

Elizabeth Knight, Nancy Morgan and Betty Schneider ■ Quilts

For the past five years, Nancy Morgan, Elizabeth Knight and Betty Schneider have gathered together on a weekly basis to demonstrate quilting at the Stephen Foster State Folk Culture Center, in the small town of White Springs in Hamilton County (northern Florida). Between stitches, the women discuss family, friends and town life.

Each of these artists came to the quilting tradition in a different way. Although Schneider grew up sewing, she was introduced to quilts through books and classes. Knight, on the other hand, began quilting with her mother when she was 14. She recalls that her mother "didn't make a lot of quilts; she made for cover. She didn't make them to be pretty." Knight stopped quilting while she raised her family but later took up the art again to teach her daughter. Morgan's mother helped her make a "crazy quilt" when she was 13. She remembers her mother stitching together fabric remnants to make crazy looking patterns. For Morgan, the quilts of her youth were utilitarian: "The houses were heated with fireplaces and, when the fire went out, you'd be glad to have three or four or five quilts on you and a feather bed to sleep in. That's what we had."

Often, quilting is a communal event. Quilters negotiate time and talent in a shared artistic expression. Much like the current weekly meetings in White Springs, Morgan attended quilting bees when she was a girl. At these gatherings 10 to 12 women could "quilt it out in a day." Young women would help, so they too



could learn. Morgan recalls: "When they got finished, they'd wrap it [the quilt] around one of the young girls and tell her she'd be the next to get married. Just funning, you know. And they'd bring covered dishes and eat."

The quilters in White Springs have witnessed many changes in the local quilting tradition over the decades. The proliferation of books, classes and quilting paraphernalia has increased the number of patterns made by the local community. Tools such as quilting markers and stencils allow quilters to mark the designs to be stitched in sections of the quilt. These innovations have displaced the older method of drawing fan type patterns on the fabric with a piece of chalk and a string.

The greatest change in the tradition is that fewer people are quilting by hand, that is, stitching the quilt layers together with a needle and thread. More "quilters" now piece together tops and then have them machine quilted. However, for Knight, Morgan and Schneider, the joy of quilts is in the quilting. Morgan, a Florida Folk Heritage Award winner, states: "If you like it, you just can't do without quilting." Knight adds: "You got to love it to do it, that's for sure!"

—Jonathan Kay

Top: Quilt made and loaned by Elizabeth Knight, Nancy Morgan and Betty Schneider (detail).

Left: Knight, Morgan and Schneider (left–right) quilting at the Stephen Foster State Folk Culture Center, White Springs.



Sallie Jones ■ Quilts

Sallie Jones, born in 1915, tells stories of African American family life as she displays and interprets her quilts. Like her parents and grandparents, she farmed 60 acres in Swift Creek, near White Springs in northern Florida. As a young woman, she hitched mules to plow, stripped and hauled sugarcane, helped with domestic tasks, split rails for fences, rolled corn shucks for drying and rived boards for shingles. She proudly tells of helping her father set out the first tobacco in Hamilton County. She helped pick, string and put tobacco up to cure, and sometimes picked cotton and peas for pay. With her 15 younger brothers and sisters, she cared for livestock, milked cows, and butchered hogs and chickens. Jones raised 15 children of her own and maintained three gardens to feed them. She grew peas, peanuts, butter beans, okra, corn, snap beans, potatoes, rice and sugarcane. The family's self-sufficiency did not end there. Her eight daughters gave birth to their first children at home, with Jones and her sister serving as midwives. Quilting was just one part of providing for her family.

Jones began helping her aunts and her mother to quilt when she was 13 and completed her first quilt when she was 19. Since the age of 60 she has used her mother's 75-year-old Singer treadle sewing machine to carry out all the stages of quilt making. She uses large safety pins to hold the multiple quilt layers together and rolls the quilt, so that she can sew the layers together one section at a time.

Jones's quilts express a cultural aesthetic that links contemporary African Americans to West Africa. Six major characteristics are identifiable in her work: vertical strip organization, bold color, large design elements, asymmetry, multiple patterning and "improvised rhythm." The strip is a basic structural unit in many West African textiles; hand looms with narrow warps are used to make long strips of cloth, which are cut and edge-sewn to form a larger textile. Some blankets made in Ghana, for example, are remarkably similar to the quilts patterned by Jones. Her quilts fea-

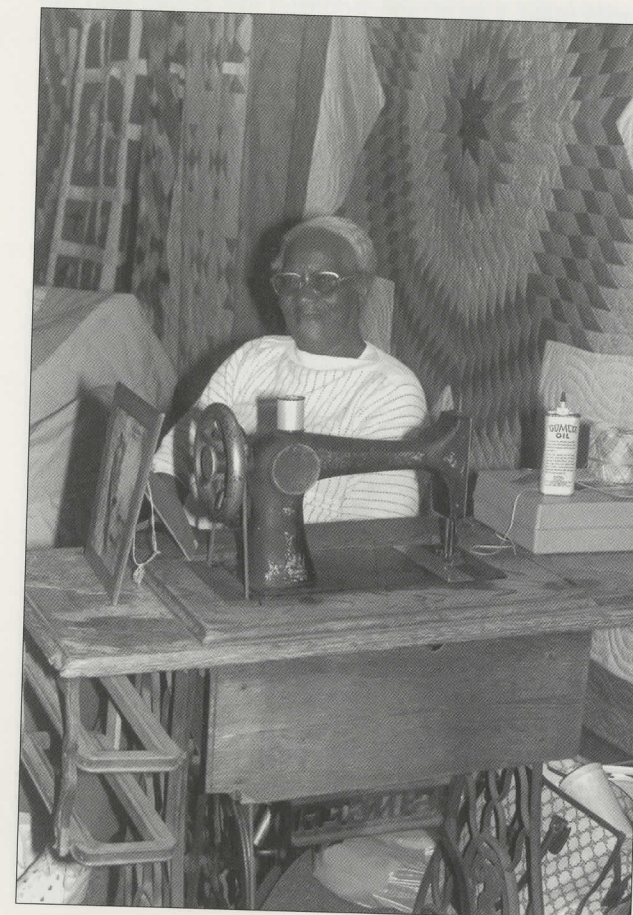


ture thin solid strips of color next to wide strips or blocks of triangles. The strips are not uniform and are deliberately not lined up in a standard fashion. Jones says, "I make it the way I get the scrap to fit." Strip quilting is faster than Anglo-American quilting, which requires tiny hand stitches. Jones says that she can make a quilt in two or three weeks. African American strip quilts are also generally heavier than Anglo-American ones; instead of light batting, multiple pieces of cloth are typically sewn between the two pieced layers.

Jones's quilts, which have now been distributed among five generations, testify to the self-sufficiency of twentieth-century African American farm families in Florida.

—Elizabeth Higgs

Top: Quilt made by Sallie Jones. Loaned by Museum of Florida History. **Bottom:** Jones with quilts at the Stephen Foster State Folk Culture Center, White Springs.



Ginger LaVoie ■ Quilts

Ginger LaVoie was raised in Florida, but soon after high school moved to the island of Molokai, Hawaii, where she remained for over 25 years. As a child, her mother taught her how to embroider, crochet and sew. In Molokai she took up crocheting bikinis, while watching surfers. But then she discovered the art of Hawaiian quilting, which became her lifelong passion. Long before the *haole* or white man came to the islands, Hawaiians were making *kapa*, a layered cloth, from the bark of *wauke* trees. On the top layer of these cloths, they printed geometric designs. When missionaries arrived in the early 1800s, they taught women to make patchwork quilts and children to fold and cut paper snowflakes. However, the women rejected the patchwork style and discovered that folding cloth like snowflakes resulted in beautiful quilt patterns, similar to their *kapa* designs.

LaVoie learned the art of Hawaiian quilting from elderly women at a time "when it was almost a lost art." She soon realized that this tradition was not simply a handicraft but a spiritual process: "When a Hawaiian quilter would make a quilt, she wouldn't just go out into her

garden and say: 'I like this particular flower or plant' and start designing it. It most often was some kind of emotional or spiritual experience that you have that you then want to put that into a quilt."

The first quilt that LaVoie made was one with a breadfruit pattern. The legend behind this traditional pattern is that a woman laid some cloth on the grass to dry and noticed the shadow cast on it by a breadfruit tree. After cutting out the design made by the shadow, the woman appliquéd it to another cloth and stitched what became the first Hawaiian quilt. According to tradition, one who starts quilting with a breadfruit design "will have a fruitful life, never hungering for wisdom or knowledge." Typically, a design is cut from a single piece of fabric. A full-size quilt can take over 1,000 hours to make.

In 1996 LaVoie returned to Orlando to be with her parents. There she discovered a large Polynesian community that appreciated her traditional knowledge and skills. She currently teaches quilting to several Polynesian women in the area, thus serving as a link between the tradition of Hawaiian quilting and local Polynesian residents. She comments: "Here is a community of people that are separated from their homeland, and they're starving for their culture. And I was received with open arms." LaVoie has been in training for the past 25 years for the work that she is now doing. While she plans to return to Hawaii in a few years, she says that, in many ways, she has "found [her] island in Florida."

—Jonathan Kay

Top: Breadfruit quilt made by Ginger LaVoie (detail).
Loaned by Ginger LaVoie.

Left: LaVoie with breadfruit quilt in her home, Orlando.



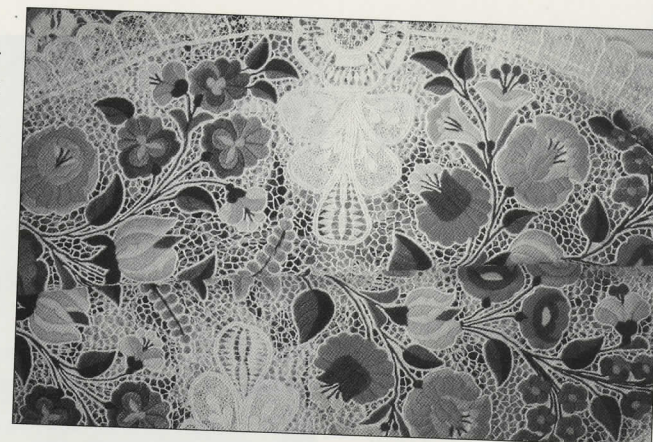
Margaret Horvath ■ Embroidery

Margaret Horvath's suburban home in Port Orange (Volusia County) is filled with Hungarian folk art. Visitors are greeted by half a dozen dress dummies outfitted in stunning costumes, profusely decorated with embroidery, lace and beadwork. Tables are covered with

cloths of striking designs from the old country. An elaborately carved *cymbalom*, a type of large hammer dulcimer played in traditional Hungarian bands, graces the living room.

Horvath was born in Budapest, where she began to learn traditional embroidery techniques and patterns from her parents when she was five. Her father would draw the designs, while her mother would embroider them. From the beginning, she was exposed to two different Hungarian embroidery traditions: the Mezőkövesd style from her father's side and the Transylvanian tradition of her mother's family. When she started school, her training continued, since the local style of embroidery was taught in the public grade schools. As she progressed through school, she learned the embroidery traditions of the other regions of Hungary as well.

The Hungarian embroidery tradition can be traced back hundreds of years and, like other Hungarian folk arts, is associated with four major regions: Dunántúl, Nagyalföld, Felvidék and Erdély. Since these regions belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was three times the size of present-day Hungary, parts of some of them lie within today's boundaries of Serbia, Croatia, Slovakia, Rumania and Ukraine. Each region's embroidery can be identified by distinctive elements of design, such as birds and flowers, predominant colors, materials and stitching techniques. For example, the Transylvanian style from the Erdély region is characterized by the prevalence of geometric designs embroidered in solid colors, usually red or black. Floral, multi-colored designs are identified with the Mezőkövesd style of the Felvidék region. Horvath, who is familiar with several styles, is careful not to combine any two. "You cannot mix the different style elements," she explains. "That



is very important." In the Hungarian tradition, each embroiderer makes her own original designs within the constraints of a particular style. It is the symmetry, grace and, most important, the "flow" of a design that are at the heart of a successful piece of work.

Every summer Horvath and her husband travel to Hungary, where the folk arts are experiencing an unprecedented level of interest. They visit museums, attend festivals and comb the countryside to see and purchase traditional works of art. "This way we refresh the old tradition," she states. "I am learning always." In recent years she has begun to incorporate Florida flowers, such as hibiscus and impatiens, into the Kalocsa style. In doing so, she integrates the Hungarian tradition into her new world environment. "I am proud of my heritage," she says. "Now it's a Hungarian-American heritage, not just Hungarian."

—Robert Stone

Top: Tablecloth (Kalocsa style) embroidered by Margaret Horvath (detail). Loaned by Margaret Horvath.

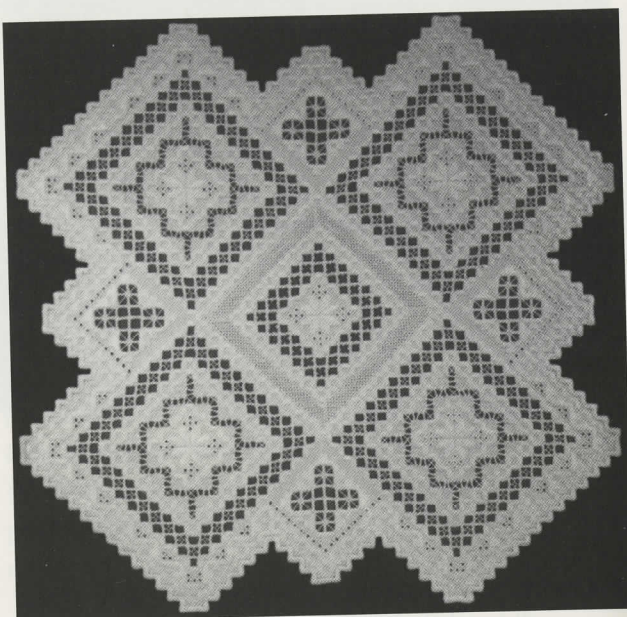
Bottom: Horvath with embroidery in her home, Port Orange.



Lillian Bolstad ■ Hardanger Embroidery

Some people like to be busy all the time. In her home in Oviedo, north of Orlando, Lillian Bolstad is happiest when she is creating works of art with thread. This kind of work comes easily to her. "It took me 15 minutes to learn to tat," she says. She throws bobbins on a pillow to make bobbin lace, decorates traditional Norwegian costumes with colorful floss and embroiders intricate patterns known as *hardanger*. The lace-like white-on-white hardanger pieces are perhaps her best-known work; consequently she is often called to teach this embroidery process to others.

Hardanger is named after the county and fjord in Norway with which this art form is associated. Bolstad says that the tradition almost died out, until admirers started paying attention to pieces in museums. She adds that she wanted to learn to make hardanger for a long time, but did not find a way to teach herself until 1978, when she discovered a pattern she could read. After that she studied in Oslo with a teacher, whom she met in the Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa. Bolstad is very particular about how she approaches her work. "The back side should be as pretty as the front side," she explains. When she does hardanger, she is careful to follow traditional procedures. For example, it is important to use only white cloth and white thread. Pieces should not be contaminated with other kinds of embroidery that do not



belong. The best material to use is linen, she states, but cotton is acceptable.

While hardanger was originally used on aprons, cuffs, collars and household linens, Bolstad either frames her work or uses it to make banquet cloths, which are brought out on special occasions. She observes with a laugh that you have to be careful when you use your hardanger pieces. It isn't a good idea to place them on your table "when you're going to eat pickled beats or cranberry sauce, or have red wine."

Although Bolstad is actually Swedish-American, her husband Bjorn was born in Norway. They have visited the country so many times that she can't count the trips. In addition to staying with her husband's family, she once visited her Swedish grandfather, who married a Norwegian. It was 56 years ago that she met her own husband at a folk dance in Brooklyn, New York, close to where she was born and raised. The Bolstads continue to dance Norwegian folk dances and enjoy dressing up in traditional costumes. However, on a day to day basis, it is the needlework that most interests Lillian. "My hands just do these things," she concludes.

—Kristin Congdon

Top: Hardanger embroidery by Lillian Bolstad. Loaned by Lillian Bolstad. **Left:** Bolstad with hardanger embroidery in her home, Oviedo.

Panagiota King ■ Embroidery

Panagiota King of Sarasota was born in northern Greece, where many families continue the custom of providing a dowry for their daughters. All the linens needed for the bride's new home are typically included. When she was a little girl, King would sit on her mother's lap for hours, watching her embroider traditional designs on tablecloths, curtains and pillowcases for dowries. Embroidery has been a tradition in Greece for generations, but King says that her mother, as a girl of just 16, was the first to embroider on a treadle sewing machine. As far back as she can remember, her mother taught the art. "The young girls would come to our house. She would empty one room, take all the furniture out. The girls would bring their treadle machines and their lunch, and all day they would practice. In 15 days they could do everything she could do, but not as fast."

King left Greece shortly after she married an American missionary. Some years later, when her parents came to visit, her father bought her an old treadle machine. Ironically, King herself never received any formal lessons from her mother. But she was able to get started

from her memory of the rhythmical back-and-forth motion that her mother performed at her machine for countless hours.

To embroider on the foot-operated treadle machine, King first secures the fabric in an embroidery hoop. She sets the tension on the bobbin very tight. To achieve the zig-zag stitch necessary for embroidery, she moves the hoop back and forth. At the same time, she pushes and turns the hoop to make the design, while controlling the speed of the stitch with her feet.

Today King is proficient at embroidery on both treadle and electric sewing machines. She has adapted the art form to her life in Florida. "In Greece," she explains, "everything has a doily on it or a tablecloth or something like that." Since those items were not as common here, she decided to concentrate more on apparel. Her embroidery on blouses, shirts and jackets has been so well received that she can hardly keep up with demand. While her mother specializes in white-on-white, King is well-known for her color work. During recent visits to Greece, her mother and sisters have told her that she is better at color embroidery than artists there.

King is pleased at the enthusiasm for family traditions shown by her youngest daughter, who just graduated from college. "My father was a baker for years. When Michelle was 13, she wanted to learn to bake bread like her grandfather did. So I taught her and she sold it," King recalls with great pride. Michelle earned enough money from bread sales to finance a trip to Greece to begin to learn the embroidery tradition directly from her grandmother.

—Robert Stone



Top: Cloth embroidered by Panagiota King. Loaned by Museum of Florida History. **Left:** Panagiota King and her daughter Michelle in their shop, Sarasota.

Nadia Michael ■ Cross-Stitch

Born in 1928 in the town of Ramallah, near Jerusalem, Nadia Michael is a master artist in Palestinian cross-stitch. In addition to cross-stitching, she works full-time as a weaver at a Lebanese-owned business in Jacksonville, where she uses a hand loom to repair rugs. She has lived in Jacksonville since 1949, by which point Israel had occupied most of Palestine. Her father had earned U.S. citizenship for his children by serving in the U.S. army medical corps during World War I. Michael says that "Ramallah came to Jacksonville." At present, an estimated 350 families from this one town have made Jacksonville their new home.

Palestinian cross-stitch, called *tatreez* in Arabic, dates to the time of the Crusaders. The only dyes available were black and red; these are still the colors used in the type of cross-stitch practiced by Michael. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, cross-stitch was mainly done with floss silk thread produced in Syria. After the 1930s, however, a *perle* cotton thread made by a French company, Dolfus, Mieg et Cie (DMC), became the preferred material. Though, traditionally, women's entire wardrobes featured cross-stitch designs, today it is special occasions, especially weddings and religious festivals, that call for a cross-stitched dress.

According to her mother, Michael could thread a

needle when she was two. By the time she was five, she would sit in the garden with her mother and neighbor women to cross-stitch palm trees, roosters, stars, moons, the Road to Hebron and Old Man's Teeth on hand-woven, un-dyed linen. Michael remembers her grandmother cross-stitching her entire wardrobe, using fine linen material with 100 stitches to the inch. Every mother taught her daughter this traditional art. "You knew which town a woman was from by her dress." Palm trees and leeches were favorite dress motifs among women from Ramallah.

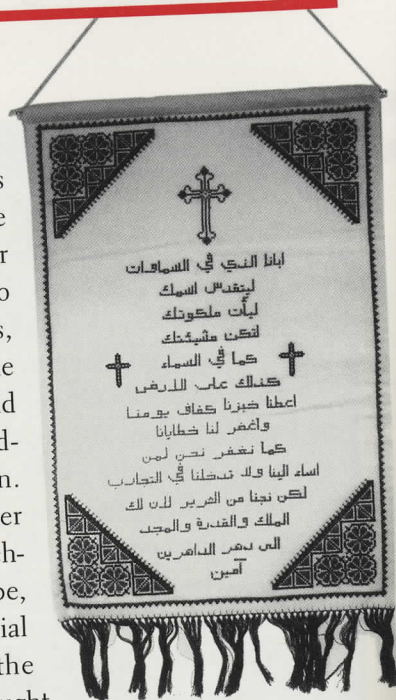
Ramallah samplers may depict over 100 motifs. Most of these are border patterns used for framing other designs. The oldest are stars, crosses, triangles, birds and the tree of life. Birds facing each other on the tree of life are thought to have originated in Egypt in the ninth century. The tall palm is symbolic of endurance in the desert, the eagle of the Resurrection, and the rose of victory, pride and love.

Michael has sewn covers for the wine chalices that priests carry in procession during Sunday morning services at St. George's Antiochian Orthodox Church in Jacksonville. She has also made church vestments, for which she uses blue cross-stitch to fill in the cross designs and gold thread for the outlines. For her home, she decorates sofa throw pillows with red and black symbols of her Palestinian town: the kohl (mascara) bottle, leech and the eye of a cow. She also uses these patterns on tablecloths and smaller pieces, including bookmarks, place mats, runners and lamp shade covers.

—Elizabeth Higgs

Top: Wall hanging cross-stitched by Nadia Michael (length, 27 in.). Loaned by Nadia Michael.

Left: Michael cross-stitching in her home, Jacksonville.

