

Some Women Artists in Nova Scotia Now

Myra Barss

Barbara Carter

Dawna Gallagher

Carol Kennedy

Anna-Marie Larsen

Kimberley MacHardy-Mitman

Susan Mills

Vita Plume

Nancy Sherwood

Nancy Stevens

Barbara Carter

Born: Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, 1958

Resides: Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia

Education: Self-taught

Selected Exhibitions: *Visions*, Black Duck Gallery, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, 1988 (solo); *Desire*, Black Duck Gallery, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, 1989 (solo); *Patterns*, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1989 and touring (group); *The Great American Quilt Festival*, New York City, 1989 (group)

"Defining Self" in relation to the family and its history is the central motif in this collection of new work by Barbara Carter. Using her mother's family photo album as a catalyst for this work, Carter looks at the lives of the women who came before her; mother, aunts, grandmother. By viewing them within the narrow boundaries of family groupings, she explores her own life in the context of theirs. "*These pieces question my life and theirs*" she writes in reference to her work.

A departure from her previous work in which figures were mannequin-like forms striving to speak on such universal themes, such as jealousy and anger, this work is deeply personal. We see representations in fabric of real people — in fact her relatives. The body stances and group interaction tell much about self-image and relationships. They speak of a somber rigidity, a heavy earthiness. The colours are shades of brown, reminiscent of sepia-tone photographs and of rural life.

In *Their Purpose* four women, sisters or sisters-in-law, stand shoulder to shoulder, left arms slightly forward as if in military formation. Although there is a feeling of regimented union — a steadfast togetherness, they each look in different directions, giving an impression of individual insecurity and disunity.

The weight of Barbara's people speaks of the genetic burden of family which we carry within us generation to generation, and which can define and limit us unless we choose to define and limit it.



Works in the Exhibition

hand-stitched poly/cotton fabric, quilt batts, stretched on wooden frames; all from 1990

Their Purpose (illustrated)
55.5 × 66.0

Mother
55.5 × 66.0

The Students (Newburne, N.S., 1942)
55.5 × 66.0

The Girls
55.5 × 66.0

The Family
66.0 × 55.5

Mother and Daughter (The Legacy)
66.0 × 55.5

The Couple
40.5 × 58.0