed that will fulfill the requirements for a Ph.D. from the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota. Since my internship with Lauranne Gilbertson, in the curatorial aspects of the museum, I have wanted to make another connection that would contribute to the Vesterheim's education mission.

In this next endeavor, I will use my professional and academic insights in organization development, adult education, and design to capture the evolution of the Gold Medal Award process. Three faculty members in the College of Education and Human Development and one faculty member in the College of Design form my Ph.D. committee, which will oversee the substance of my work. Permission to conduct the research from the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures ethical standards in managing all aspects of the interviews I conduct and secondary data I review. I will provide Vesterheim with IRB documentation before conducting the research.

Purpose. The purpose of my Ph.D. study is to discuss the preservation and transformation of Scandinavian folk art education and enlighten the philosophy and practice of the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum's folk education and recognition programs. Integral to this discussion is the Vesterheim's 2007 National Exhibition of Folk Art in the Norwegian Tradition. The discoveries in the research data will make explicit the understanding of the folk school movement's previous and present contributions.

Background. The background for this research emanates from the history and current status of the *folkehögskolen* construct in Scandinavia, its history and current status, and the movement's correlation to folk education and to the preservation of traditional folk arts and crafts in a contemporary environment. Discussion will include corresponding modern and postmodern sociopolitical and sociocultural epistemologies that influenced folk education in Norway and the United States from the 19th to the 21st century.

Context. Artisans/craftpersons who have received the Gold Medal Award in the previous National Exhibitions and in the 2007 National Exhibition will be the central interviewees of the research. This particular group models excellence in the various Norwegian technical and artistic traditions. Due to the number of years these exhibit and recognition events have existed, there are a significant number of persons who are no longer creatively active. The timing of this research project is critical in articulating their experienced insights, from both an historical viewpoint and for the current and future planning of the Vesterheim.

Process. Case study methodology is the foundation for this study and includes observation, secondary data, and interviews in a triangulated approach. I will interview Gold Medalists and possibly a representative population of the judges; interviewing will be discussed with Director Pultz in the near future. As I recently requested, I will observe the award procedures on July 12 and 13 of this year. This observation will involve taking notes on the process and asking for clarification from the Vesterheim staff. Professor Gerald Fry, in the College of Education and Human Development and whose expertise is case study, was consulted about this observation and stated that my presence is appropriate at this point as long as I am “not systematically interacting or interviewing anyone.”

Timeline. At present, the literature and the research process are in the draft stage and will be reviewed by the Ph.D. committee in early September. Following the committee’s and IRB approval, I will request the museum’s secondary data from the award process and proceed to interview the research interviewees. Director Pultz will be apprised at each step and will serve as an advisor for all museum concerns.

Director Pultz and museum staff, I am pleased to have your interest in what I expect to be a positive experience for the Vesterheim. I honor and respect this privilege, and I will do my very best to channel the resulting information into a quality and productive outcome for the organization. Thank you for your willingness to work with me.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Litsheim, M.A., M.A.

Appendix B

IRB Exempt from Review Letter

Date: 04/04/2008

To: Mary, Litsheim (litsh003@umn.edu)

From: irb@umn.edu

Subject: 0803E28165 - PI Litsheim - IRB - Exempt Study Notification

Message: The IRB: Human Subjects Committee determined that the referenced study is exempt from review under federal guidelines 45 CFR Part 46.101(b) category #2 SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS; STANDARDIZED EDUCATIONAL TESTS; OBSERVATION OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR.

Study Number: 0803E28165

Principal Investigator: Mary Litsheim

Title(s):

Evolution of Scandinavian Folk Art Education within a Contemporary Context

This e-mail confirmation is your official University of Minnesota RSPP notification of exemption from full committee review. You will not receive a hard copy or letter.

This secure electronic notification between password protected authentications has been deemed by the University of Minnesota to constitute a legal signature.

The study number above is assigned to your research. That number and the title of your study must be used in all communication with the IRB office.

Research that involves observation can be approved under this category without obtaining consent.

SURVEY OR INTERVIEW RESEARCH APPROVED AS EXEMPT UNDER THIS CATEGORY IS LIMITED TO ADULT SUBJECTS.

This exemption is valid for five years from the date of this correspondence and will be filed inactive at that time. You will receive a notification prior to inactivation. If this research will extend beyond five years, you must submit a new application to the IRB before the study's expiration date.

Upon receipt of this email, you may begin your research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at (612) 626-5654.

You may go to the View Completed section of eResearch Central at <http://eresearch.umn.edu/> to view further details on your study.

The IRB wishes you success with this research.