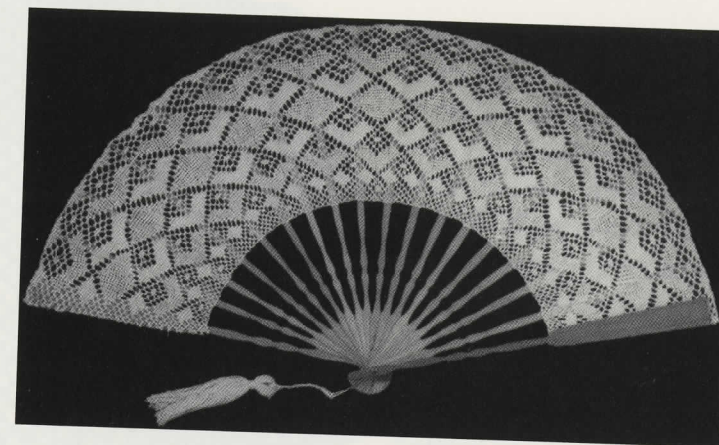


Rosa Ena Torruella ■ Bobbin Lace

Rosa Ena Torruella, whose home is now Jacksonville, was taught by her grandmother in Puerto Rico to make traditional bobbin lace. In Puerto Rico bobbin lace is called *mundillo* ("little world"), in reference to the cylinder apparatus used to produce the material. Torruella was born in Caguas, Puerto Rico, in 1935, and grew up in a household that included two other children, her parents, and her mother's two brothers and seven sisters. Much of her time was spent in the home of her paternal grandmother, who was born in Spain. Her grandmother said that Rosa Ena could thread a needle by the time she was two. Some of her earliest memories are of returning from school to spend the afternoon sitting with her grandmother and making lace.

Bobbin lace is typically used for fancy clothing or very fine home decorations, which are only brought out for special occasions. Entire table cloths can be made of the lace, but heavy duty thread must be used for such pieces. More delicate lace decorates baby bonnets and the bodices of dresses. Torruella recently used bobbin lace to embellish the bodice of a wedding dress.

To make bobbin lace, one begins by creating the lace pattern with pin points on a small strip of stiff paper. Then one "connects the dots" by drawing the pattern with a pen. The drawn pattern is attached to the cylinder (*mundillo*) with straight pins. The cylinder is covered with velvet and mounted on a wooden stand with notches around the rim, one for each wooden bobbin of thread. To determine how many pairs of bobbins are needed to make a particular lace pattern, one counts the number of strands (pen lines) in the newly drawn pattern. Each line in the lace is made with one pair of bobbins; 16 lines of lace with a border line would require 18 pairs of bobbins. Each bobbin is approximately 4½ inches long, the diameter of a pencil, and is hand-wound with about 4 yards of thread. To "sew" the lace, one must cross two bobbins, twist the thread and repeat the pro-



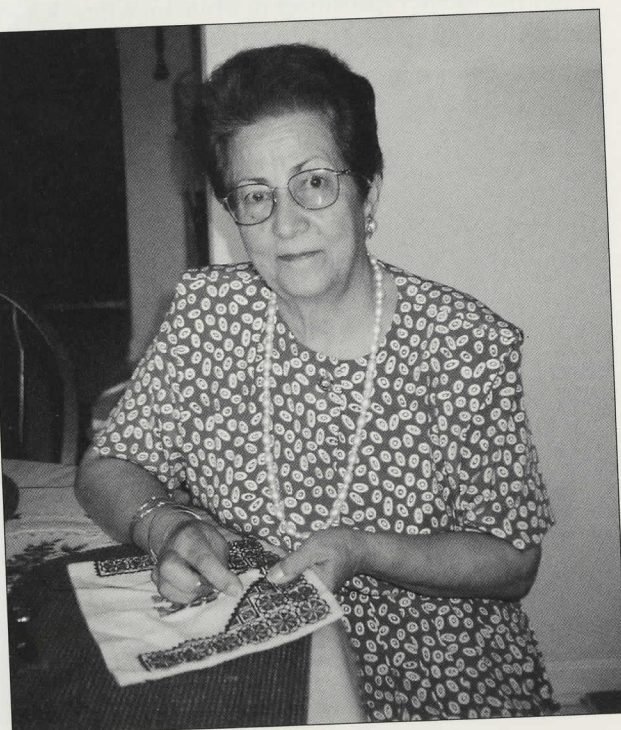
cess. Each pair of bobbins can be separated off and anchored in place with hat pins, when not being held.

Torruella has an extraordinary knowledge of the history of bobbin lace and of variations in technique and style in different regions of Puerto Rico. In earlier

years she worked with the Puerto Rican Museum of History, Archeology and Anthropology to document this tradition. She also excels in several other kinds of needlework indigenous to Puerto Rico, including fagoting, hair pin lace, and drawn work ("randa" and "calado"). These crafts simply require a needle and thread, as opposed to the *mundillo* for bobbin lace.

—Elizabeth Higgs

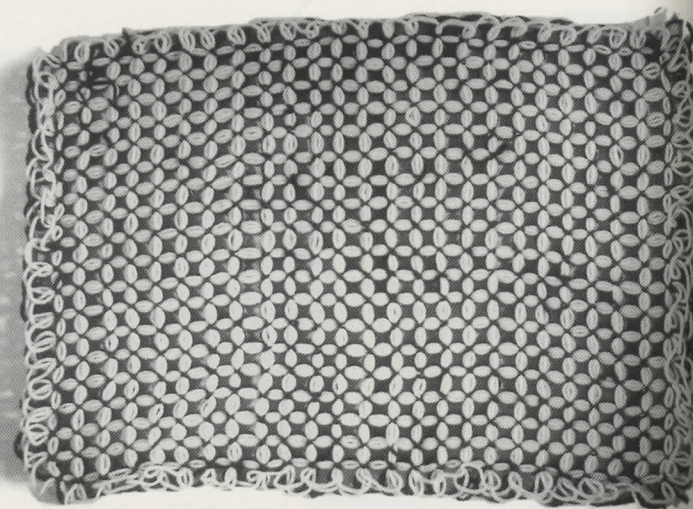
Top: Bobbin lace fan made by Rosa Ena Torruella (width, 16 in.). Loaned by Rosa Ena Torruella. **Bottom:** Torruella with *mundillo* and bobbin lace in her home, Jacksonville.



Percival and Lucille Francis Fuller ■ Antimacassars

Percival Fuller and his wife Lucille have been making antimacassars for over 30 years and are among the few who continue to practice this West Indian craft in South Florida. Antimacassars derive their name from their function as protective covers that prevent chairs and couches from being stained by hair products, such as Macassar oil. Typically, small matching armrests are also made to accompany the larger rectangular pieces that are draped over the backs of couches.

"Back in Jamaica, a long time ago, people used to make them for gifts," Mrs. Fuller states. "You make one to give to your teacher or to your pastor's wife." Mr. Fuller, who also constructs elaborate flower vases out of wooden clothespins, taught himself how to make antimacassars during the 1960s and later passed the skill on to his wife. After the couple moved to the Miami area in 1980, Mr. Fuller modified the hand-made rectangular wooden frames that are employed in Jamaica to make the items. By using smaller pieces of wood and a double instead of a single layer, he was able to fabricate frames that were sturdier and easier to control. Frames can be made in various rectangular sizes, as well as in the shape of a parallelogram. "As



many as 92 nails are in the large frames," Mr. Fuller notes. The nails are set to form one inch squares and are headless so that the yarn will slide off without damaging the finished product.

The Fullers start the process of making an antimacassar by holding a frame upright and threading a ball of yarn vertically up and down the rows of nails, until the end of the rows is reached. Then the yarn is threaded back in the opposite direction. After the second layer is in place, they begin to thread horizontal rows. This process is repeated, according to the desired thickness of the antimacassar. All pieces have at least eight layers. The next step is to tie the center of the piece with a string of yarn. The piece is then carefully eased off the frame. In making antimacassars, the Fullers prefer wool, because of its fluffier, more relaxed appearance. But, since the proper wool yarn can be difficult to find in Miami, they generally use synthetic cotton.

"The larger pieces can take up to two days to make," Mrs. Fuller states, "which is why both men and women make them. All that matters is who has the time." Furniture in the Fullers' home is attractively adorned with antimacassars of various colors. In their spare time, they continue to make these useful items for themselves, as well as relatives and friends.

—Joanne Hyppolite

Top: Antimacassar made and loaned by Percival and Lucille Francis Fuller. **Left:** The Fullers weaving antimacassars in their home, Hollywood.

Daniel Tong ■ Rope Work

Macramé and rope work can be found all over the islands," Daniel Tong reports, "but it takes someone with real patience to do it." Born in Guyana in 1971, Tong moved to New York when he was five years old. By the age of twelve, he had become interested in the Rastafari religion. "After that, it develop and grow natural within me," he says. This interest inspired him to visit Jamaica for five months, after graduating from high school. While there he joined the Nyabingi order of Rastafari. Another member of the religion, also from Guyana, introduced him to tied rope work or macramé. Tong spent the next few years experimenting with the art form, challenging himself to perfect the knots and to create increasingly complex designs. He learned to make room partitions, wall and floor mats, baskets, planters, belts and religious regalia, all typical of the Rastafari tradition of rope work.

At the age of 19 Tong moved to Miami with his family. By this point he had so mastered the art that he was able to achieve his most spiritual and ambitious project: an intricately designed wall mat, titled "The Glory of the King." This creation stands as a testament to the Rastafari faith. "I call it the handwriting on the wall, just like Daniel in the Bible saw the handwriting on the wall," Tong states. The elaborate design, which uses Rastafari colors and icons, took him over a year of nights to complete.

Tong's belts and regalia, which are worn by Rastafari as banners on holy days, are usually made on a wooden table loom. Most of the other items are tied completely by hand. While wall mats and room partitions take at least a month to make, smaller planters and baskets can be finished in a day. In making a room partition, Tong begins by measuring the door frame. He hangs a rod at the top of the frame and then calculates the number and lengths of different colored ropes that he will need.

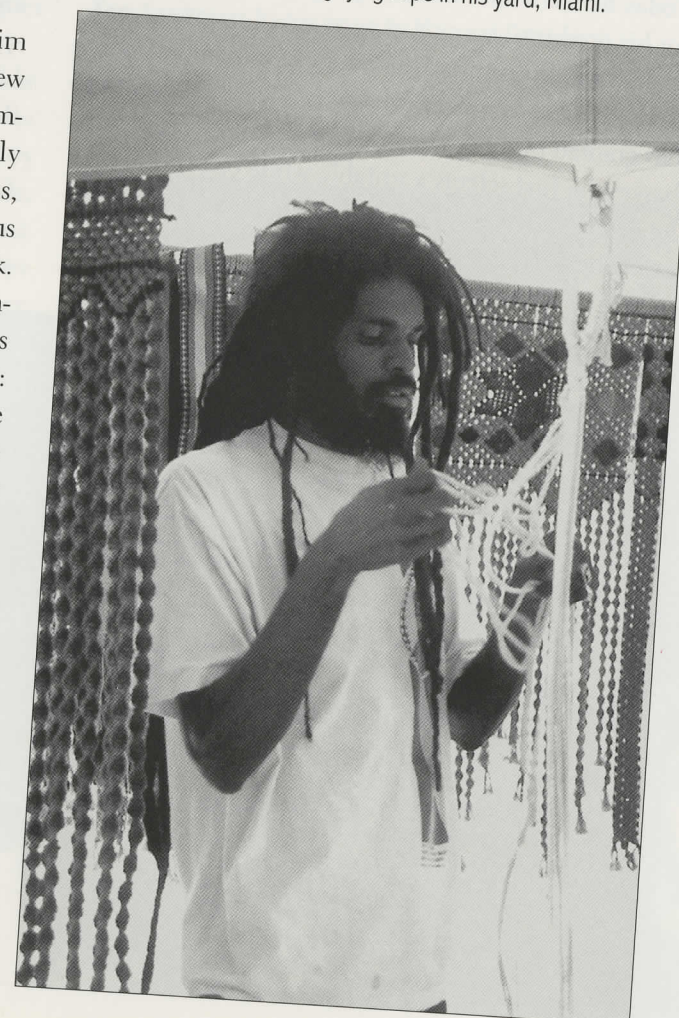


Hemp or nylon ropes may be used, but he favors cotton for its lightness. After cutting the ropes and attaching them to the rod, he begins to tie the knots, using one rope as a base and weaving others around it. Additional ropes are worked across the first set to add horizontal lines of different colors to the overall design.

Impatience with the easily tangled ropes and the enormous amount of time required has led many macramé practitioners to abandon the craft. But not Tong: "It's a part of me now and my love for it leads me back to it whenever I have the time." Tong's creations are enjoyed by many Rastafari and other customers in the Miami area.

—Joanne Hyppolite

Left: Rope planter tied by Daniel Tong (length, 48 in.). Loaned by Daniel Tong. **Bottom:** Tong tying rope in his yard, Miami.



Lucreaty Clark and Alfonso Jennings ■ White Oak Baskets

For several generations, residents of rural northern and western Florida have been making sturdy baskets from pliable strips of wood split from young white oak trees. Alfonso Jennings lives in the richly forested community of Lamont, several miles east of Tallahassee, where he skillfully weaves white oak baskets, using techniques and designs that have been passed down from one generation of his family to the next. He began to learn the craft as a teenager from his late grandmother, Lucreaty Clark, who learned from her parents and in-laws. The pair received support to help sustain the white oak basket making tradition in 1983, when they participated in the Florida Department of State's Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program. Jennings has been making baskets full-time for several years now. Following in his grandmother's footsteps, he has gained a national reputation for making finely-crafted, functional baskets that will last a lifetime. Today he has a hard time keeping up with the demand for his products.

Jennings is fortunate to live in an area where white oaks are relatively plentiful and to have a landlord who has granted him permission to harvest trees. To make a basket, he first selects a suitable white oak tree, which he distinguishes from other varieties of oak by its characteristic bark and leaf. He looks for a tree four to eight inches in diameter and cuts off the trunk just below the

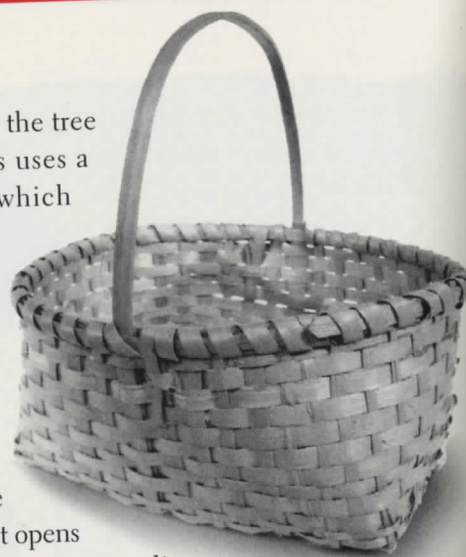
first branch. Once the tree is down, Jennings uses a sledge hammer (which he calls a "John Henry"), an ax and wedges to split white oak logs into thin strips or "splits." He can tell the quality of the wood when he first opens up a log. If it is a good one, it splits easily into uniform, smooth strips. If the wood is not suitable, he stops working on the log, sets it aside for firewood and splits another one.

While some materials might require soaking before and during the construction of a basket, white oak splits are naturally pliable. After trimming and finishing the splits with a knife, Jennings weaves the basket from the bottom up, taking great care to keep the weave tight and the sides straight. It is all done by eye; nothing is measured. The final, and probably most difficult, step is finishing the rim.

Years ago white oak baskets were made in a variety of sizes and shapes for use on plantations and farms. Although many of the baskets continue to be used for agriculture, the ones Jennings weaves today are more likely to be found in homes as containers for magazines, fruits and vegetables, family laundry or picnic provisions. Jennings takes pride in continuing this family tradition. "It makes me feel good that people like my baskets so much," he says.

—Robert Stone

Top: White oak basket made by Alfonso Jennings (length, 19 in.). Loaned by Museum of Florida History. **Far left:** Lucreaty Clark weaving a white oak basket, Lamont. **Near left:** Jennings splitting a piece of white oak, Lamont.



Margaret Garrison ■ Sweetgrass Baskets

Slaves were brought from the region of Sierra Leone, on Africa's west coast, to the barrier islands of Georgia and South Carolina for their specific knowledge of rice farming. Because of the relative isolation of the islands, most of which are still only accessible by boat, many elements of African cultures remain strongly rooted in these communities. The descendants of the enslaved Africans, whose language and culture is known as Gullah, are renowned for the fine baskets they craft from sweetgrass. Sweetgrass baskets are an example of the adaptation of Old World techniques to the resources available in the New World.

Margaret Garrison lived in Jacksonville from the late 1960s until her recent death. She grew up in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, where there is a large community of African American coiled sweetgrass basket makers, many of whom derive a substantial part of their income from the sale of these items. When she was three years old, her mother and grandmother began showing her how to "sew" baskets. One of 13 children, Garrison recalled: "Everyone in my family made baskets, including my brothers. The ones that didn't make baskets made quilts. There was basket making all the time."

Garrison fashioned her baskets by coiling sweetgrass and pine needles and then "sewing" them with strips of palmetto. She used a sharpened metal spoon handle, called a "bone," to help bind the palmetto strips through and around the coils of grass and needles. (Originally, Mt. Pleasant basket sewers fashioned this tool from the bone of a game animal.) Garrison crafted baskets in sizes ranging from small bowls to large picnic containers. Her control of the craft was evident in her innovative shaping of coils in undulating curves. Also, by including pine needles in the coils, she was able to vary the color of her baskets.

Garrison sewed a variety of baskets both for everyday use and for sale. She made bread and flower baskets, hot

pads, planters, and large baskets with handles and lids. Over the years she developed her own distinctive style. Compared to her mother's baskets, Garrison's are made with thinner coils and vary more in size and shape. Periodically, she returned to Mt. Pleasant to see the new designs that her family and friends were creating, so that she could add the ones she liked to her own repertoire. One popular design made by many of today's craftspeople is the "missionary" bag. This traditional design may refer to the Quaker missionary women who taught the freedmen of St. Helena's Island, South Carolina, after the Union victories near Beaufort in 1862. Garrison took great pleasure in continuing the basket making tradition that has been practiced by her family and ancestors for centuries.

—Robert Stone

Top: Sweetgrass basket woven by Margaret Garrison (height with handle, 23 in.). Loaned by Museum of Florida History. **Bottom:** Garrison (right) and Barbara Turner weaving sweetgrass baskets, Jacksonville.



Ethel Santiago ■ Sweetgrass Baskets

Seminole Indians make two different kinds of baskets. Woven baskets are constructed from strips cut from the dried stems of palmettos. For years these shallow baskets were used for storing and serving food, as well as for sifting corn meal. Because modern plastic or metal household goods now meet most everyday needs, only a few women know how to weave palmetto stem baskets.

Today the coiled sweetgrass basket, a form possibly derived from African American traditions, is the most common type made by Seminoles. Unlike the palmetto stem basket, which had its origins in traditional domestic use, the sweetgrass basket was adopted specifically for the tourist trade. Gradually, coiled sweetgrass basketry became traditional among Seminoles. Ethel Santiago, who lives on the Immokalee Reservation in Collier County, remembers: "I learned it, how to make baskets, from my mother and step-grandmother."

In South Florida sweetgrass grows among scattered palmettos in open savannas. Santiago explains that the grass is best harvested between June and September. She

takes care to pick only the longest, most healthy green grass, without spots or brown patches. "You don't pull everything right there. You pick 'em. That's why it takes so long," she explains.

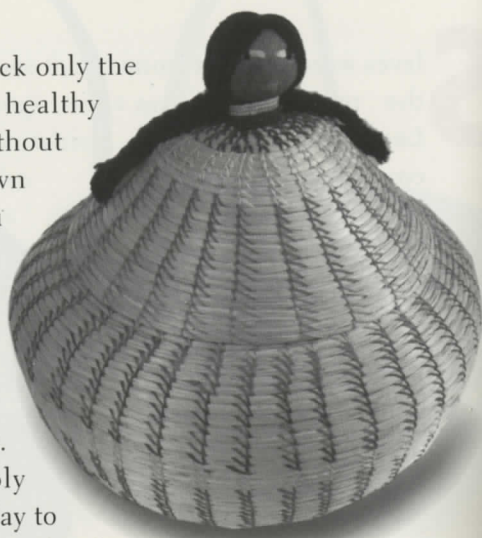
"You probably have to go all day to get a whole bunch of grass, if you want any." After she gathers the grass, she lays it in the sun to dry for four or five days. When it feels light, because the moisture has dried out, she knows it is ready for working.

Santiago coils the dried grass into bundles, which she sews together with embroidery thread. The circular bottom of the basket is usually made of palmetto fiber, obtained from the base of the plant, while the lid is characteristically topped off with a lifter in the shape of a doll's head. Often the doll's head features the high hairdo popular 50 years ago, as well as a stack of beaded necklaces typical of that period. To create a more modern look, a ponytail of black yarn is attached. For several years Santiago did not make lids for her baskets. "I was told, if you are young and if you are not married, or even if you're married and have children, that you should never make a basket with a top on. Because they say you are closing it, just like closing a coffin."

Top quality baskets, such as those that Santiago makes, are distinguishable by subtle features. The coiled bundles of grass are uniform throughout the basket and are tightly secured. In addition, the end coil is made to blend into the basket. Santiago is an expert practitioner of this Seminole tradition that parallels African American basketry and has evolved in the tourist trade.

—Robert Stone

Top: Sweetgrass basket woven by Ethel Santiago (height, 11 in.). Loaned by Museum of Florida History. **Left:** Santiago weaving a sweetgrass basket at the Immokalee Seminole Reservation.



Louise Billie ■ Sweetgrass Baskets

Louise Billie, a Seminole basket maker, grew up along South Florida's Tamiami Trail (U.S. Highway 41). Today she resides and works on the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation. Like many older Seminole people, she practices a variety of tribal traditions, including speaking her native Mikasuki language and sewing the patchwork skirts that she wears. At the same time, she interacts easily with the hordes of tourists who visit Billie Cypress's Swamp Safari, an attraction on the reservation where she has worked for about seven years. At the Safari, Billie demonstrates beadwork to schoolchildren and helps with the upkeep of the rented cabins.

The baskets that Billie weaves are made from sweetgrass and palmetto fiber. To prepare the sweetgrass for weaving, she cuts it while green, dries it on a table and then ties the grass into neat bundles with white strips of sheet. (She also makes a similar style of basket with pine needles).

To begin a basket, Billie constructs its base from lay-

ers of palmetto fiber that are cut into a circle. Coils of sweetgrass, approximately the diameter of a small woman's little finger, are attached to the base and layered upward to form the basket's walls. As the coil begins to thin (toward the end of the grass's length), she carefully adds more grass to ensure that the coil remains the same diameter. She remarks: "if you don't, it's going to go lopsided." The sweetgrass coils are sewn together using colored embroidery floss, which has been pulled through wax for strengthening. Billie uses two stitches, which look like little bird feet, at each point that she attaches the coil. When finished, the stitches are aligned in vertical rows as they ascend along the basket sides.

Billie says that she learned to make baskets from her mother and grandmother, who "used them in the home and to sell and buy groceries." Traditionally, Seminole women made baskets from palmetto fronds for sifting grain. Sweetgrass baskets, like the ones Billie constructs, were and still are made predominantly for the tourist trade. In fact, weaving sweetgrass baskets emerged as a Seminole craft in the 1930s in response to tourist demands for "authentic" Indian merchandise. Today fewer younger people have the time to weave baskets by hand, though efforts to pass on the art form continue. So, while sweetgrass basketry may have begun as a means for Seminoles to participate in an outside tourist economy, now the art is regarded as an important tradition within the community itself.

—Laura Ogden

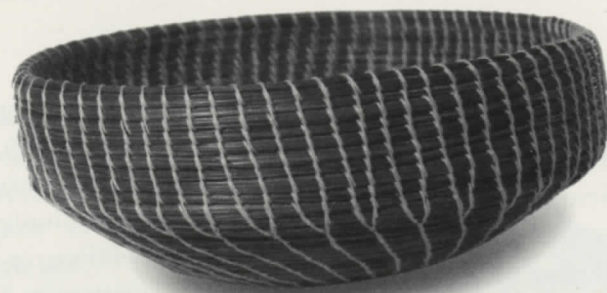
Top: Sweetgrass basket made by Louise Billie (height without handle, 9 in.). Loaned by the Seminole Tribe of Florida. **Left:** Billie weaving a sweetgrass basket at the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation.



Connie Palmer ■ Pine Needle Baskets

The functions, meanings and aesthetics of folk arts often change over time. A good example of such transformations is the work of Connie Palmer, who practices the Creek tradition of making pine needle baskets. Palmer grew up in the panhandle town of Clarksville (Calhoun County) and learned to construct baskets from her mother and grandmother.

Creek baskets were once primarily utilitarian—differently shaped baskets served different purposes. Shallow, bowl-shaped baskets were for gathering fruits, nuts and herbs. Round, flat-bottomed baskets with tight-fitting lids served as storage containers. Baskets for drying stemmed fruits, seeds or herbs resembled round, fat bottles; their short necks facilitated drying by letting in a limited amount of air. Other baskets with long necks were used to store water, once they had been sealed with melted beeswax and pine rosin. Today, however, Creek baskets have become decorative items and symbols of ethnic identity.



For Palmer, making a basket starts with collecting pine needles. The best needles are 20 to 24 inches long and are gathered in the fall from the bottom branches of long-leaved trees, preferably yellow-hearted or volunteer pines. Once she gathers the needles, she takes them home and dries them on racks for three months. The needles must be turned every day to prevent them from becoming moldy. When the caps pop easily off their ends, the needles are ready to be worked into baskets.

Palmer begins a basket by binding together 8 to 15 pine needles at one end of the bunch. By continually feeding new needles into the bunch, she keeps the "coil" a consistent thickness as it is bound into a spiral. Although her grandmother used dyed twine and string saved from feed sacks to bind needles, Palmer uses heavy cotton thread or embroidery floss, which is more colorful and easier to find. This material is used to secure the coil every quarter to half inch. The colors she prefers include graduated shades of red and lavender, as well as the traditional Creek colors of slate blue, dark reddish-orange and white. Palmer has introduced the use of embroidery-like designs that she calls "wraps" into her baskets. The floss wraps serve not only to bind the needles into the basket shape but to form diamond, "v," "x" and chevron patterns, similar to those found in Creek beadwork and sashes. She has also created new designs derived from those found in her grandmother's patchwork quilts and on Creek ornaments.

Basket making is an art form that has been common among Creek women for generations. Palmer has extended this tradition in new directions to create objects of exceptional beauty that are popular both within the Creek tribe and among outside collectors.

—Robert Stone

Top: Pine needle basket made by Connie Palmer (diameter, 7 in.). Loaned by Museum of Florida History. **Left:** Palmer sewing a pine needle basket in her home, Altha (Calhoun Co.).

Kazuko Law ■ Temari and Origami

Temari is the traditional Japanese art of decorating spheres by winding and lacing colored threads in intricate patterns around a core ball. Origami, which originated around 600 A.D., is the art of folding colored paper into three-dimensional shapes.

Kazuko Law of Gulf Breeze, near Pensacola, was born on the island of Hokkaido, Japan, in 1929. As a young girl, she began to learn the ancient arts of temari and origami from her grandmother and great grandmother. "Every evening after dinner we spent about 45 minutes with our grandparents," she recalls. "My grandmother would teach us and tell stories."

Law is a multi-talented artist who is also accomplished in Japanese dance, the traditional tea ceremony and doll making. She practiced traditional arts regularly until she married an American military man in 1950. The responsibilities of raising a family left her little time to continue her arts until the mid-1960s.

The special thread used for temari and the preferred rice paper for origami are not commonly available in the United States. So, whenever she visits her family in Japan, Law buys what she needs and ships it to Gulf Breeze. While in Japan she also visits older people who practice temari and origami, in order to learn designs and shapes with which she is unfamiliar.

To begin a temari piece, Law first makes a ball by wrapping approximately one cup of rice hulls in newspaper. The ball is covered with cotton, then carefully wrapped with sewing thread until a symmetrical sphere is formed. Next, she precisely divides the sphere into equal parts, without the use of a tape measure. She wraps a strip of paper around the middle of the sphere, folds the paper in half, places the folded paper back on the sphere and then sticks a pin into the sphere to mark the midpoint. Law continues the folding and marking process until the sphere is divided into as many as 32 equal parts. She then proceeds with the wrapping and lacing of the ball with thread to make her design.

Law says the most important point in constructing origami figures is to make the paper folds tight and precise. She prefers Japanese rice paper, because its strength



allows her to create complex figures from a single sheet, without using glue or making any cuts. Many of the objects she constructs are symbolic. A crane, for instance, symbolizes long life. "A crane lives 1,000 years; a turtle, 10,000," she explains.

Today Law freely shares her skills and knowledge of traditional culture with members of Japanese communities in West and North Florida, as well as with her own children and grandchildren. Passing this valued information on to others gives her some assurance that the art forms will continue in her new homeland.

—Robert Stone

Top: Origami made by Kazuko Law (height of back panel, 11 in.). Loaned by Kazuko Law. **Bottom:** Law lacing a temari ball in her home, Gulf Breeze.

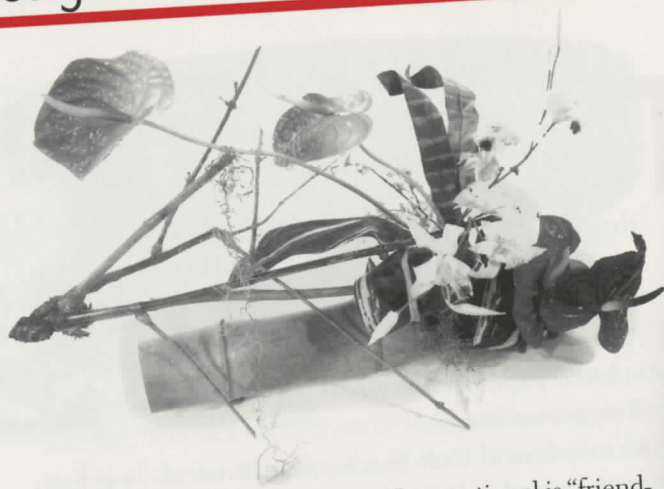


Mieko Kubota ■ Ikebana and Origami

Mieko Kubota is an accomplished artist in *ikebana*, a Japanese method of flower arranging. Well-recognized for her creativity, Kubota teaches and demonstrates *ikebana* throughout South Florida. She lives with her daughter and her daughter's small children in a house in Miami, whose entranceway is decked with bonsai formed from blooming bougainvillea and ficus plants. For several years, she has served as an interpreter and tutor for the Dade County school system.

Ikebana, like many traditional Japanese arts, has a history dating back several centuries. Flowers and greenery are arranged both to reflect the artist's interpretation of natural forces and to create new meanings linked to the non-natural environment. There are many schools of *ikebana*, which range from the strictly traditional to the various contemporary free-style forms. Kubota's own style is eclectic. Similar to the manner in which a jazz musician improvises within standard chord changes, she explores personal interpretations of traditional *ikebana* patterns. Her designs incorporate found objects, experimental containers, native plants and tropical flowers.

Kubota is the local president of the *Ikebana* International school, which was founded in the United States in



the 1950s. The motto of *Ikebana* International is "friendship through flowers." In keeping with this motto, Kubota uses *ikebana* to reach out to others in the community through the beauty of arranged flowers. She has taught *ikebana* at Fairchild Tropical Garden in Miami for several years, as well as at other locations. In addition to teaching, she has demonstrated the art on many occasions. For instance, she donates her time each year to fund-raisers for the Miami Horticultural Society, held at the Miami Museum of Science. One year she demonstrated flower arranging techniques to music, thus creating a performance piece.

Kubota's perceptions of *ikebana* parallel her feelings about bonsai, the Japanese art of shaping small shrubs to give the illusion of trees in nature. In 1971 Kubota and her late husband founded a nursery in rural southern Dade County, dedicated to bonsai. She comments that "bonsai teaches you that you must follow the rules of nature. You shape bonsai to emphasize nature's shape. And there are many styles of bonsai, but nature decides what style it will be."

Kubota is also a skilled *origami* artist. In *origami*, a paper sculpture is created out of a single piece of folded paper, without using scissors, tape, glue or staples. Popular forms are the crane, frog, ship and balloon. Like most folk arts, *origami* has been passed down through oral instruction and demonstration, with mothers teaching designs to their children. Kubota has passed on this traditional art to her daughter and grandchildren.

—Laura Ogden

Top: Ikebana designed by Mieko Kubota (length, 31 in.).
Loaned by Mieko Kubota.

Left: Kubota designing ikebana in her home, Miami.

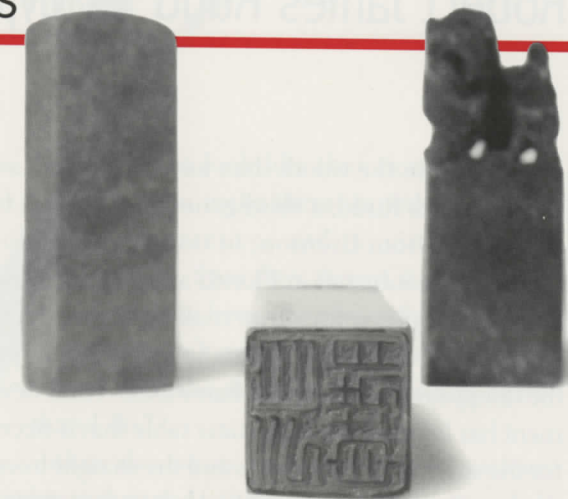


Hung-Wah Michael Poon ■ Chops

Since emigrating from China to Florida in 1988, Hung-Wah Michael Poon has continued to engrave Chinese *chops*—stamps or seals used to sign names. Poon was born in Canton and educated in Hong Kong. He currently lives with his family in Miami, in a white-tiled house that is filled with Chinese paintings and displays of Chinese calligraphy. His wife, Sarina, is an accomplished landscape painter, who stamps her works with chops carved by her husband.

In China a chop is used to withdraw money from the bank, to pick up a registered letter from the post office or to legalize a contract. In addition to these official transactions, artists employ chops to sign their paintings. Chops can also be used to convey different messages, such as proverbs, lines of poetry or statements that describe one's feelings. Among the more than 40 chops in Poon's collection are ones that read "we all learn from nature," "making a person happy and building better characters" and "classy hobby."

Traditionally, the preferred materials for making chops were copper (for the general population) and jade (for the emperor and nobility). Marble, wood and metal chops are commonly used today. A chop itself looks like



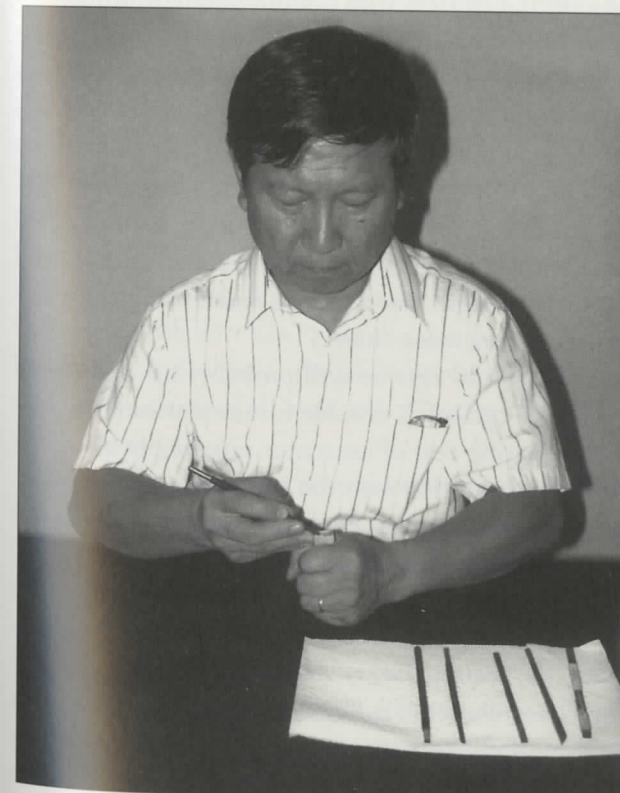
a large chess piece. Its body is sometimes carved into the form of an animal, which often corresponds to the chop user's birth year in the Chinese calendar. For example, someone born in 1974, 1986 or 1998 might have a chop in the form of a tiger, since those years are the Chinese "Year of the Tiger."

The most important part of chop making is the engraving of the stamping surface. This is the specific art that Poon practices. Before becoming a chop engraver, one must first master the complexities of Chinese calligraphy, since versions of Chinese letters are drawn on a chop's stamping surface. The engraver learns to arrange the letters on the surface in a design that is aesthetically pleasing. Small knives are used to engrave the letters in a pattern that is a mirror image of the stamp that will appear on a piece of paper. The stamps produced by chops are usually red and white, since the color red symbolizes luck and happiness. After a chop has been engraved, it is pressed into red ink paste and stamped on white paper.

The art of chop engraving has been practiced for over a thousand years in China and is highly regarded. While it is possible to take classes in chop making at local colleges and universities, it is generally considered a folk art, since carvers typically learn the skill through apprenticeships with masters in their home towns. The best carvers preserve elements of their masters' styles, while also developing unique styles of their own. At present, Poon receives orders for his high quality chops from customers throughout the United States and abroad.

—Laura Ogden

Top: Chops engraved by Michael Poon. Loaned by Michael Poon.
Left: Poon engraving a chop in his home, Miami.



Robert James Rudd ■ Cypress Furniture

"'d rather be in the woods than anywhere else," asserts Robert James Rudd, a third-generation cypress furniture maker from Bronson, in north central Florida. Once a common craft in Florida and other deep southern states, cypress furniture making is practiced less frequently today than a generation ago, due in part to the disappearance of cypress hammocks. Land development has lowered the high water table that is necessary for the survival of hammocks and the straight trees that they produce. Rudd learned his craft from imitating the work of his father, who made straight arm chairs, swings and love seats. Through his own invention and the suggestions of customers, Rudd has expanded his furniture to include chaise lounges, headboards for beds, tables and stools.

Rudd was born in Boynton Beach in southern Florida in 1926. As a young man, he worked in the building trades but had to find another means of livelihood when his hearing began to fail. He soon began to help his father make cypress furniture on a part-time basis. By 1966 he was making furniture full-time in a shop adjacent to his home in Lake Worth. Although he could once collect his materials near his home, the decreased availability of cypress in the Lake Worth area required him to drive 270 miles north to Bronson to cut wood. Finally, in 1989, he moved to Bronson to live a

rural lifestyle and be close to a supply of cypress.

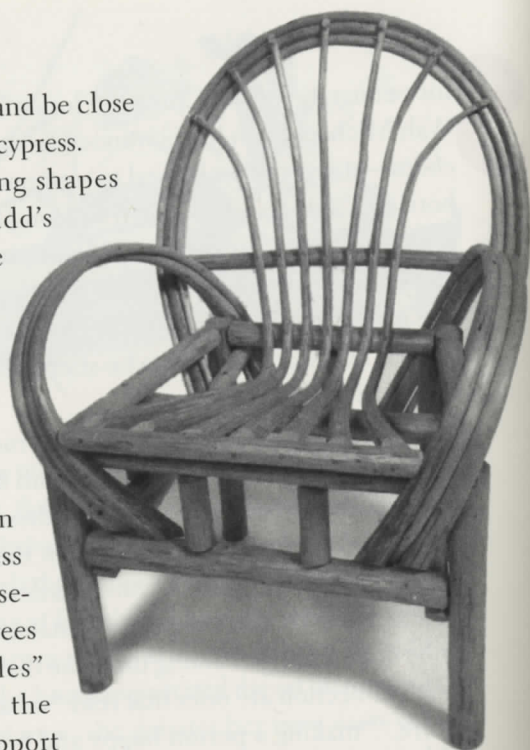
The curving shapes found in Rudd's furniture are made possible by the combination of strength and flexibility found in young cypress trees. Rudd selects small trees for the "poles" that form the legs and support

structure of his furniture. He uses long, skinny shoots for the "benders" that make the curving seat and outer frame of his chairs and lounges. To keep the benders flexible, he soaks them in barrel of water, "just like a bouquet of flowers." He strips the bark off the cypress with a knife before building a piece of furniture, and fastens the wood pieces together with rust-resistant galvanized nails. Over the years Rudd has refined his chair designs to maximize comfort. Often he will adjust the angle of the back or the length of the legs to fit the buyer's body. He has developed two designs of his own: a lounge chair with arms made from bent cypress, rather than the usual straight wood pieces, and a straight-back, armless dining room chair.

Sadly, Rudd says he will probably have to stop making his graceful, durable furniture soon. Due to the increasing cost of insurance required by the paper companies that own the property on which he cuts cypress, it is no longer economically feasible for him to continue this family tradition.

—Robert Stone

Top: Cypress chair made by Robert Rudd (height, 34 in.). Loaned by Museum of Florida History. **Left:** Rudd in a cypress love seat at his previous home in Lake Worth.



Bobby Thomas Johns ■ Wood Carvings

Bobby Thomas Johns, whose Native American name is Bearheart, is a multi-talented artist and a tireless advocate of his Creek cultural heritage. He was raised in the backwoods of south Georgia, near the Okefenokee swamp. As a boy he learned Creek wood carving traditions from his maternal grandfather and uncle. At first he made domestic objects, such as spoons, bowls and ladles. The older men also taught him how to incorporate recycled material, especially metal, into his work. "You give us a rim off a wagon wheel and we were in hog heaven," he says, recollecting the austerity of his youth. He had a talent for carving and learned quickly. While still a boy, he began to barter his goods to others, when his family would take their wagon into town, "I built a trade in a hurry," he recalls. "Just me and a Barlow knife."

After retiring early from a civil service career, Johns began to devote more time to carving and to advocating Native American culture. He has been honored by the Florida Department of State three times: he served as a master artist in the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program in 1989, was the first Creek to receive the Florida Folk Heritage Award in 1993 and was awarded an Individual Artist Fellowship in 1995. In 1981 he began an informal Creek museum and cultural center in a building in his back yard in Pensacola. In 1995, after years of hard work, he helped to establish the Perdido Bay Tribal Cultural Center on Perdido Key, a small island just west of Pensacola. Today the Cultural Center is a hub of activity for students of all ages, as well as for more than 230 tribal members.

Johns continues the family tradition of carving wooden canes, walking sticks and crutches, usually from wild persimmon or winter huckleberry. "Nature does all the work," he explains. "You just have to clean it up and shape it up a little bit." By decorating his walking sticks with inlaid recycled materials, such as shell, bone, gems and metal, he takes the tradition a little farther. "I found out that some people that need a cane won't use one, because they don't want

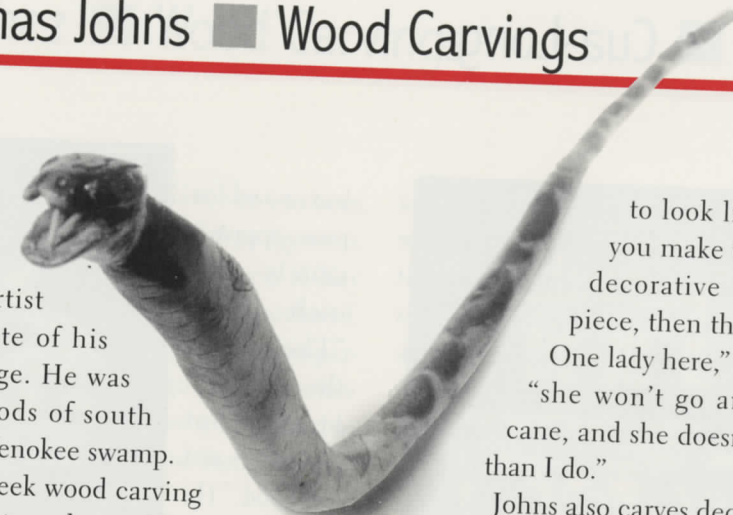
to look like they need it. But if you make them something that is decorative and a conversation piece, then they accept it quite well. One lady here," he says with a chuckle, "she won't go anywhere without her cane, and she doesn't need one any more than I do."

Johns also carves decorative pieces, such as wooden snakes, and fashions the equipment needed for stickball. This rugged traditional game, still played today, is known among Creeks as "the little brother of war." Recalling his youth, Johns says: "The first thing they would do was build a stickball field. Most of our disensions were settled on the ball field."

—Robert Stone

Top: Wooden snake carved by Bobby Thomas Johns. Loaned by Museum of Florida History.

Bottom: Johns beginning a wood carving in his shop, Pensacola.



Tuan Nguyen ■ Cua-Long

Tuan Nguyen works quietly and painstakingly at a table in the back room of his Tampa home to create elaborate wooden bas relief figures, in the ancient Vietnamese tradition known as *cua-long*. Nguyen was born in Hanoi, North Vietnam. When he was a teenager, his family moved to Saigon, South Vietnam, where he saw many *cua-long* artists selling their work on the streets. He was immediately drawn to the delicate beauty of the craft. A friend told him how the figures were made but, he adds, "they didn't tell me how to do it." After a brief period of trial and error, he figured out the process, acquired the proper saw and wood, and began to make *cua-long* pieces. He emigrated to the United States in 1978, settling in Tampa where some Vietnamese friends lived. In Tampa he continues his *cua-long* work as a means of maintaining elements of his cultural heritage.

At first glance a *cua-long* piece looks like a carving, but it is not. It is all done with a saw and glue. "I cut out everything, then I put it back," Nguyen explains. To begin a *cua-long* figure, he first selects a suitable piece of

basswood or pine, approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. "The softer, the better," he says, "but too soft is not too good." He then uses a pencil to draw a design on

the board. Next, using a bow-frame hand saw with a very fine blade, he cuts along the pencil lines to make a sort of jigsaw puzzle. After all the pieces are cut out, he glues them back together, with some pieces projecting farther out from the plane of the picture than others. By carefully gluing the pieces, he obtains a total depth of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch or more. Next he prepares a piece of plate glass on which to mount the piece. He either paints a simple colored background, which might include a pale sun or moon, or glues a piece of colored cloth to the glass. The finished piece is then varnished, glued to the glass and installed in a frame.