Appendix C

Study Questions

Evolution of Scandinavian Folk Art Education within the Contemporary Context

English

Please tell me about your work as a folk art educator/about the art/craft you create.

What informs your educational practices/artistic expression?

How do you integrate the folk art traditions as a teacher in the classroom/as an artist in the act of creating?

What changes do you see in your educational practices/artistic expression that vary from the tradition?

What other artistic influences affect your educational perspective/artistic expression?

What cultural changes have taken place that affect your role as a folk art educator/folk artist?

What relevance does teaching/creating folk art have in contemporary society?

What do you consider a mastery level of accomplishment? How do you define the process in reaching this level?

What do you see as today's challenges in teaching/creating folk art/craft?

Norwegian

Vennligst fortell meg om ditt arbeid som lærer i kunst og håndverk/om kunsten/brukskunsten du skaper:

Hva har hatt innflytelse på din undervisningsmåte/dine kunstneriske uttrykksformer?

Hvordan integrerer du som lærer og kunstner i din skaperform tradisjonsene i folkekunsten?

Hvilke forandringer ser du i din måte å undervise på/i din kunstnerlige uttrykksform som varierer fra tradisjonen?

Hvilke andre kunstnerlige innflytelser påvirker din måte å arbeide på og ditt perspektiv på kunsten?

Hvilke kulturelle forandringer har skjedd som har påvirket din rolle som lærer i kunst og håndverk/brukskunstner?

Hvilken relevanse har undervisning/skapende brukskunst i vår samtid?

Hva betrakter du som ditt mesterverk? Kan du beskrive prosessen du gikk gjennom for å nå dette nivået?

Hva ser du som dagens utfordringer som lærer og kunstskaper i kunst og håndverk og brukskunst?

Appendix D

Letter to Research Participants

March 1, 2008

Dear Potential Research Participant:

RE: Evolution of Scandinavian Folk Art Education within a Contemporary Context

The intent of this letter is to introduce myself and to invite you to be a participant in my research project on Scandinavian folk art education.

My research project—"The Evolution of Scandinavian Folk Art Education within a Contemporary Context"—is to fulfill the requirements for a Ph.D. in Education from the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. The research explores the history and current status of folk art preservation and transformation in Scandinavia and America, looking specifically at the evolution of folk art education in the context of the 21st century.

There are two cases included in this study, the folk art education programs of the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa, and the folk art education programs of Norway--a strong influence in the culture of Norwegian-Americans. In both cases, I will be interviewing administrators, educators and/or students. The purpose of this research is to identify how the philosophies, meanings, and practices of traditional folk art education programs are relative to and expressed in the contemporary context.

I would like to interview you as part of this study. The one-to-one, in-person interview sessions would last between 45 minutes and one hour. This request and procedures of my research process have been officially approved by the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum and the University of Minnesota's Institute of Research Board (IRB).

Please accept my invitation to participate in this study. I have attached a consent form that provides more specific information on the interview process. If you accept my invitation, please sign and return in the enclosed stamped envelope.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Litsheim, Ph.D. Candidate
University of Minnesota
litsh003@umn.edu

Appendix E

Study Consent Form

Evolution of Scandinavian Folk Art Education within a Contemporary Context

You are invited to participate in a research study which is seeking to preserve the cultural essence of Scandinavian-American folk art tradition in its evolution within the contemporary context. You were selected as a possible participant because of your role as an educator, administrator, and/or student in folk art education. Please read the following information and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore how the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum's folk art education programs—curriculum and national exhibition--can be integrated within a contemporary context. Data will be collected from both the Vesterheim and folk high schools and museums programs in Norway.

Interview and Confidentiality

Your participation in this study involves responding to a series of open-ended questions relative to your experience as a folk artisan, educator, and/or student. The interview will be conducted between you and the researcher in a one-to-one, in-person session that is expected to last between 45 minutes and one hour. Two recorders (one for backup) will be used to collect the interview data. The resulting data may be used as citations in the researcher's thesis, or other publications, to support the themes and patterns that develop. No participant will be identified or identifiable. Hardcopy and electronic data will be used only by the researcher and data safety will be controlled by locking both in a locked space.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. The decision to, or not to, participate has no effect on your current or future relations with the organization with which you are working or participating.

Contacts and Questions

If you have questions about the research and/or research interviewees' rights, call or write Mary Litsheim, researcher, or Dr. Shari Peterson, advisor. Mary's contact number is (651) 647-4950 and her email is litsh003@umn.edu; Dr. Peterson's contact number is (612) 624-4980 and her email is peter007@umn.edu.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, please contact the University of Minnesota's Research Interviewees' Advocate Line at (612) 625-1650.

Scandinavian Folk Art Study

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher _____ Date _____