Among the traditional images that Nguyen creates are dragons, fanciful birds of paradise and women depicting the four seasons. Vietnamese often give a *cua-long* depicting a dragon and bird of paradise to newlyweds as a wedding gift. Nguyen explains that, in his culture, "we are the son of the dragon." Today he incorporates elements of his Florida environment in his work. He has made images of brown pelicans and, as a substitute for the traditional crane, has created egrets and great blue herons. He makes gifts of his work to friends and family for special occasions, such as graduations, weddings, anniversaries and birthdays. Nguyen shares his art and culture by demonstrating at festivals and workshops throughout the state.

—Robert Stone

Top: Cua-long piece (dragon and bird of paradise) made by Tuan Nguyen (width, 21 in.). Loaned by Museum of Florida History.
Left: Nguyen with design for a *cua-long* piece in his home, Tampa.



Mario Sanchez ■ Wood Carvings

Master wood carver and painter Mario Sanchez was born in 1908 in the upstairs of his family's *bodega* (grocery store) at the corner of Duval and Louisa streets in Key West. He lived most of his life in this neighborhood, which was called "El Barrio de Gato" after the prosperous cigar manufacturer Eduardo Hidalgo Gato. Sanchez studied at a business institute in Key West and worked in various clerical positions in Key West and Tampa during his adult life.

Although he never studied art formally, in 1930 Sanchez began carving life-size replicas of local fish (such as yellowtail, lane snapper, Key West porgy and grunts) on discarded boards from tobacco crates. Eventually, he sold some of these pieces through Thompson's Hardware Store. His mother-in-law enjoyed his work and suggested that he depict community life in Key West. Sanchez tried his hand at carving such scenes and, at first, painted them with colors he made from materials at hand, including egg yolks and coffee grounds. He sold his first piece of this type, "Manungo's Diablito Dancers," to a local store manager in 1946. The first



public exhibition of his work was held at Key West's East Martello Gallery and Museum in 1961. Since then, Sanchez's work has received acclaim in Key West, Tampa and throughout Florida.

Sanchez begins his works by drawing a scene in pencil on a brown grocery bag. He then uses chisels to carve the image on a pine, cypress or cedar board. When the carving is completed, he paints the scene with the vibrant colors that are characteristic of Key West. Most of his work has been carried out in his "Studio Under the Trees," part of an extended family compound in Key West. His carvings illustrate places and events that made old Key West distinctive: Bahamian funeral parades, children flying Cuban kites and playing games, diablito dancers, the daily fish catch, cigar factories, the Cuban *piruli* (lollipop) vendor, Boza's comparsa dancers, and other local activities, buildings, docks and businesses. He has also carved scenes of the Cuban community in Tampa, where he resided part of the year, until the death of his wife Rosa in 1996.

Though now 90, old age has in no way dimmed Sanchez's enthusiasm for his art or his extraordinary memory. He says that he can still close his eyes and view again the streets of his childhood, remembering each house, tree and person just as they were. He treasures his time in Key West, where he now lives year-round.

—Tina Bucuvalas

Top: "Old Island Days #17" (comparsa dancers), carved and painted by Mario Sanchez (width, 28 in.). Loaned by Key West Art & Historical Society.

Left: Sanchez working in his outdoor studio, Key West.



Rene Latour ■ Metal Sculpture

Until his retirement in 1995, tinsmith Rene Latour created magnificent metal sculptures in his home garage workshop, shaded by live oaks and palms. His shop reflects similar home environments built by mechanics across the United States. A work bench wraps around the wall, surrounded by an array of partially completed tin parts, sheet metal scraps, wood and cardboard templates, notes, sketches, pictures, pamphlets and tools.

Born in 1905 in France, Latour arrived in America at age 18 months, when his coal-miner father emigrated to Pittsburgh. In 1921 Latour entered a steel mill as a bricklayer's helper and, eventually, advanced to pipe-fitter's assistant. Stimulated by metal work in the mill, he purchased a set of sheet metal manuals, and added welding to his skills. After employment on Army Corps of Engineers projects during the war years, he moved to New York to open a small tin shop, in which he found himself mainly replacing rusted gutters. Constant outdoor toil in cold weather persuaded him to move to Florida in 1951, where he continued sheet metal work.

In Florida's booming space/defense industry, Latour worked for Martin Marietta and NASA, joining several unions in organized plants. In 1953 he opened a tin shop with a business partner in Ormond Beach (Volusia County), his current home. After dissolving this com-



pany in 1959, he established his own firm: Ormond Sheet Metal & Roofing on U.S. Highway 1.

It has been difficult for Latour to explain the sources of his artistry. In 1961 he fabricated his first tin man, designed to advertise his shop. Around 1976 he crafted a metal cowboy to serve as a second trade sign. Wearing skin-tight boots and a huge Stetson hat, this tin wrangler sported "200" on his chest, not as a rodeo number but as a street address. During the late 1970s Latour struck up a friendship with Aarne Anton, a folk art dealer from New York who had spotted "Cowboy 200" on the side of the road. Anton was able to sell this sculpture to

the Museum of American Folk Art in New York and, later, acquired a number of other pieces for his own American Primitive Gallery.

Buoyed by the knowledge that his metal sculptures had secured recognition as well as good homes, Latour designed additional figures from galvanized steel: girl-with-ball, ballerina, clown, dog, cat, sheriff, moonwalker and baseball-player-at-bat. After seeing a geodesic dome at a Las Vegas shopping mall, he sought out one of Buckminster Fuller's books on this design. Sharing ideas on domes with a Florida architect, Latour developed a configuration that blended Fuller's fantasies with funnel patterns used for decades in the tinsmith trade. These experiments with spherical shapes evolved into heads for cowboys and clowns, cats and dogs, as well as a planetary system that included the sun and nine revolving planets.

—Archie Green

Top: "Moonwalker," made by Rene Latour (height, 70 in.).
Loaned by American Primitive Gallery.

Left: Latour in his home shop, Ormond Beach.



Stanley Papio ■ Metal Sculpture

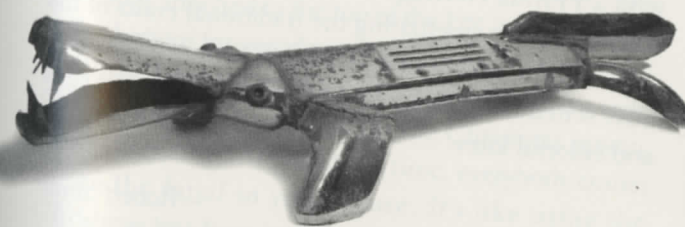
Stanley Papio, a native of Canada, was 34 years old when he settled in Key Largo in 1949. He had worked at various jobs across the United States; his favorite was welding, which became the basis for his unusual art.

At Mile Marker 101 in the Florida Keys, Papio created his own environment, using bed springs to build a fence around his property. He encouraged people to leave old cars, appliances and other metal junk in his yard, and he transformed them. Car fenders became alligators, Volkswagen sections became rabbits, washing machine parts became people. Amazed travelers on the nearby highway viewed the lawn of art with astonishment, but neighbors and developers petitioned him to "get rid of the junk." For not obeying zoning laws, Papio was in and out of jail six times!

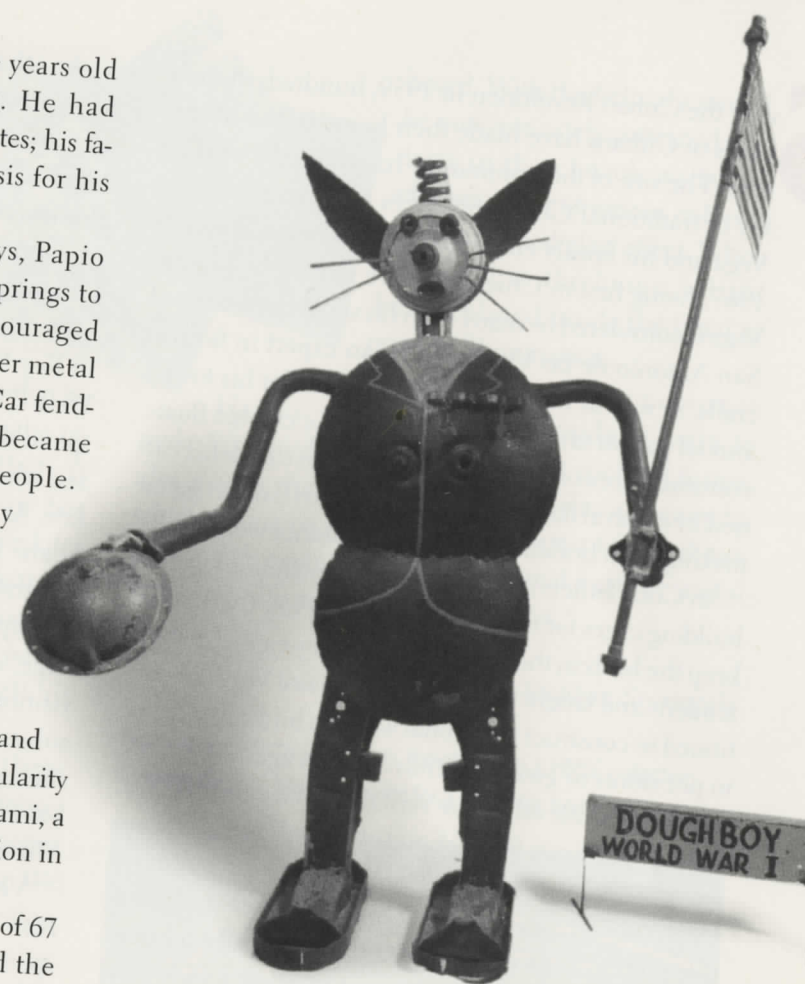
Papio's sculpture eventually got the attention of the art community. Private collectors and art critics began to flood into his yard. His popularity led to a teaching offer from the University of Miami, a United States tour for two pieces and an exhibition in Ottawa, Canada.

Stanley Papio died of a heart attack at the age of 67 before his collection of junk sculpture toured the United States as planned. His heirs donated the strange collection of objects to the Key West Art & Historical Society. The collection is now in the permanent collection of the East Martello Gallery in Key West.

—Karen Valdés



Top right: "Doughboy—World War I" (height, 67 in.).
Above: Alligator (length, 75 in.). Sculptures by Stanley Papio.
Loaned by Key West Art & Historical Society.
Right: Papio in his yard, Key Largo.



Manuel Vega ■ Birdcages and Kites

Since the Cuban Revolution in 1959, hundreds of thousands of Cubans have made their home in the Miami area. The size of this community has allowed a wide array of traditional Cuban practices to survive. Manuel Vega and his family emigrated to the United States in 1967, living first in Chicago before settling in Miami. Vega is considered by many from his small hometown of San Antonio de las Vueltas to be an expert in festival crafts, as well as in other traditional arts. For his town's annual patron saint's day celebration, he created floats, costumes, fireworks and *farolas* (decorative lanterns carried by carnival dancers). He also tried his hand at guitar making, boat building, cabinetry and other wood crafts.

In Cuba fathers and sons would spend hours together building cages for trapping songbirds. They then would keep the birds in their patios, where they cared for them tenderly and taught them tunes. In Miami Vega has continued to construct traditional wooden bird cages to sell to pet stores or give to friends. Some cages are simple structures, while others are veritable palaces, with doors, windows, intricate fretwork and other architectural flourishes. Though these more elaborate cages can hold birds, they are generally used by their owners as decorative pieces. Vega creates most of his cages in a home workshop, where he has gathered together a wide variety of wood and metalworking tools.



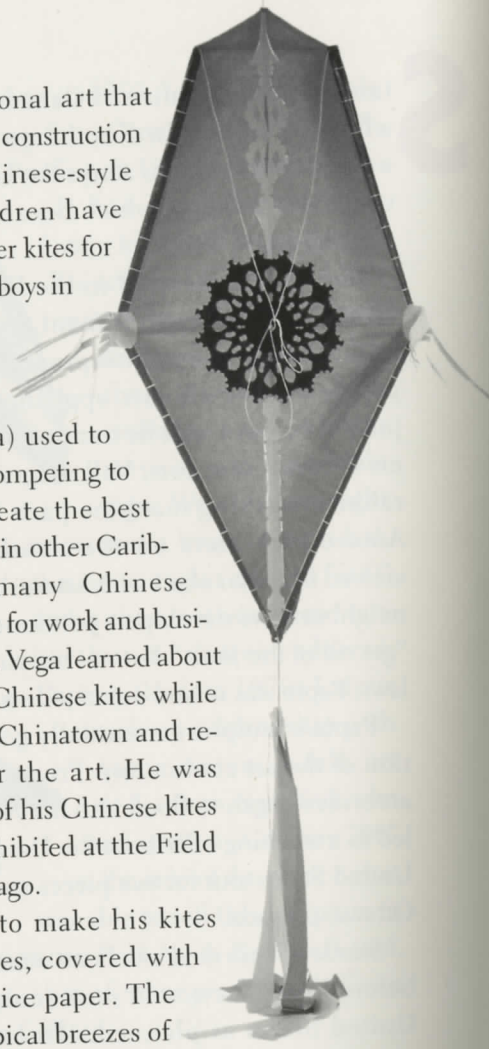
Another traditional art that Vega practices is the construction of Cuban and Chinese-style kites. Cuban children have flown six-sided paper kites for generations. Young boys in Cuba and in Cuban communities in Key West and Ybor City (Tampa) used to spend their days competing to see who could create the best kite. As is the case in other Caribbean nations, many Chinese emigrated to Cuba for work and business opportunities. Vega learned about large, decorative Chinese kites while visiting Havana's Chinatown and resolved to master the art. He was successful—one of his Chinese kites has even been exhibited at the Field Museum in Chicago.

Vega prefers to make his kites from wood frames, covered with special types of rice paper. The persistent subtropical breezes of South Florida provide plenty of opportunities for Vega and his son Manuel, Jr., to fly the kites, much to the delight of onlookers. The sight of a brightly colored 40-foot dragon kite dancing in the sky always draws interest.

In appreciation of his accomplishments in constructing bird cages and kites, Vega was presented with a Florida Heritage Award in 1998. He remains committed to perpetuating the traditional crafts of his native Cuba, and his son has taken time out from his busy schedule to learn to make the handsome cages and colorful kites.

—Robert Stone

Top: Kite made by Manuel Vega (length without tail, 29 in.). Loaned by Museum of Florida History.
Left: Vega with bird cage in his home, Miami.



Jan Sebon! ■ Kites and Fanals

Since his arrival in Miami from Haiti in 1981, Jan Sebon! has become a well-known figure in the city's arts world. He has served as the leader of Koleksyon Kazak, a popular musical ensemble, exhibited paintings in several local venues and published two books of poetry. "Jan Sebon!" is actually a literary name that he adopted as a student activist and writer during the repressive regime of Jean-Claude Duvalier in Haiti. It means "Jean, watch out!" More recently, Sebon! has returned to two art forms of his childhood: making kites and *fanals* (Christmas lanterns). He originally learned to fabricate these objects by observing acquaintances in his neighborhood in Port-au-Prince. Eventually, he became so skilled himself that he was able to sell his creations to other youths.

A favorite Haitian kite style is the *grandou kap* (large kite), which can have a diameter of three feet or more. "Usually, you'll find big people flying it," Sebon! notes, "because sometimes the wind in Haiti is very strong. We always think it can lift a kid." While in Haiti a *grandou* is made with split bamboo sticks and brown wrapping paper, Sebon! uses wooden dowels and tissue paper. He begins by arranging six three-foot dowels in a star shape and tying them together with a piece of string. He then runs string around the circumference of the frame and attaches a shorter dowel at the top of the frame to create a slightly bowed shape. After gluing tissue paper to the frame, he adds colored paper designs to increase the kite's aesthetic appeal and attaches colored paper fringe to its edges to create a pleasing sound in the wind. A paper flap is attached to the top of the kite and a cloth tail to the bottom for aerodynamic purposes.

While kites are used for play throughout the year, fanals are made specifically for the Christmas season. Sebon! explains: "At Christmas time, everybody comes to see the fanal in your house. It's like using the Christmas tree here in America. Also kids walked with them at night with candles to make competition—to show the best one." Fanals are traditionally constructed in the shape of churches. Though pieces of shoe boxes are the standard material in Haiti, Sebon! uses poster

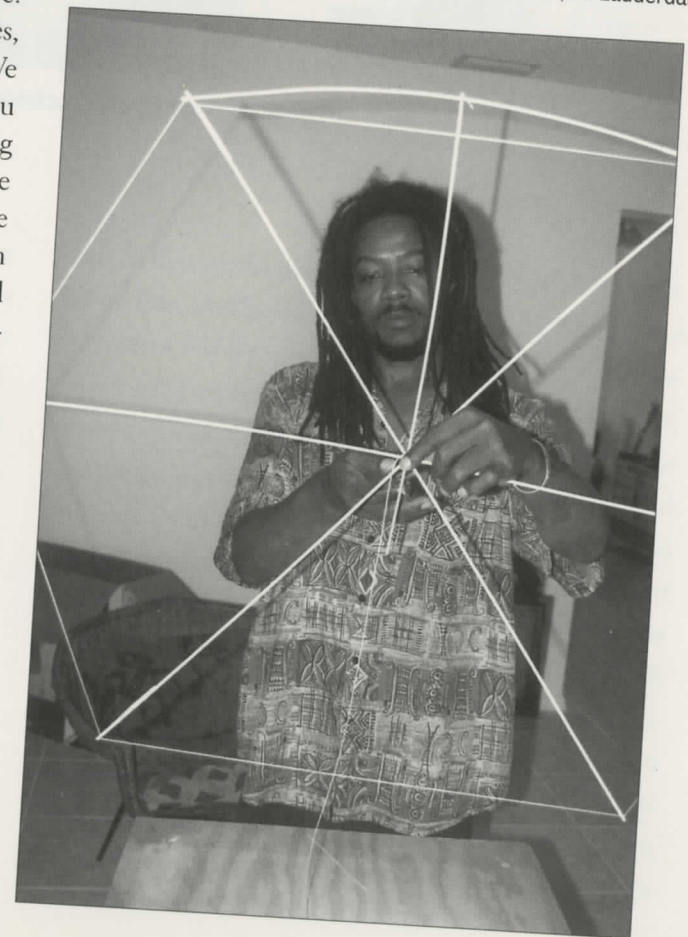


board. With the help of a stencil, he cuts intricately patterned windows in the church walls and attaches paper of various colors to create a stained glass effect. When displayed in the home, a light bulb is placed inside the fanal to provide illumination.

Sebon! hopes to encourage Haitian youths in South Florida to learn to make kites and fanals. He states that such art forms, along with the Kreyòl language, offer a means by which young people can create a better life for themselves: "We exploited people must make arts be useful as weapons to win a better tomorrow."

—Stephen Stuenkel

Top: Fanal made by Jan Sebon! (height, 12 in.). HMSF collection.
Bottom: Sebon! tying the frame for a kite in his home, Ft. Lauderdale.



Ritual and Festive Traditions



Victoria Grimm (back right) and friends with Mexican piñatas, Volusia Co.

Florida's diverse communities all set aside time from their work routines for spiritual observances and festive celebrations. These special occasions are typically marked by a variety of forms of artistic expression, including the making of objects. Ritual and festive objects may symbolize and facilitate contact with the divine, embody myths, intensify communal experience, or express religious and ethnic identities. Many types of material are used to make these items, from the wood of Russian Orthodox icons to the cloth and feathers of Haitian Vodou *pakèts* (charms). Generally, there are specialists in communities who are responsible for the production of ritual and festive objects. In some cases, these individuals possess specific spiritual knowledge as well as artistic skills.

Some objects are associated with rites of passage:

rituals that symbolize transitions in life, such as birth, entry into adulthood, marriage and death. Among the objects of this type that are made in Florida are Nicaraguan piñatas for birthdays and first communions, dazzling dresses for Cuban *quinceañeras* (coming-of-age ceremonies for young women) and Jewish *ketubot* (decorated marriage contracts). Other objects are used for calendrical festivals or holidays. There are Ukrainian and Slovakian Easter eggs, Filipino *parols* (Christmas lanterns), Mexican altars for the Days of the Dead, Trinidadian costumes for Carnival (observed on Columbus Day weekend in Miami), and Bahamian Junkanoo costumes for the celebration of the Goombay Festival and Martin Luther King's birthday. Typically, new items are constructed each time a community observes a calendrical festival or rite of passage.

Carole Demesmin ■ Pakèts Kongo

Since 1994 Carole Demesmin, a renowned Haitian singer, has been living in the Miami area. As is true with many of her artistic talents, her skill in making *pakèts kongo* (magical charms) stems from her appreciation of the creative expressions of Haitian folklore and the religion of Vodou. Born in Leogane, Haiti, she early developed an interest in drawing and designing. After being sent to Boston on a student visa, she began singing and designing sets for a local Haitian theatrical organization. Her vocal talents led her to the prestigious Berkeley School of Music, while subsequent recordings and musical tours established her as one of Haiti's premier vocalists. She briefly attended the Massachusetts College of Art, but was unhappy with the cultural discrimination toward her work. In the early 1980s she decided to return to Haiti to learn more about Vodou and other folk traditions.

For the next ten years Demesmin studied the religion and its songs in various temples. She became a *manbo* (priestess) and received her *ason* (the rattle symbolic of her spiritual leadership) in her hometown of Leogane. It was as a Vodou initiate that she learned the art of making

pakèts kongo. *Pakèts* serve largely as protection against negative forces and are made by *manbos* and *oungans* (priests) for their clients. The name evokes its connection to the Kongo people of central Africa. Demesmin describes this connection as central: "If you look back, you can see in many small ways that it was the Kongo tribe that tried to unite all the different African tribes in Haiti."

The exteriors of *pakèts* are decorated with cloth, satin, lace, feathers and sequins, while the interiors are usually filled with sweet-smelling herbs and medicinal leaves. The predominant colors used for a particular *pakèt* depend on the *lwa* (spirit) being represented and the kind of protection desired. *Pakèts* always retain the same round bottom shape, with arms akimbo and feathers protruding from their heads. But individual creativity in the dressing of *pakèts* leads to an endless variety.

In reference to an extra-large *pakèt* that she designed for the *lwa* Ayizan (one of the oldest female divinities), Demesmin states: "She is the mother of all the *lwas*, of the universe, and the protector of children." Her universality is captured by a rainbow of colored feathers attached to a stick neck. A white cloth is wrapped around the body and the arms, which are kept in their akimbo position with copper wire. After completing the body, Demesmin dresses the *pakèt* with white chiffon, lace and cloth flowers. Since songs and magical incantations always accompany the making of *pakèts*, she sings and addresses her creation as a person. Demesmin constructs *pakèts* as gifts for friends when requested and for her own private use. "It's our job to pass on life," she states. "That's why we make *pakèts*."

—Joanne Hyppolite

Top: *Pakèts kongo* for (left–right) Ogou Feray, Ezili Freda, Azaka and Ezili Dantò, made by Carole Demesmin (height of tallest piece, 21 in.) Loaned by Carole Demesmin. **Left:** Demesmin creating a *pakèt* for Ayizan in her home, Hallandale.



Eduardo Antonio Salas ■ Orisha Herramientas

Eduardo Antonio Salas is an *alagbede* (smith) for the Orisha or Santería community in Miami. This community maintains the religious traditions of the Yoruba people of modern-day Nigeria, who were known in Cuba as the Lukumi. Though Orisha practitioners excel in many art forms, Salas has for more than 30 years specialized in the fabrication of *herramientas* (tools)—metal implements used in the worship of the individual orishas or deities.

Salas was born in Havana in 1930 and descends from a long line of Orisha priests and priestesses. He was initiated himself as a priest of Shangó, the god of thunder and justice, in 1961. In 1966 he emigrated to the United States and, within a couple of years, began making *herramientas* in a friend's garage. Today he takes pride in having "the only officially incorporated metal shop in Miami" for the Orisha community: Salas Metal Enterprise, Inc.

There are two basic types of *herramientas*: those used for the consecration of an orisha representation in a shrine and those employed as regalia by the orisha or by worshipers. *Herramientas* are made of iron, brass, copper, lead, aluminum, stainless steel or, occasionally, wood. The material used to make the implements is determined in accordance with strict religious axioms, in that each orisha has particular preferences. For example, Obatala (the god of creation and purity) dresses in immaculate white garments. He prefers white metals, stainless steel and aluminum. Oshun (the goddess of love and sensuality) has a preference for brass. Ogun (the god of iron and war) will only accept iron implements.

For Orisha practitioners, there are three aspects of Salas's work that are immediately recognizable. First is the Yoruba symbology and its relationship to the deities. Each *herramienta* is related in some way to an indi-

vidual orisha's character, attributes and domains. For example, Oshosi (the god of hunters) is represented by bows and arrows, spears, cutlasses and other weapons. Second, one can see the results of the adaptational ingenuity of the Lukumi in Cuba in their response to a new culture. The implements for Orishaoko (the god of agriculture), for example, include a plow drawn by a pair of oxen, something that the Lukumi met in Cuba. Finally, what most differentiates Salas's work from that of his Cuban predecessors and his American contemporaries is his resourcefulness in creating *herramientas* that are, stylistically, both familiar and innovative.

From his modest beginnings, Salas has brought a new vision to his trade. Inspired by traditional Afro-Cuban patterns, he uses the rich array of materials and machinery available in Miami to construct what are considered the finest *herramientas* available. He likes to refer to these dazzling creations as "trophies for the religion."

—Miguel W. Ramos

Top: Crown with stainless steel *herramientas* for Yemaya (goddess of the sea), made by Antonio Salas (diameter, 9 in.). HMSF collection. **Bottom:** Salas fabricating a crown in his shop, Miami.



Alexander Jasiukowicz ■ Orthodox Icons

Besides being a painter or, as he describes it, a "writer" of icons, Father Alexander Jasiukowicz is a world-renowned expert on this ancient art and an Orthodox priest. He has a library of over 300 books, periodicals and films on iconography, and produces his own videos on the history and meaning of the images. In addition to painting individual icons, he often spends long periods of time creating entire churches full of these marvelous works.

Orthodox churches traditionally follow a program for the arrangement of icons. Such a program guides the placement of portraits and Biblical scenes, some of which are located on the "iconostasis," a partition that separates the sanctuary from the rest of the church. Jasiukowicz's latest work was the Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral in Allison Park, Pennsylvania.

By birth Jasiukowicz is Belarusian (White Russian). He and his family left Poland and settled in Chicago in 1962. In 1982 he moved to the Orlando area. His seminary training took place in many settings, including Poland, France, and Johnstown, Pennsylvania. While in Paris he took weekend classes in iconography, studying with a master artist, Leonid Ouspensky. The fact that he is both a priest and an iconographer helps him to correctly interpret the Bible. For him, iconography is an extension of biblical texts. The first "enlighteners," he notes, wrote books about their experience with God,

while iconographers do the same thing, only in a visual art form.

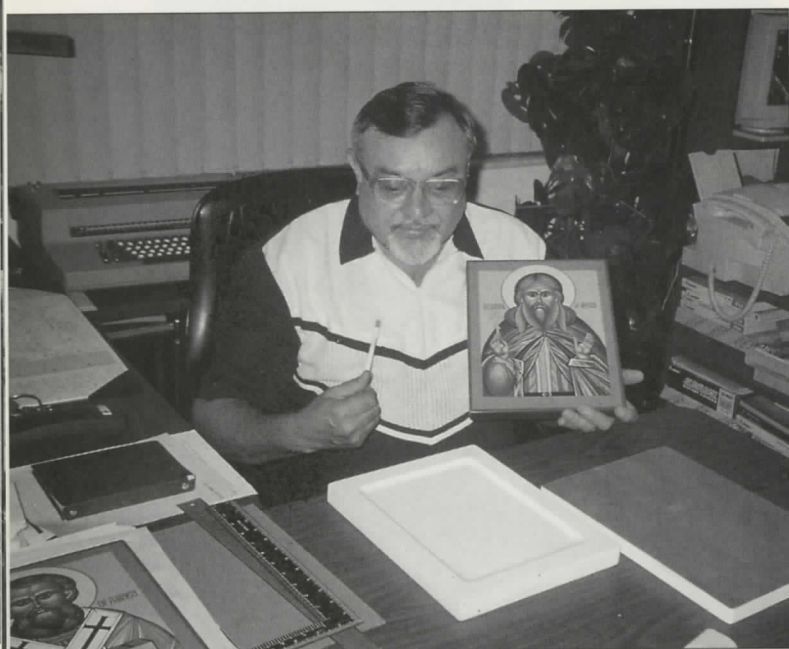
Teaching is an integral part of Jasiukowicz's mission. While his icons teach about God's message and his videos provide additional interpretation, he also teaches students how to create icons. To begin a new icon, he first prepares a wooden board, often a piece of plywood. Canvas is then attached to the board and many coats of gesso are applied. Next the board is sanded until it is smooth. Finally, an image is transferred onto the surface and painted.

Jasiukowicz believes in following the traditional rules of iconography. In one of his videos, he states: "It's important to draw a distinction between iconographers and secular artists." For him, serious iconographers have been truly enlightened by the Bible. "They listened to, read and contemplated the Word of God. Their focus was set on things of the invisible, eternal world." He continues: "An iconographer recognized his God-given gift and glorified God with it. He detached himself from pride and became an empty vessel. This is why his icons were never signed." Iconography is correctly approached as a godly task, with humility and prayer. Although Jasiukowicz is acknowledged by others as a master iconographer, in his own mind there are no contemporary masters of this art form. Not yet. "But," he says, "if we are patient, studious and dedicated students of this biblical discipline, we may acquire the spiritual vision our forefathers had."

—Kristin Congdon and Rudell Kopp

Top: Icon of Madonna with Child, made by Alexander Jasiukowicz (height, 36 in.). Loaned by Alexander Jasiukowicz.

Left: Jasiukowicz with icon in his home, Orlando.



Chony Gutiérrez ■ Party Crafts

Chony Gutiérrez's small house, in a neighborhood to the east of Miami International Airport, serves as her workshop for creating an array of delicate items used for parties in South Florida's large Nicaraguan community. Gutiérrez's reputation as a highly skilled craftsperson followed her from Nicaragua. In Miami she is known as the person to call if one desires hand-made piñatas or decorations for first communions, birthdays, weddings, baby showers, christenings or La Purísima, the season of prayer and festivity that extends from late November into January.

Gutiérrez was born in Managua in 1918. As a teenager she apprenticed herself to a woman who operated a small business in piñatas and other party crafts from her home. By the 1950s Gutiérrez was practicing these crafts as a source of income and became well-known among party hostesses. During this same period, she worked for the Nicaraguan Institute of Culture and Tourism, where she established a folk dance troupe that toured throughout Central America. She also designed traditional-style clothing for beauty contestants. In 1985 Gutiérrez settled in Miami. People continue to seek her out through word-of-mouth, though nowadays she gives away more party items than she sells.

Piñatas remain popular in the Nicaraguan community. While in Nicaragua these objects are made with clay and paper, in Miami poster board is used, since people worry about pieces of clay falling on children and potential lawsuits. In fact, Gutiérrez often constructs piñatas so that they do not need to be struck with sticks. Ribbons are attached to the bottom of a piñata, which, when pulled by children, allow the candy treats to tumble down.

For first communion parties, Gutiérrez often constructs piñatas in the shape of a church. These designs derive from her imagination, rather than from actual churches. One of her most beautiful creations is built on a piece of paper-covered cardboard. The church walls and bell towers are made of white poster board. Gold plastic bells hang from the towers, while a plastic communion chalice and Host rest in the doorway. The

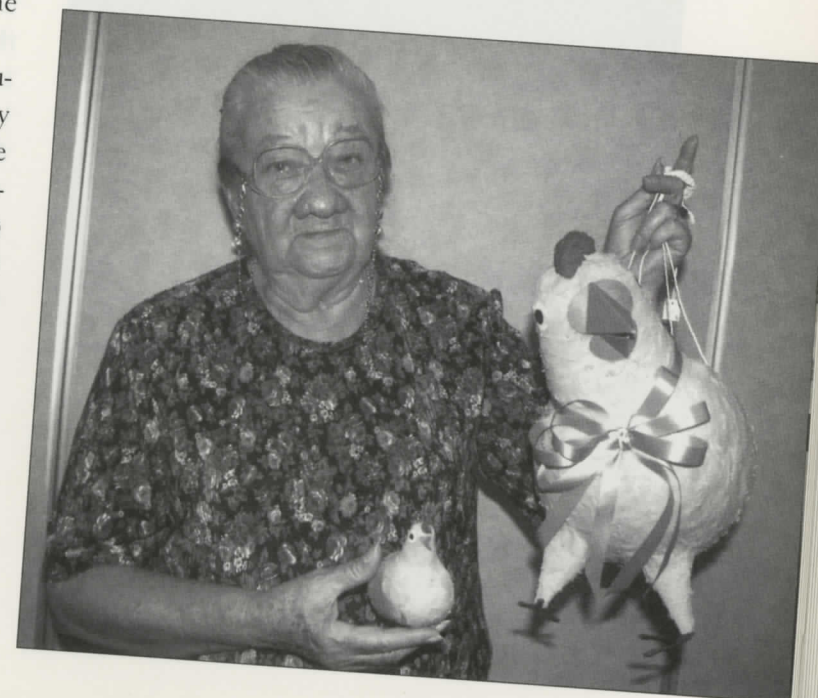


church's facade also features a circular window of cut gold paper. Additional decorations include artificial flowers, gold glitter and two small doves perched on top of the bell towers. A piñata of this sort is used for the traditional home breakfast party that follows the church communion itself. Each table place setting for the children also includes a "surprise," a small hand-made container of candy that complements the piñata.

Gutiérrez's home is a popular gathering spot for her many friends. Women often visit at all hours of the day and night, after dropping their husbands at the airport. "Everyone is looking for me," she says, "and there's always coffee." If one is fortunate, there is also the chance to see a new piñata or other party decoration taking shape.

—Stephen Stuenkel

Top: Church piñata made by Chony Gutiérrez (height, 19 in.). HMSF collection. **Bottom:** Gutiérrez with chicken piñata and "surprise" at HMSF, Miami.



Miriam Alvarez ■ Quinceañera Dresses

In a converted garage in her home in the suburbs of Miami, Miriam Alvarez fashions elaborate dresses for *quinceañeras*, special fifteenth birthday parties for girls. Surrounding the sewing machine and the cutting table in her workshop are stacks of boxes containing fabrics and accessories. Scattered throughout the room are assorted, intricately designed crafts, which display Alvarez's many artistic talents.

The dresses that Alvarez creates are part of a Latin tradition of celebrating a girl's passage from childhood to womanhood. Wearing a full-length gown for the first time symbolizes this transition. After her "quince," a woman is suited to participate in social functions frequented only by adults. The celebration itself includes the choreographed dancing of a waltz by the girl, along with fourteen couples as escorts. Traditionally, a Cuban *danzón* would follow, but this genre has been replaced by American popular music. When asked what makes a quinceañera so special, Alvarez replies: "You may be married more than once, but you become fifteen only once in your life!"



Alvarez was born in Colon, a town in the province of Matanzas, Cuba, where she attended business school and worked as a bookkeeper. Although she always liked to sew, dressmaking was not a family trade and she never received any formal training. Her expertise in creating quinceañera dresses, as well as bridal gowns, evolved from what was merely a hobby of making dresses for her friends in her spare time. Upon her arrival in Miami in 1981, the need to work led her to a couple of bookkeeping jobs, but her desire to express her artistic ability also beckoned. Hidden from her aunt, she designed and created a dress for her cousin. "We hid from my aunt, fearing she would think we were crazy in believing I could create a dress worthy of such an important occasion!" That dress was such a success that it led to many referrals and the beginning of a new career. Alvarez went on to make dresses for fashion shows at various modeling schools, including in time her own.

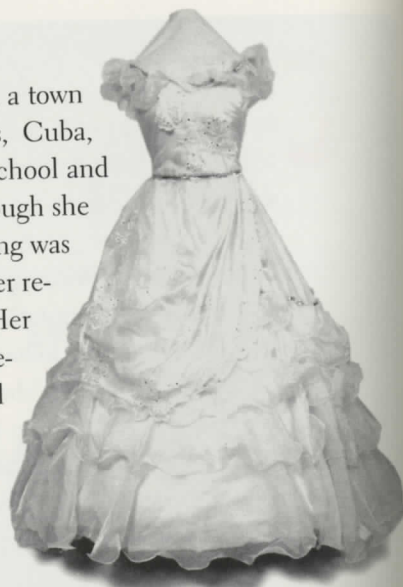
A typical quinceañera dress is a machine-made, floor length, strapless gown, featuring a full skirt of organza, silk or tulle, and hand-embroidered flowers or other motifs. Sleeves, if any, are off the shoulder. A tiara made of rhinestones or flowers adorns the head. Alvarez's dresses are designed without a pattern, require approximately 13 to 14 yards of fabric and take approximately three to four days to complete.

Alvarez says that the most difficult part of her work is to negotiate a design between the girls and their mothers. Her goal is primarily to please the girls. She gladly spends many late hours working at her trade and says that it is difficult to put into words the satisfaction she receives in return. Only by experiencing it can one comprehend its rewards.

—Marielena Valdes

Top: Quinceañera dress made by Miriam Alvarez. Loaned by Miriam Alvarez.

Left: Alvarez preparing a quinceañera dress in her home, Miami.



Honey Pearlman ■ Ketubot

When her daughter was getting married in the early 1980s, Honey Pearlman decided to make a *ketubah*, a Jewish marriage contract, for the first time. Since then she has created *ketubot* (the plural of *ketubah*) for couples throughout the United States.

Growing up in Brooklyn, Pearlman was always busy making things with her hands. In the 1950s she moved to Miami but did not seriously begin to explore her creative abilities until an accident forced her to reconsider her professional life. She returned to school for a degree in fine arts and has since worked in a variety of media, including painting and metal sculpture. Her *ketubot* combine knowledge acquired through a traditional Jewish upbringing with formal training in the arts.

For every couple that gets married, a *ketubah* is a required document that makes the marriage binding in Jewish law. It contains the date and place of the marriage, the names of the bride and groom, and signatures of the witnesses. Traditionally, it spelled out the bride price and obligations of the groom to the bride, such as providing food, clothing and shelter. Some early *ketubot* even contained a clause that the husband must protect his wife and provide ransom should she be taken captive! Though contemporary *ketubot* may still contain some traditional texts and are still often written in Hebrew or Aramaic, some couples now choose to include their own vows, in English.

In designing her *ketubot*, Pearlman often collaborates with a scribe (Jewish calligrapher). For a *ketubah* to be kosher, or valid according to religious law, the characters need to be written correctly, and there should be no mistakes in the text. While Jewish law and custom prescribe the text of the *ketubah*, there are no prescriptions for its artistic aspects—its decorations or illuminations. *Ketubot* typically reflect current trends and customs of the community in which they are created.

Pearlman often consults with a future bride and



groom about the symbols and decorations that they want included on their *ketubah*. Some choose scenes representing their personal histories: where they met, their courtship, travels or family members. Others choose abstract designs. Many *ketubot* include symbols of Judaism (such as the Lion of Judah or the Star of David), symbols of holidays (such as the Hanukkah menorah) or wedding symbols (such as the *chuppa*—bridal canopy).

In the past *ketubot* were often stored at a community synagogue. A *ketubah* would prove a woman's marital status if her husband was away and, when both the husband and wife traveled, they would carry their *ketubah* with them. At present *ketubot* are frequently framed as works of art and displayed on a wall in the home.

—Remko Jansonius

Top: Ketubah made by Honey Pearlman (height, 30 in.). HMSF collection.

Bottom: Pearlman with ketubot in her home, North Miami Beach.



Catalina Delgado Trunk ■ Papel Picado

In many Catholic regions, November 1 (All Saints' Day) and November 2 (All Souls' Day) are important dates in the sacred calendar. Spanish missionaries brought this tradition to the Americas, where it was modified in accordance with local customs. In Mexico, All Saints' and All Souls' Days meshed with pre-Columbian traditions to produce the Days of the Dead, a holiday that honors deceased relatives and friends. As the holiday approaches, families clean and decorate the graves of relatives and construct commemorative altars in their homes. The altars may be draped with embroidered cloths, banana leaves, tulle or cut-paper banners.

Growing up in Mexico, Catalina Delgado Trunk learned many fascinating and colorful Days of the Dead customs from her paternal grandmother. Trunk's grandmother taught her how to create altars with food, flowers, candles, decorative items and other offerings (*ofrendas*) for the dead. Later in life Trunk became interested in understanding more about these traditions. She visited and learned from artists and community leaders in several central Mexican towns, and even won an ofrenda contest in the Chalco district. As a long-time Orlando resident, she finds the altars to be a meaningful way to express her cultural identity and to come to terms with the cycle of life and death.

While making Days of the Dead altars involves working in several media, Trunk has become especially

skilled and renowned for her *papel picado* or cut-paper work. In Mexico banners depicting human and animal skeletons engaged in daily life activities are cut from colored tissue paper and displayed around altars. The fragile, cheap tissue paper symbolizes the temporary nature of mortal existence. Returning spirits of the deceased are said to pass through the openings cut into the banners.

Trunk has adapted the *papel picado* tradition to suit her central Florida cultural environment. In Mexico, where demand for the banners is high, *papel picado* artisans use a variety of sizes and shapes of special chisels to cut a stack of dozens of banners in one operation. Trunk cuts three at a time with a razor knife. She uses heavy acid-free paper to ensure that her banners, which require about 30 hours per image to make, will last. In recent years she has mounted some of her cut-paper work on contrasting heavy paper backgrounds. Around the border of an assembled piece, she may include text written in Otomi (a native Mexican language), *milagros* (prayer medallions) or *Anasazi* beans, which symbolize the staff of life. Although Trunk is not a Catholic, she is faithful to the Virgin of Guadalupe (known as the "Brown Virgin") and frequently includes the saint's image in her work. To her, the Virgin of Guadalupe represents the blending of European and indigenous Mexican culture, which mirrors Trunk's image of herself.

—Robert Stone

Top: Papel picado made by Catalina Delgado Trunk (height, 30 in.). Loaned by Museum of Florida History. **Left:** Trunk with Days of the Dead altar in her home, Orlando.



Ola Kryway ■ Psyanky

Ola Kryway of Titusville decorates Easter eggs with the centuries-old Ukrainian method known as *pysanky*. Pysanky is a meticulous wax-resist technique, in which a tool called a *kystka* is used to apply melted beeswax to an egg and a series of dye baths results in a detailed design. Kryway has been practicing this art for over 60 years. She grew up in Montreal in a Ukrainian immigrant family that actively preserved Old World culture in its New World home. She learned the technique and symbols of *pysanky* as a young girl from her mother, sisters, aunts and cousins. They all would work together for several weeks before Easter to decorate eggs. On Easter morning the eggs were blessed in church, then given to friends as love offerings.

According to a Ukrainian myth, the Madonna brought eggs when she attempted to see Pontius Pilate to ask him to spare Christ's life. When denied admittance by Pilate's guards, she began to cry. As her tears fell on the eggs, they turned brilliant colors. The colored eggs rolled to the end of the earth, where an evil dragon was held in chains. Traditional belief maintains that each decorated Easter egg adds a link to the chains that keep evil in check.

The *pysanky* tradition is rich in symbolism; the egg itself is a sign of rebirth or resurrection. Contemporary designs incorporate a variety of symbolic motifs, some dating from pre-Christian times. For example, a ribbon or belt around the egg means eternity; a rooster, as the messenger of light, is a symbol of Christ; and a butterfly signifies resurrection.

Kryway begins the *pysanky* process by drawing a design on an egg with a pencil. Next she applies beeswax to the area that is to remain white and dyes the egg with the lightest color. When the first color is dry, she adds wax to part of this colored area and dyes the egg with another color. This sequence is repeated with increasingly darker colors, until the design is complete. After the final dye bath, she pierces both ends of the egg with a pin or needle and blows out the contents. To remove the

wax, she then places the egg in her kitchen oven for a few minutes at 200 degrees. Removing the egg from the oven, says Kryway, is the most exciting part, since it is the first time she gets to see the results of her work. "An egg is organic," she explains. "You never can tell how it's going to take colors." After the egg cools, she rubs on a coat of varnish or shellac with her hands.

Participating in exhibits and giving *pysanky* workshops provides Kryway with opportunities to meet Floridians of Ukrainian descent and share her heritage with others. "When I start this Easter egg business, they come out of the woodwork," she says.

—Robert Stone

Top: Pysanky decorated by Ola Kryway. Loaned by Ola Kryway. **Bottom:** Kryway dyeing Easter eggs in her home, Titusville.



Violet Cimbora ■ Easter Eggs

In 1924 a group of people of Czechoslovakian descent—many of whom were employed at hard, unattractive jobs in coal mines, steel mills and other industries in the northern United States—formed the Hernando Plantation Company to purchase land in Florida. They settled about 25 miles north of Tampa and named their community Masaryktown, in honor of Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, the first president of the newly created country of Czechoslovakia. After losing several orange crops to repeated freezes, then struggling with vegetable truck farming, the people of Masaryktown finally established a successful poultry and egg industry, and their community became known as “the egg capital of Florida.”

Violet Cimbora was born in the United States of Slovakian parents and moved with her family to Masaryktown from New York in 1942. She is one of the community's foremost organizers and, from 1960 to 1961, served as its mayor—the first woman to hold that office. Her husband's family was among the first settlers in Masaryktown and built the Masaryk Hotel in 1925.



Cimbora became acquainted with the traditional Slovak “scratched” method of decorating eggs by watching her neighbors engage in the craft. She began to decorate eggs in the mid-1980s when Mary Panasek, the last of the local egg decorators, retired from practicing the art form. Cimbora felt that someone needed to take up the art to prevent it from vanishing from the community.

Cimbora makes her designs not only on chicken eggs but on those of geese and emus, large flightless ostrich-like fowl. To decorate chicken eggs, she first hard boils them, then lets them sit for several days to see if they crack or leak. Next she paints the good eggs with translucent machinist's dye, which results in a surface into which she can scratch fine lines without chipping the color. She uses a stylus, made from a small metal file that her husband grinds to a sharp point, to scratch a design on the egg, without following patterns or sketches. Most of the images she makes relate to the Easter season. They include Easter lilies, dogwood blossoms, lace designs and a variety of berries. The hard boiled egg is left inside the chicken eggshell, since the shell is too brittle to withstand the pressure of the scratching. Eventually, the egg contents dry and harden to the size of a marble.

Goose and emu eggs, which are much larger and thicker than chicken eggs, do not require hard boiling. Cimbora pierces these eggs and uses an air compressor to carefully blow out the contents before painting them.

—Robert Stone

Top: Easter eggs decorated by Violet Cimbora.

Loaned by Museum of Florida History.

Left: Cimbora with Easter eggs in her yard, Spring Hill.

Reinaldo Manzo ■ Parols

Reinaldo Manzo has constructed delicate Filipino lanterns called *parols* since the 1940s. Born in the small community of Sto. Tomas in the Philippines, Manzo was raised and educated in Manila. As a chemical engineer, he worked for several years in Manila before moving to Tampa in 1978. Soon after arriving in Florida, Manzo relocated his family to Tallahassee, where he was employed with the Florida Department of Labor. At present he works as Manager of Safety and Health for the Florida Department of Transportation.

Parols are closely identified with the Christmas holiday in the Philippines. Manzo states: “It has been a tradition for many years, the parol of light. The star is one of the basic signs of the holiday.” The lanterns are traditionally shaped in the form of the five-point Christian star, which represents the Star of Bethlehem. During the Christmas season, they are displayed in schools, churches, homes and businesses throughout this predominately Catholic country. Manzo was the first member of his immediate family to make parols. Before he began constructing the lanterns, his family would decorate their home with ones that had been purchased in the market, or made by friends and relatives. He learned by examining the work of other parol makers.

In the past bamboo was used to create the frame for the star. Today Manzo employs bamboo skewers to construct the smaller parols and dowel rods for the larger ones. Tissue paper or cellophane is used to cover the frame and is tacked with glue. The star is usually outlined with tissue paper that has been rolled and cut to create fringe. The bottom two points of the star are embellished with “tails.” Using tissue paper that is

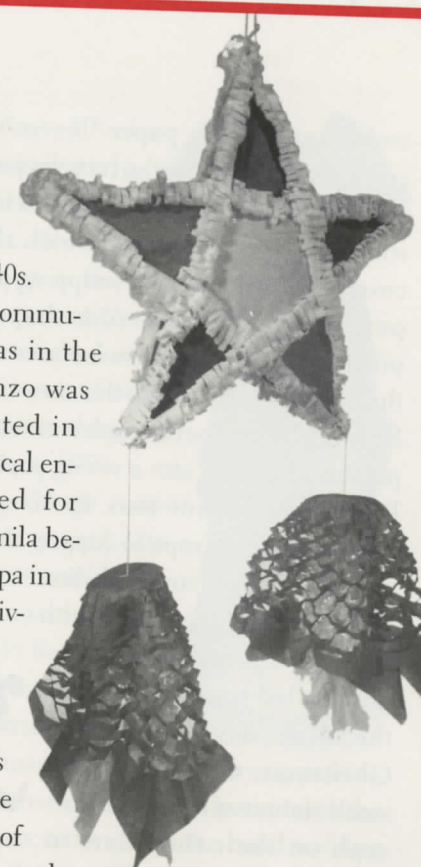
folded and scored, tails are created when the paper is unfolded and separated. The parol is completed when a small light is placed in its interior. Since the construction of parol frames can be time-consuming, they are re-covered with new tissue paper when the lanterns age or are damaged.

Members of Tallahassee's small but growing Filipino community have developed the tradition of gathering a few weeks prior to the Christmas season to make parols, practice their caroling and eat. The parols are given as gifts and used to decorate homes. Usually they are hung in windows, or from porches and eaves. Manzo notes: “When you see a house that has a lantern, then you know a Filipino family lives there.”

—Teresa Hollingsworth

Top: Parol made by Reinaldo Manzo (width of star, 12 in.).
Loaned by Museum of Florida History.

Bottom: Manzo constructing a parol in his home, Tallahassee.



Victoria Grimm ■ Piñatas

Victoria Grimm makes Mexican piñatas in a small workshop in her home in DeLand. Adjacent to her house is a garage in which she stores her many creations, which range in shape from a large orange carrot to a Power Ranger. Grimm has used piñata making to teach her children, grandchildren and thousands of Florida school children about her heritage. Born in 1935 in Mexico City in a neighborhood full of craftsmen and street vendors, about ten blocks from the national palace, she helped her parents make goods to sell for all kinds of seasonal celebrations: firecrackers for Mexican Independence Day, candles for All Saints' Day and piñatas for the Christmas season. "We always watched people working all the way around us. We were always making something to sell. We always worked with our hands." When Grimm was seven years old, her mother showed her how to make piñatas for Christmas festivities.

At present Grimm makes two types of piñatas: one with a clay pot inside it and the other constructed entirely of papier-mâché. For the first type, she sometimes uses a balloon instead of a clay pot to provide a shape. Her mother taught her a special technique for creasing

and shaping tissue paper "leaves" to cover piñatas. Grimm also recycles junk mail postcards to make the points of her small star-shaped piñatas, which she covers with silver or gold wrapping paper. To finish small rose-shaped piñatas, she ties cotton twine around the lips of the clay pots so that they can be hung. To suspend papier-mâché piñatas, she fabricates a strong paper lip and glues twine to it. For large piñatas, she uses rope to support the several pounds of small candies.

Piñatas are associated with Mexican Christmas celebrations called *posadas*. During the nine days preceding Christmas, children carry small statues of Mary and Joseph on their shoulders in neighborhood processions to commemorate the couple's journey into Bethlehem. Each night at the door of a chosen home, the group sings lines in which they ask for a *posada*—a place to rest for the night. The family inside welcomes everyone in with much celebration, noise and firecrackers. A party follows, which culminates around midnight with the breaking of piñatas to scatter candy for everyone present.

Grimm remembers how her family began their own *posada* celebrations. One Christmas the children begged their mother for her gallon-size clay bean pot to make a piñata. Victoria said that she was tired of cleaning the pot: "You couldn't make that pot blush any more." They hung this new piñata over the beams in their adobe hut and broke it by swinging at it with a broom handle. All the brothers and sisters dived to gather the most candy. This became a cherished part of their family Christmas celebrations together.

—Elizabeth Higgs

Top: Miniature piñata made by Victoria Grimm (height, 4 in.).
Loaned by Victoria Grimm.

Left: Grimm with piñata in her home, DeLand.



Emelia Fernandez ■ Comparsa Dresses

Retired restaurateur Emelia Fernandez, affectionately known as the "Cuban Coffee Queen" to locals, leads a *comparsa* dance group in Key West. She was born in the city of Central Chaparra, Cuba, where she learned the *comparsa* tradition and other dances from her family and friends. She moved to Florida in 1959.

Comparsa means "stage company" or "masquerade group." The dance, a Cuban tradition with African roots, is performed in long conga lines, usually in the streets during public celebrations. The dancers dress in colorful, ruffled costumes and are accompanied by a band playing pulsing Afro-Cuban music. Sometimes the *comparsa* takes the form of a parade or procession, with the band walking ahead of the whirling dancers. The music is largely percussive, employing a number of drums—bongos, congas and timbales—as well as cowbells and skillets played with drumsticks. One or more trumpets or saxophones weave a melody line over the rhythm. Fernandez recalls that, when she was a girl in pre-Castro Cuba, each town or province had its own color for *comparsa* costumes, and that there were competitions for the best dancing and for the group that could dance the longest without stopping.

The *comparsa* tradition in Key West was established in 1938, when Abelardo Boza founded the original "Cayo Hueso *Comparsas*." His group, nicknamed "Los Dandys de Boza," flourished until his death a few years ago. Fernandez proudly points out that her *comparsa* is a little different from Boza's group and from those found in other Cuban communities. For example, the *farolas* (ceremonial lanterns) that she made with the help of a carpenter friend are lighter in weight and not illuminated. The poles of the *farolas* are carried in cups on leather belts, normally used for holding deep sea fishing rods. The cups enable the *farolas* to be spun constantly, thus increasing their visual effect. She has also added group dance figures, such as arches and circles, that Boza did not use. In recent years Fernandez and her

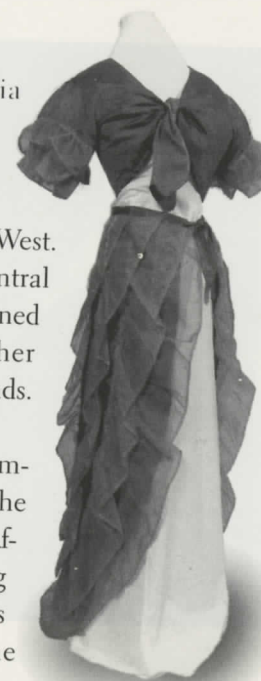
daughter, Irene, have visited Cuba several times, which has reinforced their dedication to the Key West *comparsa* tradition. "I like my roots," she states with conviction. "I want my roots to stay in Key West."

To continue the tradition, Fernandez assembled a group of islanders she calls the "Cayo Hueso *Comparsa* Dancers." She and Irene, who danced with Boza's group, choreograph all the dances. The dancers perform with "Danny Acosta's *Comparsa* Band," a group of musicians that had played for Boza's *comparsa* as well. Using Irene and Danny's old costumes as patterns, Fernandez designs and sews all the costumes for the group members. Satin and organza trim are among the standard materials. She has even made a costume outfit for her toddler granddaughter, who, according to Fernandez, "is going to be a *comparsa*, too."

—Robert Stone

Top: *Comparsa* dress made by Emelia Fernandez.
HMSF collection.

Bottom: Fernandez in *comparsa* dress, Key West.



Marion Shaw ■ Carnival Costumes



Far left:
Marion Shaw
"playing mas" in the
1997 Miami Carnival.

Near left:
Shaw making her
costume in her home
for the 1997 Miami
Carnival.

Every Columbus Day weekend, Miami's West Indian community emerges onto the streets for a massive Carnival celebration. Thousands of costumed revelers parade to the sounds of calypsos played by dance bands and deejays, riding on huge flatbed trucks. Miami's Carnival parallels similar festivals in other cities of the West Indian diaspora, such as Labor Day in Brooklyn, Caribana in Toronto and Notting Hill in London. All of these events are modeled on the grand Carnival in Trinidad, held on the two days before Ash Wednesday.

A central component of Carnival celebrations are the *mas* (masquerade) bands. A mas band is a formal organization which each year selects a theme for its costumes, based on aspects of the natural world, specific cultural traditions, periods of history or fantastic visions. Among the many themes chosen by bands for Miami's 1997 Carnival were "Sea Dreams," "Crab Season," "Past, Present, Future Seabees," "Pow Wow," "Arabian Nights" and "Dye Version." Each band designs an array of costumes and constructs particularly elaborate pieces for its king, queen and "individuals." Anyone may join a band by purchasing a costume. For several weeks before the Carnival, the various bands' mas camps (headquarters) are filled with workers assembling the costumes that have been ordered.

Marion Shaw is one of the scores of individuals in Miami who are highly skilled at constructing costumes. Shaw was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad, and recalls watching the Carnival from her living room window as

a girl, because she was not permitted to go out on the street. "When I was a little older," she recalls, "I was taken to the Savannah [a park] to sit in the stands and watch the Carnival, much to my annoyance. Because, even then, I knew I wanted to be part of it." She adds: "I started to play the first year my mother was out of town. And I've been involved in Carnival ever since." Before migrating to Miami in 1975, she played (masqueraded) with a few of Trinidad's greatest band leaders: Harold Saldenha, Stephen Lee Heung and Peter Minshall.

It was on a return trip to Trinidad, in the late 1970s, to play with Minshall that Shaw began constructing costumes herself. During the following years she worked with various South Florida bands and, in 1994, helped form D'Midas Miami.

For the 1997 Carnival, D'Midas selected "Street Party" as its theme. Shaw designed and made a unique costume for herself called "Rhythm," which featured decorated poster board images of percussion instruments, a saxophone and a keyboard, mounted on netting. The netting was suspended between fiberglass poles that extended from a specially fabricated jacket. When the Carnival arrived, Shaw spent a full day dancing in the sun, with over 200 other D'Midas masqueraders. While most revelers discard their costumes after the festival, Shaw saved hers for the *Florida Folklife* exhibition.

—Stephen Stuenkel

Bahamas Junkanoo Revue ■ Junkanoo Costumes



Near right:
Bahamas Junkanoo
Revue at the
opening of the
1996 Goombay
Festival, Coconut
Grove, Miami.

Far right:
David Dean
constructing a
Junkanoo costume
for the 1996
Goombay Festival.



Bahamians who have migrated to South Florida have brought with them their Junkanoo tradition, a form of parading that has been closely associated with Christmas season celebrations. The first formal Junkanoo group to emerge in the Miami area was the Sunshine Junkanoo Band, which was formed by Bruce Beneby in Overtown in 1957. From this group a second organization—the Bahamas Junkanoo Revue—was born in 1993. The founders of the Bahamas Junkanoo Revue included Langston Longley, David Dean, Eddie Clark, and three long-standing members of the Nassau-based Saxons Junkanoo group: Reggie Lang, Al Green and Clinton Neilly.

During the 1950s and 1960s Junkanoo costumes in Miami were similar to those in Nassau, consisting of pants, shirts and hats that were often decorated with strips of crepe paper that had been cut into fringe. When Longley began taking part in Junkanoo in South Florida in the late 1960s, he would bring costumes from Nassau for Miami Junkanooers to use. He continues this practice today. During the 1980s the style of costumes in Nassau began to change, with the incorporation of elaborate skirts and shoulder-pieces fashioned from cardboard. These pieces were decorated with fringed crepe paper and worn over the traditional pants and shirts. The Bahamas Junkanoo Revue gradually adopted this style of costume.

In addition to using costumes from Nassau, the Bahamas Junkanoo Revue creates its own outfits in Miami. The style and construction of these costumes continue to show the influence of the Nassau tradition, due to the

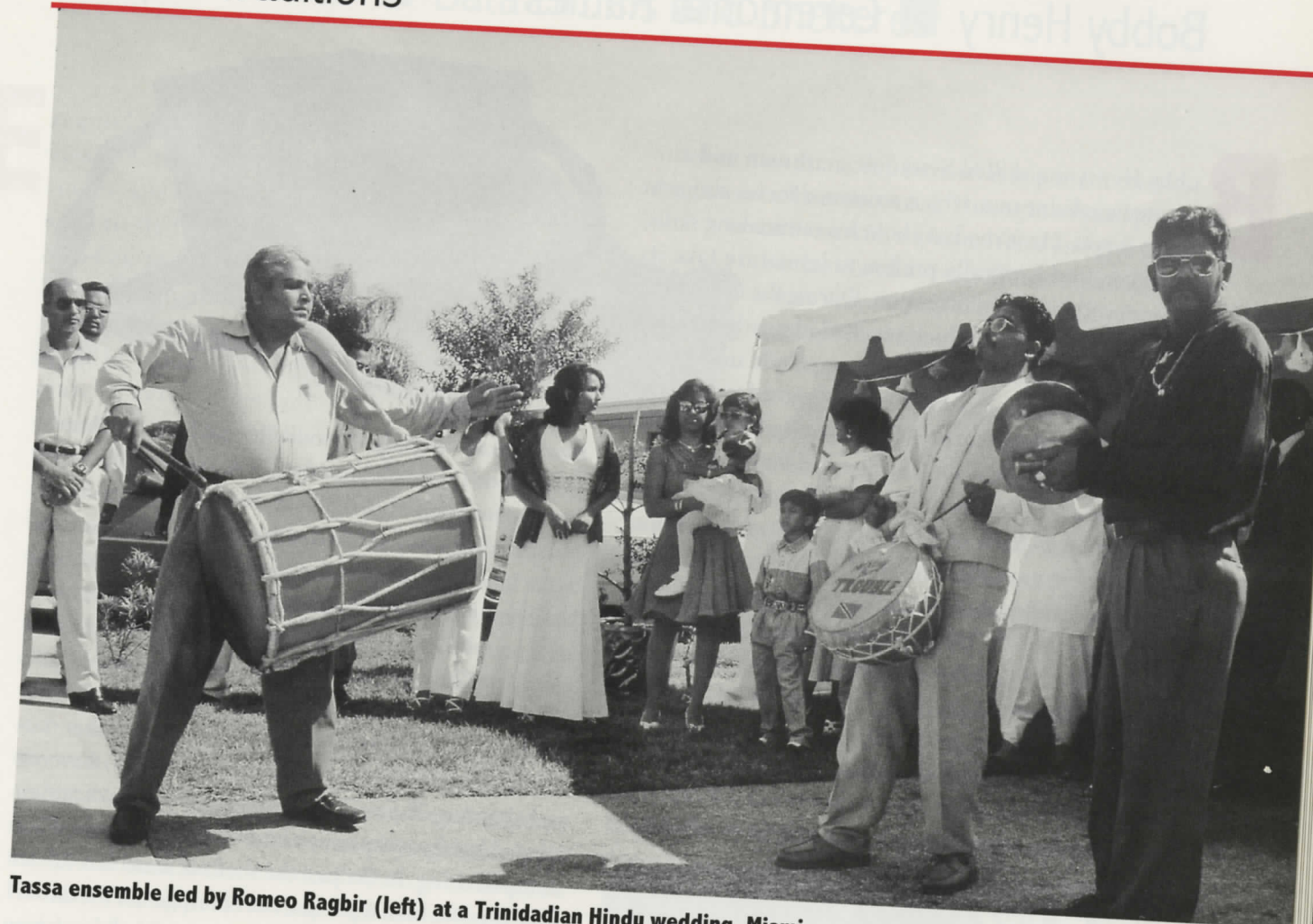
ongoing contact between Junkanooers on both sides of the Florida Straits. Members of the Bahamas Junkanoo Revue return to Nassau each year to participate in the Junkanoo parades on Boxing Day (December 26) and New Year's Day. In addition, Junkanoo performers come from Nassau to South Florida to join in the Goombay Festival in Coconut Grove, the Martin Luther King, Jr., birthday celebration in West Perrine and the Orange Bowl Parade.

The creativity that members of the Bahamas Junkanoo Revue have shown in the decoration of their costumes has, in turn, influenced Junkanooers in Nassau. For example, they have established the practice of painting their costumes, instead of covering them with fringed crepe paper. They also make use of felt, satin, mylar, beads and colored plastic jewels (known as "tricks"). Nassau-based Junkanooers have adopted these practices, but on a much smaller scale, since they are restricted by rules governing their performance in the parades in Nassau.

Junkanoo parades are highly spirited performances, involving not only costuming but dance-like body movement and music. The standard instruments include hand-made goatskin "goombay" and bass drums, tom-toms (derived from trap sets), cowbells, small one-note horns, whistles and, more recently, trumpets, trombones and sousaphones.

—Nina Wood

Musical Traditions



Tassa ensemble led by Romeo Ragbir (left) at a Trinidadian Hindu wedding, Miami.

Musical instruments are fundamental to music making in most of Florida's cultural communities. Instruments extend a community's musical resources beyond those of the human body itself and shape its musical styles. While most musicians in Florida perform with factory-made instruments that are purchased in stores, some use instruments made by hand by local craftsmen. These instrument makers have detailed knowledge of the acoustic properties of natural materials, particularly woods and animal skins.

A variety of percussion instruments are constructed in Florida, many of which are used for ritual or festive occasions. Rattles made from gourds, coconut shells and milk cans are employed in Seminole ceremonies. Central to the Afro-Cuban Orisha religion are

double-headed *batá* drums, constructed from diverse woods and skins, and gourd *shekerés*. Vodou drums continue to be carved in Haiti but are often covered with skins in Miami. Similarly, clay shells and goatskins for *tassa* drums are purchased in Trinidad and later assembled in South Florida for use in Hindu weddings and festivals. Trinidadian steel *pans* are fabricated from discarded oil and chemical containers for performances ranging from the Miami Carnival to hotel concerts.

Also present in the state are makers of string and wind instruments. For years the fiddle has been a key instrument in country music traditions, while acoustic guitars are used by classical, flamenco and other musicians. *Shofarot* are made from animal horns for Jewish holiday celebrations; *tsabounas*, a type of Greek bagpipe, are constructed in Tarpon Springs from goatskins.

Bobby Henry ■ Ceremonial Rattles

Bobby Henry is a skilled Seminole craftsman and a respected medicine man who is renowned for his ability to make it rain. He is modest about his rainmaking skills, however, and generally prefers to let nature take its course, without his intervention. During the drought of the summer of 1998, which resulted in nearly 500,000 acres being consumed by wildfires, people urged him repeatedly to make it rain. Finally, he agreed to dance in Volusia County, where fires endangered a large population. After he had danced and chanted for two days, the rains came and the fires were extinguished.

Henry was born in 1937 near Ochopee (Collier County). For years his family had a camp in a hammock about three miles from present-day Alligator Alley (Interstate Highway 75). He remembers that it took about a day and a half to get there, traveling northwest by canoe from the 40-mile bend on the Tamiami Trail (U.S. Highway 41). "Lots of people lived there—bunch of hammocks over there," he recalls. "So we stopped here, we stopped there, then came to our camp."

Henry has learned many of his skills in medicine,



ritual and crafts in what he calls "Indian School." Among Seminoles, informal annual schools are held out in the swamps for a period of eight days to teach traditional culture. Students are not allowed to write anything down or make tape recordings of the lessons. "Just get it in your head and heart," he explains. Learning the medicine is an especially long process. "Old people teach you for a long time," he says. "If you start at 12 or 15 years old, you get about 45 years old before you learn anything."

At present, Seminoles do not use drums or other musical instruments in their rituals; only rattles, dancing and chanting. Henry makes two different types of rattles: a hand-held instrument and a large shaker used for stomp dancing. In the past the shells of small box turtles were used for both types but, out of respect for the diminished turtle population, other materials have been substituted. Today Henry makes the hand rattle from either a coconut shell or a dried gourd. He fills the rattle shell with a mixture of dried seeds, dried corn and small pebbles. After carving the handle from cypress, he runs it through a large hole cut into the shell body and lashes the assembly together with deerskin. To let the sound escape, he drills several small holes in the rattle shell. Henry makes the stomp dance shaker from condensed milk cans, filled with the same mixture of seeds, corn and pebbles. He uses deerskin to fasten as many as 12 cans together as a unit. The stomp dancer ties one of the bulky assemblies to the outside of each calf. "I guess we tie them pretty good," Henry explains, "because we are dancing sometimes 12 hours."

—Robert Stone

Top: Stomp dance shakers made by Bobby Henry (height, 8 in.).
Loaned by Museum of Florida History.

Left: Henry with hand rattles at his Seminole museum, Tampa.

Ezequiel Torres ■ Batá Drums and Shekerés

Ezequiel Torres of Miami makes *batá* drums whose voices speak with the *orishas*, deities of the Afro-Cuban Orisha or Santería religion. At weekend ceremonies in the homes of Orisha practitioners, Torres and other musicians play traditional rhythms on these drums that invite the orishas to appear and assure the well-being of their followers. *Batá* drums themselves are believed to be owned by Shangó, the powerful orisha of thunder and justice.

Torres was born in Havana in 1955 to a musical family. At the age of 16 he apprenticed himself to a few of the city's master *batá* drum makers and players. Soon he developed the skills necessary to perform at ceremonies and, over a period of years, experimented with making drums on his own. In 1980 Torres left Cuba for Miami and established himself as one of the top *batá* drummers in the United States. In addition to playing regularly in the Miami area, he receives calls from such cities as Houston, Chicago and Los Angeles. Meanwhile, he has perfected his drum making techniques and currently produces instruments that are considered to be of the highest quality available.

The backyard of Torres's home serves as his workshop. Here he dries almond and mahogany logs in the sun, soaks animal skins in a plastic baby pool, and maintains a wood lathe at which he often works under a lantern during Miami's cooler evenings. *Batá* drums are made in three sizes: the large *iyá* (mother drum), the mid-sized *itótele* and the smaller *okónkolo*. For each of these instruments, there are precise measurements that have been passed down by oral tradition. After beginning to shape a log with an *adz*, Torres moves it to his lathe, where he carves it to the proper hourglass dimensions. He notes that his drums look like women and that he falls in love with them as he works. Once a drum has assumed the proper shape, he hollows it out with chisels and a hammer. After pieces of cowhide or other skins have been prepared, they are mounted with loops of rattan on each end of the drum. Leather or rope lacing is then attached to the two skins and tightened.



Before new drums can be used at important ceremonies, they must be consecrated. During this ritual, priests invest them with a spiritual force and give them a name and a voice. Consecrated drums may only be played by members of a special spiritual fraternity.

Torres also makes *shekerés*, different sized gourd rattles that are covered with nets of beads or seeds. These instruments are played in conjunction with a conga drum and a *guataca* (a hoe blade or cow bell) at ceremonies with less rigorous ritual requirements. Torres's *shekerés* typically have colored beads which symbolize specific orishas, such as red and white for Shangó, and yellow for Oshun, the flirtatious river goddess.

—Stephen Stuenkel

Top: *Batá* drum (*iyá*) made by Ezequiel Torres (length, 28 in.).
HMSF collection.

Bottom: Torres hollowing out an *itótele* drum in his yard, Miami.



Cathelius Laguerre and Joseph Senatus ■ Vodou Drums

Cathelius “Ton Ton” Laguerre and Joseph “Ti Wouj” Senatus are a familiar presence on Miami’s Haitian cultural scene and in its vibrant community center, Little Haiti. Acknowledged as masters of traditional Haitian drumming, the two musicians are also skilled at covering wooden drums with animal skins. While growing up in Haiti, both men learned to play drums through informal apprenticeships with master drummers *anba tonel* (“under the peristyle”)—in the temples where Vodou services are held. Both also performed extensively with Haitian folkloric troupes, which toured across Europe and the Caribbean. While Vodou drums are typically carved in the Haitian countryside, there is a separate tradition of covering them in major cities, such as Port-au-Prince. Laguerre and Senatus acquired drum-covering skills in Port-au-Prince and continue to practice this art in Miami.

Vodou drums are generally divided into distinct categories, in accordance with their ritual uses. *Rada* drums are associated with the Rada division of *lwa* or spirits. The ensemble consists of three drums: a large *manman*, a mid-sized *segon* and smaller *kata* (or *boula*), all of which have cowhide covers attached with wooden pegs. *Petwo* drums, for the Petwo division of *lwa*, come in sets of two or three instruments, with goatskin covers that are attached by a loop of rubber and a system of cords. Closely related to the Petwo drums are the *Kongo* drums for the Kongo nation of *lwa*.



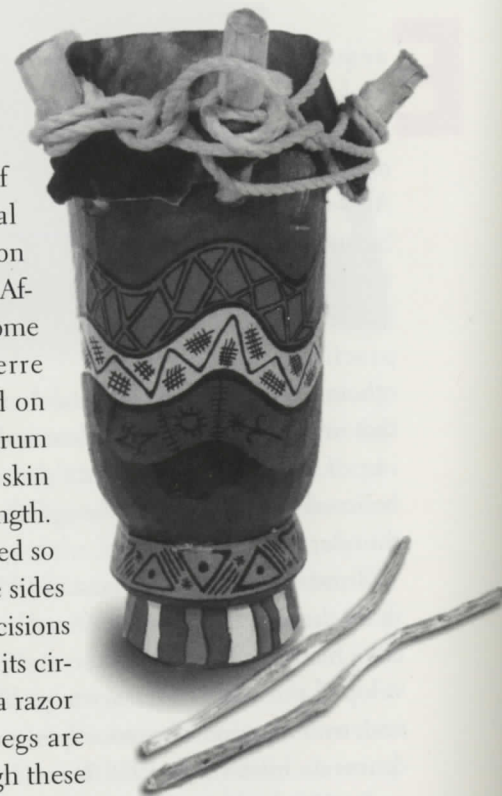
The process of covering a Rada drum begins with soaking a piece of cowhide for several days in a lye solution to soften its texture. After the skin has become malleable, Laguerre and Senatus stand on opposite sides of a drum body and pull the skin with all of their strength. The skin is stretched so that it overlaps the sides of the drum. Six incisions are then made on its circumference with a razor blade. Wooden pegs are hammered through these incisions into pre-carved holes on the sides of the drum. Next a razor blade is used to shave remaining hair from the skin. Finally, a length of rope is tightly interlaced around the pegs. “The way someone ties the rope varies from place to place,” Laguerre states. “It depends on where you’re from in Haiti or who you learned it from.”

Because drum skins become looser with continued playing, Laguerre and Senatus are often called by local musicians to re-cover and re-tie their drums. “He doesn’t know what he’s doing,” says Laguerre, as he watches a younger musician completely re-tie his manman drum, before informing him that he has done it wrong. He then takes over the process and instructs the novice as he proceeds. “There aren’t enough old drummers here to teach them,” he comments, while pulling the skin to the proper tension.

—Joanne Hyppolite

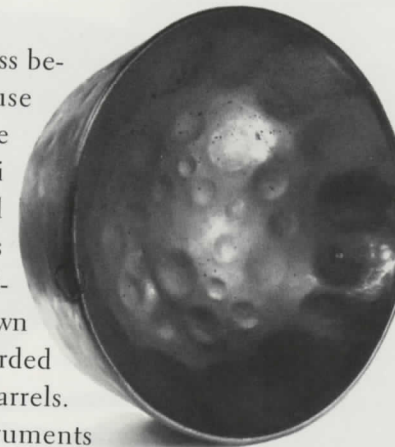
Top: Rada drum (kata) covered by Ton Ton Laguerre and Ti Wouj Senatus and painted by Jan Sebon! (height, 24 in.). HMSF collection.

Left: Laguerre (left) and Senatus covering a manman drum in the church yard of Notre Dame D’Haiti, Miami.



Michael Kernahan ■ Steel Pans

In a field of sawgrass behind a warehouse complex on the edge of Miami’s Tamiami Airport, Michael Kernahan creates high-precision musical instruments, known as *pans*, from discarded oil and chemical barrels. These are the instruments



used by steelbands, a type of musical ensemble that emerged in the island of Trinidad around 1940. Today steelbands include a variety of pans, ranging from single lead tenors, with close to thirty notes, to bass sets with six or nine pans, each with three or four notes.

Kernahan learned to play pans in the early 1960s with the Tripoli Steel Orchestra, one of the top bands in Port of Spain, Trinidad. In addition to performing with Tripoli in Trinidad’s pre-Lenten Carnival, he appeared with the band at Expo ’67 in Montreal and joined in its subsequent tour throughout the United States. During the early 1970s, he learned to *tune* (fabricate) pans from Alan Gervais, Tripoli’s master pan tuner. Kernahan recalls that he was a fast learner: “Maybe because I did [automobile] body work, I already knew how to really hammer. So it didn’t take me long to catch up.” Soon afterwards he migrated to Michigan and, by the mid-1980s, had relocated to Miami. Here he leads and arranges music for the 21st Century Steel Orchestra, a band that performs in the local West Indian Carnival and at a range of concert venues. At present the band has over 20 members and a repertoire that includes calypsos, American popular tunes and European classical selections.

Meanwhile, Kernahan continues to tune pans on a year-round basis. Tuning a pan or set of pans is a complex process that requires many hours of work. To make a single tenor pan, for example, Kernahan turns a barrel upside down and sinks its bottom inward with a bowling ball and a sawed-off sledge hammer to form a concave shape. He then marks on the surface 29 individual sections, each of which will produce a particular note. Next a blunted nail punch is used to create shallow grooves around the perimeter of each section. He then cuts off the sides of the barrel, so that the pan has

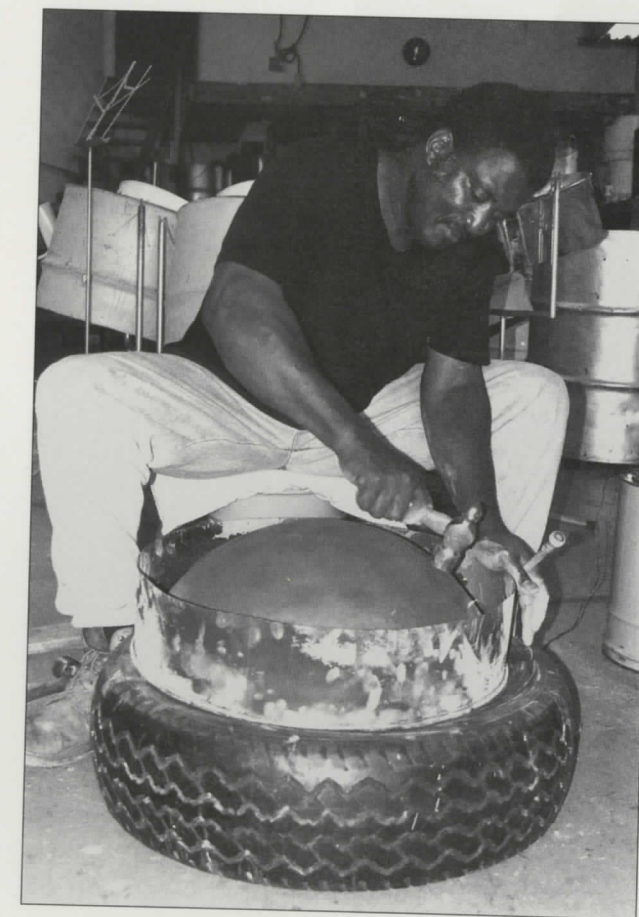
a “skirt” approximately six inches long, and briefly heats the instrument. After the pan has cooled, the actual tuning of its notes begins. First individual sections are “ponged up” from underneath so that they bulge out from the rest of the pan surface. Each section is then carefully tapped with a small hammer and pan playing stick from above and below to adjust its tension and produce the required pitch.

Kernahan tunes pans for steelbands in the Miami area and as far away as Mississippi and Michigan. Because of the intricacies of metallurgy and acoustics, each pan is a new experiment. “Pan tuning is very tricky,” says Kernahan. “It’s something you have to keep doing all the time.”

—Stephen Stuenkel

Top: Tenor pan made by Michael Kernahan. HMSF collection.

Bottom: Kernahan tuning a tenor pan in the panyard of the 21st Century Steel Orchestra, Miami.



Romeo Ragbir ■ Tassa Drums

At Indo-Caribbean Hindu weddings, festivals and birthday parties in homes and rented halls around South Florida, one can sometimes hear the sharp, staccato sounds of tassa drums, accompanied by a booming bass drum and a pair of brass cymbals. More than likely, the series of different "hands" or rhythms are being provided by Romeo and the Boys, the leading tassa ensemble in the region. Romeo Ragbir states that "all tassa men are supposed to be able to make their own drums." While this may be the ideal back in Trinidad and Guyana, in South Florida Ragbir ends up preparing most of the drums.

Ragbir was born in the small town of Tacarigua in Trinidad in 1951. While growing up, he watched his father make and play tassa drums and, eventually, started performing himself. When he was 24, he moved to New York, where he gave up playing tassas. In late 1984 he relocated to the Ft. Lauderdale area. He recalls that, several months later, he attended a wedding: "I saw these guys with a tassa. One guy was beating a tassa, another was using a bass drum from a trap set and the

cymbals from a trap set. They were having a good time. I thought: not a bad idea. But I could help these guys." Eventually, the group obtained the proper instruments and

became known as the Sunshine Tassa Band. Ragbir played with Sunshine until they disbanded and, around 1991, formed Romeo and the Boys, which includes his son and a few friends.

Ragbir returns to Trinidad on a regular basis. While there he usually picks up the conical clay shells and pieces of dried goatskin that are used for tassa drums. Back in Ft. Lauderdale, he constructs drums on the back porch of his home, surrounded by a multitude of family members and friends. First he cuts a piece of goatskin into a circular shape and punches holes around its circumference. Though traditionally deerskin lace is used to attach the goatskin to the clay shell, Ragbir prefers nylon cord. A needle is used to sew the cord through the pre-punched holes, around the top of the drum. Then additional cords are run from the sewed section to a ring at the base of the drum. Next extra skin around the drum's face is tucked under itself and sewed again. After the vertical cords are pulled tight, another cord is laced around the drum's mid-section and tightened. Finally, a goatskin loop is attached to the top of the drum, for holding a cloth neck-strap.

Before tassa drums can be played, they must be heated to tighten their skins and heighten their pitch. While this is accomplished over an open fire in Trinidad, Ragbir has found a propane heater to be a convenient alternative for most social occasions.

—Stephen Stuenkel

Top: Tassa drum covered by Romeo Ragbir. HMSF collection.

Left: Ragbir (seated), with friends, covering a tassa drum at his home, Plantation.



Henry Ohumukini ■ Hula Drums

Though far from its homeland, the large Polynesian community in Orlando continues to practice many of its cultural traditions. One of the most talented members of this community is Henry Ohumukini, Jr., a master artist from Hawaii. In addition to making bone fish hooks and neck ornaments, Ohumukini crafts a variety of percussion instruments used to accompany hula dancing and singing: the *hula pahu* (hula log drum), the *hula puniu* (coconut knee drum), the *ipu heke* (gourd drum) and the *uli'uli* (feather gourd rattle). While modern performances of the hula include ukuleles and guitars, the *hula kahiko* (ancient hula) features only percussion.

Ohumukini grew up in a family with several generations of master craftsmen. In addition to acquiring skills from relatives, he studied drum making and dance at the Kamehameha School, an institution devoted to the traditional arts of Hawaii. In 1984 he moved to Orlando, where he worked as a professional entertainer. He currently devotes his time to Hawaiian crafts, teaching hula dancing and organizing hula competitions.

The *hula pahu* is traditionally made from a hollowed-out coconut log and a stretched tiger shark skin. The skin is tightened with a cord, consisting of braided coconut fibers. Before it can be used for a drum head, a skin must be cleaned and salted, so that it will dry. It is then soaked for approximately 24 hours to make it soft and pliable. Next the skin is shaped over the top of the drum and pulled tight with cords. The cords are, in turn, laced through decorative carvings that form the drum's base.

Hawaiians place a high value on their natural resources and use them wisely. Ohumukini explains: "When they catch the shark, they don't just kill and throw it away. It is food. We eat it, use the bones for something else and the skin for something else. Everything is used." Similarly, Ohumukini does not cut trees to make his drums. Instead, he looks for trees that have already fallen or for stumps.

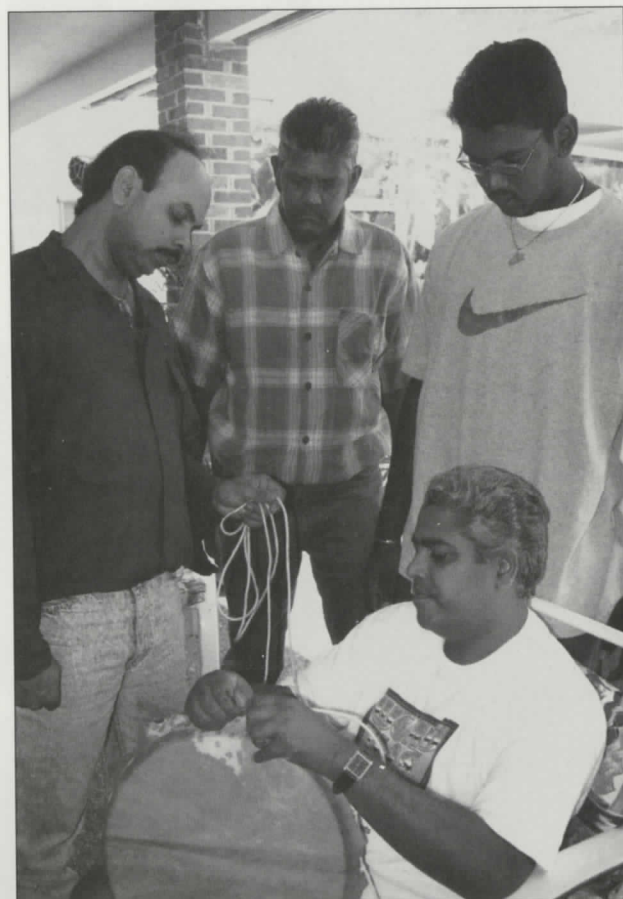
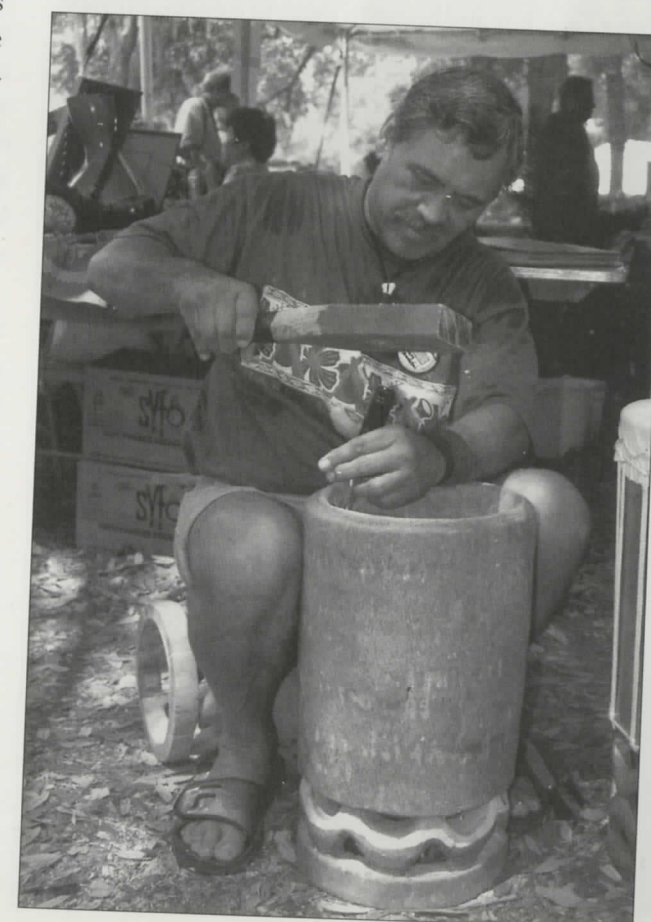
In Florida, Hawaiians have adapted their traditions to

fit with their new lives and the available natural resources. In making hula drums, Ohumukini now typically uses Queen's palm, rather than coconut, logs. Meanwhile, he has replaced shark skin heads with rawhide, and coconut fiber lacing with nylon cord. However, he continues to hollow out logs with a chisel and to carve drum bases with elaborate designs.

Ohumukini's drums are used by various hula musicians around Florida. He is also passing on his craft skills to his daughter and nephew. In reflecting on his life in Florida, he sees a new future for old Hawaiian traditions: "The children of Hawaii are coming back to their culture, finally. They are learning how to make the crafts, how to sing and do the dance."

—Jonathan Kay

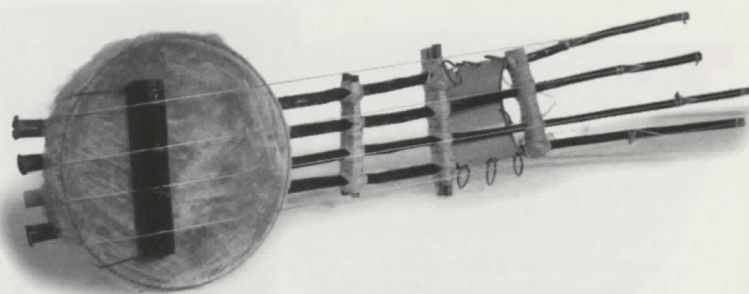
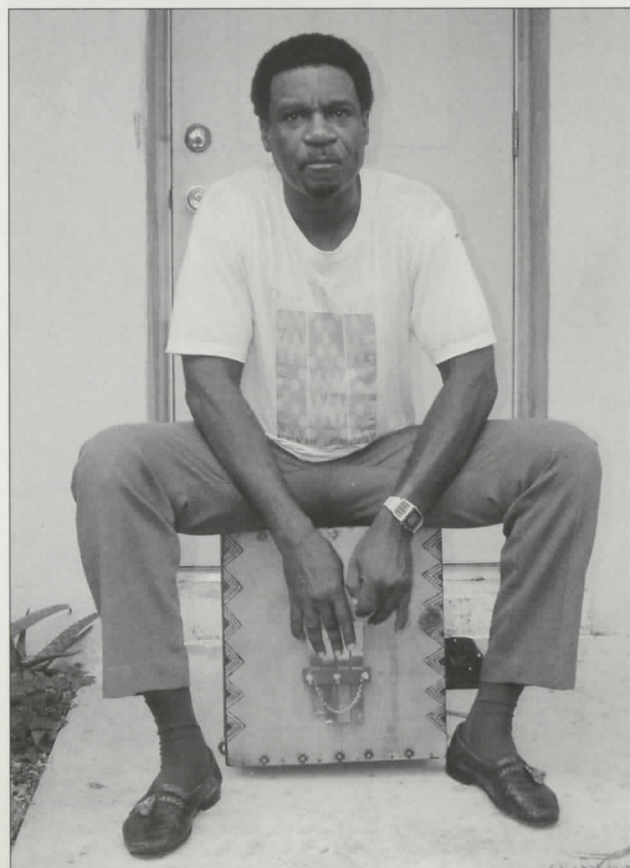
Top: Hula pahu made by Henry Ohumukini. Loaned by Henry Ohumukini. **Bottom:** Ohumukini hollowing out a hula pahu at the Florida Folk Festival, White Springs.



Eddie Osborne ■ Percussion and String Instruments

The rooms of Eddie Osborne's home in Miami contain musical instruments from throughout the African world. Shelves and corners are filled with assorted West African drums and lutes, Central African marimbas, and one-string instruments from Brazil and the American South. All of the instruments are made by Osborne and represent years of study of transatlantic cultural connections.

Osborne was born in Griffin, Georgia, in 1946. "In my family, there was always an awareness of African ancestry," he notes. "My interest in things African started with language. Because learning of the African origins of words that I grew up hearing in Georgia led to wanting to explore other connections, including musical instruments." At Friday night fish fries and other social occasions, he encountered hand-made instruments, such as glasses of water struck with spoons and drums made by stretching animal skins over nail kegs. From his father he learned about the one-string diddly bow of Mississippi and the one-string gut-bucket bass that used to be played in Griffin and other communities. Eventually, he fashioned a single-string lute from a cigar box and began to make keg drums himself.



Over the years Osborne became increasingly interested in the African antecedents of such instruments. A particularly important experience was a trip to Spain in 1970, which offered him the opportunity to meet musicians from several African countries. In 1971 he settled in Miami and, by the end of the decade, began making instruments on a regular basis. Childhood memories, books and conversations with other musicians have all provided him with models for instruments. He states: "I oftentimes will see an instrument and, because I'm familiar with something that's similar to it and can make that, I will transfer that knowledge to a new instrument."

In his home workshop, Osborne continues to experiment with a wide array of instrument materials and designs. He makes a gut-bucket bass by attaching a flexible stick to an inverted wash tub and running a string from the top of the stick to the center of the tub. His diddly bow consists of a banjo string nailed to the ends of a small board, with a spool or other object serving as a bridge. An *akam*, based on models from Senegal and Cameroon, has a body made from a goat skin stretched over a wooden bowl and a neck consisting of four curved sticks. Kite strings provide the primary tones, while a secondary buzzing sound is produced by a piece of a Vienna sausage can with metal rings. A Central African style marimba has hardwood keys of different lengths, suspended on foam rubber above a plywood sound box. In addition to making these and numerous other instruments for musicians and collectors, Osborne uses them in educational workshops on African cultural heritage. "My whole desire," he states, "is to show that we didn't just stop being African at some point in this country."

—Stephen Stuenkel

Top: Akam made by Eddie Osborne (length, 22 in.).
Loaned by Eddie Osborne.

Left: Osborne playing a kongoma outside his home, Miami.

Clayton Raulerson ■ Fiddles

Clayton Raulerson, a fiddle maker from Narcoossee, today lives in a retirement home in St. Cloud, south of Orlando. As a young man, he worked as a cowboy, driving cattle across the state. In those days, all cattle teams had a fiddle player. Raulerson explains that the fiddle "was the only thing back then we had that you could move around." So, fiddlers kept teams entertained at night, playing favorite tunes around the camp fire. Though now over 90 years old and in a wheelchair, Raulerson still wears the requisite outfit of an ex-cowboy: plaid western shirt and dark blue jeans, with his sparkling blue eyes just visible under his tall hat.

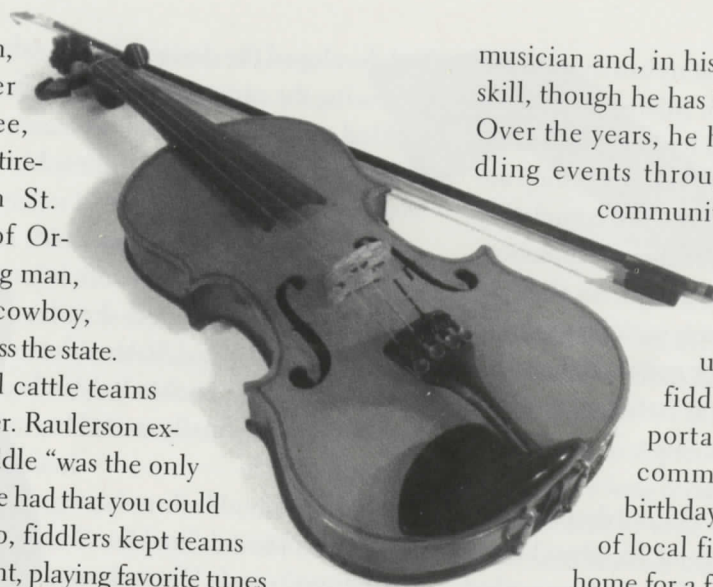
While working as a cowboy and later as a carpenter, Raulerson repaired fiddles for musicians throughout the state. He began making fiddles about 30 years ago, when he retired. The first "looked like a hillbilly job." Eventually, he based his patterns and jigs on the famous Antonio Stradivari violin of the 1700s, noting that this model has been popular for hundreds of years. He states: "I copied him, 'cause he was supposed to be the best maker there was."

The handwork involved in making a fiddle is complex and time-consuming. First the perfect piece of wood is selected for tone. Raulerson's daughter contends that "he has a special touch at knowing the wood." Raulerson generally uses spruce for the instrument's top and maple for its back. The wood is then planed down to 1/8 to 1/16 of an inch in thickness. The pegs for tightening the fiddle's strings are made from maple or oak. After he has made sure that "every inch of it's right," the fiddle is placed in the "hottest, driest place you can find in the sun" for about 30 days, to dry and cure the wood. Then he applies his special varnish to the instrument, the formula for which he will not reveal.

Raulerson got his first fiddle from the Sears and Roebuck Company when he was 14 years old; the instrument and case cost him \$4.90. He is a self-taught

musician and, in his understated way, downplays his skill, though he has been playing for nearly 80 years. Over the years, he has performed at numerous fiddling events throughout the state, as well as at community gatherings. He has made and repaired fiddles for some of the country's finest musicians. In fact, Hank Williams, Jr., used to visit him to talk about fiddles. Raulerson remains an important figure in the fiddling community of Florida. On his last birthday, when he turned 91, a number of local fiddlers came to the retirement home for a fiddling party, regaling the other guests with the music of their youth.

—Laura Ogden



Top: Fiddle made by Clayton Raulerson. Loaned by Clayton Raulerson.
Bottom: Raulerson tuning a fiddle in his retirement home, St. Cloud.



Paris Banchetti ■ Guitars

Paris Banchetti makes and repairs guitars in a shop on the side of his self-built home in South Miami. Light from a window illuminates the work bench where, he says, his only companion is his mind. Surrounding the shop are racks filled with guitars, in various states of completion and disrepair. Banchetti has an international reputation, both for his own fine line of guitars and for his ability to make the most damaged instruments seem like new. In all of his work, he strives to produce guitars that provide both the highest quality sound and "satisfaction of the eyes." "In 43 years in this job," he notes, "I never saw a customer coming back protesting."

Banchetti was born in Italy in 1930 and developed an interest in woodworking by the age of 16, when he was offered a job in a shop that made coffins. He later worked for a cabinet maker and, in 1953, emigrated to Brazil through a government program for craftsmen. In São Paulo he met Juan Orozco, a master guitar maker from Spain. Orozco was part of the most famous lineage of Spanish guitar makers—that of Antonio de Torres, who

had developed the design of the modern guitar during the nineteenth century. Banchetti studied guitar making with Orozco for 21 months, before striking out on his own in Montevideo, Uruguay.

As a child Banchetti had enjoyed American cowboy movies and, in Uruguay, he continued to dream of living in the United States. After moving his family back to Italy and then to Paris, he finally arrived in Miami in 1975.

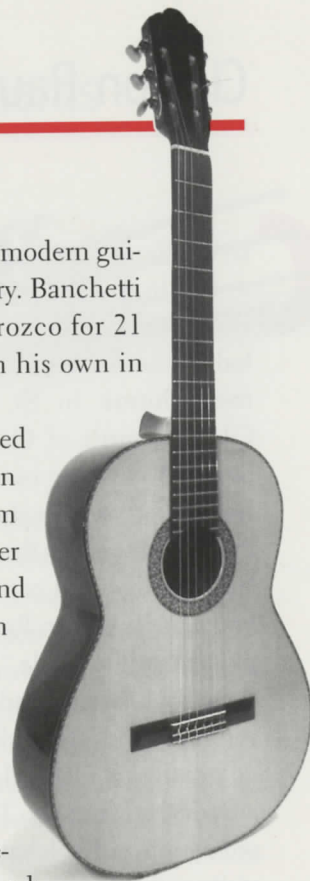
Banchetti builds three types of guitars: classical, "traditional flamenco" and "flamenco negra." His classical model has a rosewood back and sides, a cedar or spruce top, a mahogany neck and an ebony fingerboard. The traditional flamenco guitar has a shallower body, consisting of a cypress back and sides and a spruce top. While the traditional flamenco has a sound that is earthier than that of the classical, it also has less projection. Greater projection is offered by the flamenco negra model, which is made with a rosewood back and sides and a spruce top. The actual construction of each type of guitar is a highly complex process. For example, the sides have to be bent with a heater and mold, the inside of the top must be properly braced with struts, and metal frets must be carefully embedded in the fingerboard.

Banchetti sometimes goes for months without making any new guitars, since he receives so many requests for instrument repairs. But repairs offer unique artistic challenges. "To be a good repairman," he states, "you have to be a builder first. In the repair, you have to invent continuously how to solve the problem." Banchetti also repairs other types of string instruments and invented a "practical bass," a bodiless upright bass with an electronic pick-up.

—Stephen Stuenkel

Top: Classical guitar made by Paris Banchetti. Loaned by Paris Banchetti.

Left: Banchetti sanding a classical guitar in his home shop, Miami.



Yossi Gansburg ■ Shofarot

The shofar is one of the earliest musical instruments known to man. While shofarot (the plural of shofar) are mentioned in biblical texts as having a variety of uses, today they are most commonly blown during two major holidays in the Jewish calendar: Rosh HaShana (New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). Usually, the word "shofar" is translated as "ram's horn." In reality, a shofar may be made from one of five species of animals: sheep, goat, mountain goat, antelope or gazelle. Horns of other animals are not considered kosher, or suitable according to Jewish law, for the making of shofarot.

Rabbi Yossi Gansburg was born in Brooklyn in 1964 and relocated to Coconut Creek, a suburb of Ft. Lauderdale, in 1993. He believes that it is important that a child's Jewish education include both the creation and use of shofarot. While shofarot are ritual items subject to kosher guidelines, there are no restrictions on who may make the instruments. Through a workshop called "The Shofar Factory," Gansburg gives children a hands-on experience in the creation of shofarot.

The first step is to rid the horn of its marrow. Boiling the horn softens its texture and allows the marrow to be extracted with a chisel and pliers. This must be done carefully, since a crack or hole in the horn would make it unfit for ritual use. Next the particular shape of the horn may require that its sharpest curves be straightened. After softening the horn by heating it over a flame, it is untwisted and placed under a press or in clamps until it cools down. Depending on the required length of the shofar, its tip may be sawed off. A hole is drilled in the tip to create the mouth piece. Additional work may then be done to finish the shofar, such as smoothing its interior, polishing its exterior by hand or machine, and coating it with shellac. Though the shofar may not be painted, further embellishments in the form of gilding or carved designs are permitted.

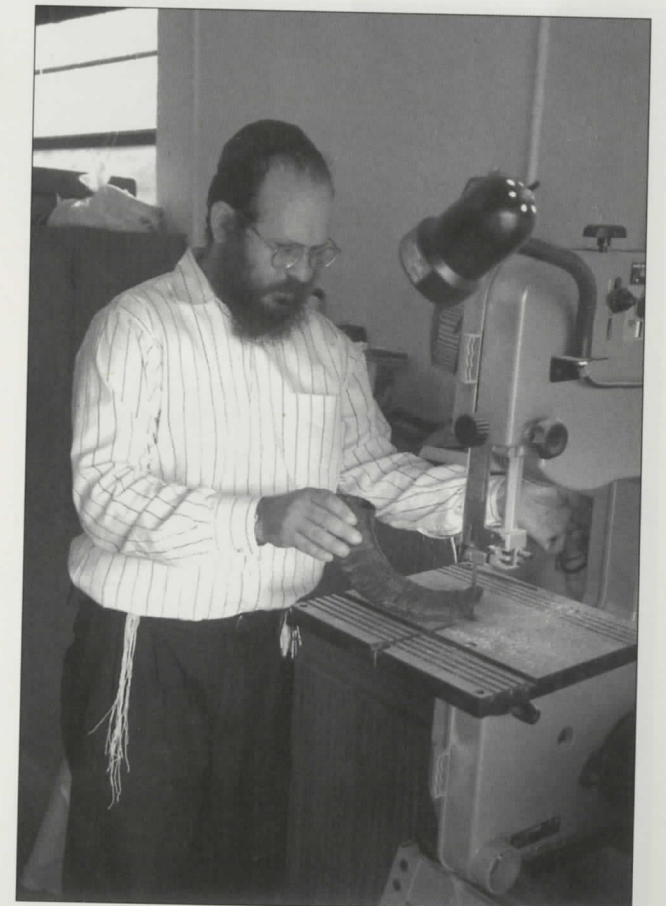
Today most shofarot used in America are produced in home workshops in Israel. After moving to Florida, Gansburg explored the making of shofarot on his own, combining practical know-how with the requirements of written Judaic law. For him, the purpose of shofar making is not to create a highly decorated work of art but to produce a ritual object in accordance with Jewish law, suitable for use during Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.



At these occasions, the shofar may be blown in a temple by any male who has been *bar mitzvah'd* (who has completed the rite of passage to Jewish adulthood). Traditionally, a sequence of notes of different durations is sounded: a long *tekiah*, three shorter notes called the *shevorim* and/or nine very short notes known as the *teruah*, and another long *tekiah*.

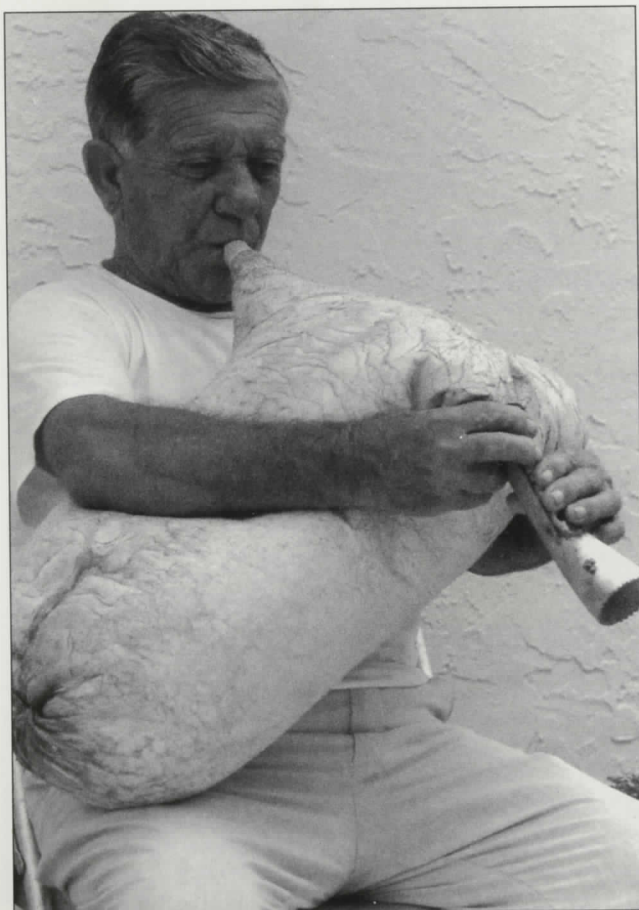
—Remko Jansonius

Top: Shofar made by Yossi Gansburg (length, 33 in.). Loaned by Sanford L. Ziff Jewish Museum of Florida. **Bottom:** Gansburg cutting a shofar in his home shop, Coconut Creek.



Shortly after the turn of the century, Greek men began to emigrate to Florida's west coast to work as divers in the state's burgeoning sponge industry. They established the town of Tarpon Springs, a few miles northwest of Tampa, as one of the world centers for sponge diving. Today Greek-Americans living in Tarpon Springs continue to practice many elements of traditional culture—foodways, music, dance, religious rituals, crafts and occupational arts—that have been handed down from one generation to the next.

Nikitas Tsimouris was the first Floridian to be awarded the National Heritage Fellowship, the highest honor given by the United States government to traditional artists. He was recognized for his ability to make an ancient southern Greek bagpipe, known as a *tsabouna* (pronounced *sah-BOO-nah*), and for his continued performance on this instrument at weddings, dances and other social functions in Tarpon Springs. Tsimouris learned to play and make tsabounas from his father, while growing up on Kalymnos, a small Greek island just a few miles west of Turkey.



Most people identify the bagpipe with Scotland. However, nearly every country in Europe has a bagpipe tradition. Today playing the tsabouna is a vanishing art, even in Greece. It is believed that the instrument was developed by herdsmen to pass time while tending sheep and goats. Tsabouna music is played in rhythmic patterns unlike the two, three, and four beat music to which most Americans are accustomed. It is dance music and nearly every tune has a song associated with it. Often the lyrics are improvised spontaneously. The repertoire of tunes, playing style and melodic ornamentation vary from one Greek island to the next.

Tsimouris makes the tsabouna bag, or *touloumi*, from a goatskin turned inside out. First he ties the neck, tail and two leg openings shut. He then uses string to tightly bind the mouthpiece and chanter of the instrument to the remaining two leg openings. When he blows the skin full of air and increases the pressure inside the bag by squeezing it with his arms, air forced through the chanter, or *marta*, vibrates the chanter reeds and produces sound. The chanter has two cane pipes, one with five finger holes and the other with three. To tune the chanter, Tsimouris adjusts the gap between each reed and its pipe with a piece of string and reduces the size of the finger holes with pieces of beeswax. The chanter is mounted in a hollow wooden elbow with a flared opening. The elbow on Tsimouris's personal instrument was carved from olive wood by his paternal grandfather and passed on to him by his father.

Tsimouris has done his best to ensure that the valued tradition of tsabouna music continues in the community of Tarpon Springs. He has taught a few young people, most notably his grand-nephew, Nikitas Kavouklis, to make and play the instrument.

—Robert Stone

Top: Tsabouna made by Nikitas Tsimouris.
Loaned by Museum of Florida History.

Left: Tsimouris playing a tsabouna at his home, Tarpon Springs.



Notes—Introduction

1. For discussions of the definition of folk art, see John Michael Vlach, "American Folk Art: Questions and Quandaries," *Winterthur Portfolio* 15 (Winter 1980): 345–355; Simon J. Bronner, ed., *American Material Culture and Folklife: A Prologue and Dialogue* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1985); and Henry H. Glassie, *The Spirit of Folk Art: The Girard Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art* (New York: Abrams, 1989).
2. See David M. Blackard, *Patchwork and Palmettos: Seminole-Miccosukee Folk Art Since 1820* (Ft. Lauderdale: Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, 1990), p. 23; Kathleen Deagan, "Afro-American and Native-American Traditions in Florida Basketry," in *Florida Basketry: Continuity and Change* (White Springs, Fla.: Florida Folklife Program, Florida Department of State, n.d.), pp. 18–19; and Tina Bucuvalas, Peggy A. Bulger and Stetson Kennedy, *South Florida Folklife* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994), p. 23.

Notes—The Landscape of Florida Folklife

1. The Seminole people are descended primarily from Creek peoples of Alabama and Georgia. The recent distinction between Seminoles and Miccosukees is sociopolitical, rather than cultural. The Seminole Tribe of Florida was established in 1958; the Miccosukee Tribe in 1962.
2. Cited in Jane Gilmore Landers, *Florida* (New York: Macmillan/McGraw Hill School Publishing Co., 1995), p. 51.
3. For general histories of Florida, see Michael V. Gannon, *Florida: A Short History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993); and Michael V. Gannon, ed., *The New History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996). For the geography of the state, including cultural and historical perspectives, see Edward A. Fernald and Elizabeth D. Purdum, eds., *Atlas of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992).
4. Cited in Miguel A. Bretos, *Cuba & Florida: Explorations of an Historic Connection, 1539–1991* (Miami: Historical Association of Southern Florida, 1991), pp. 75–76.

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Contributors

Tina Bucuvalas, Ph.D., established the folklife program at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida in 1986 and curated *Tropical Traditions: Southeast Florida Folklife* (1991). She has served as a staff folklorist in the State of Florida Folklife Program since 1996 and directs the Folklife Apprenticeship Program. She is a co-author of *South Florida Folklife* (University Press of Mississippi, 1994).

George Chillag, M.A., is Curator of Exhibitions at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida. Among the many exhibitions that he has designed are *From Mayami to Miami: The Story of a River* (1987) and *Summer of 1898: War in Florida & Cuba* (1998). He also serves as the museum's chief photographer.

Kristin G. Congdon, Ph.D., is Professor of Art at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. She is currently a member of the Florida Folklife Council and is a past president of the Florida Folklore Society. She is co-editor of *Art in a Democracy* (Columbia Teachers College Press, 1987), *Pluralistic Approaches to Art Criticism* (Popular Press, 1991) and *Evaluating Art Education Programs in Community Centers* (JAI Press, 1998).

Archie Green, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus of Folklore at the University of Texas and, for many years, has been an advocate of public folklife programs in the United States. Among his numerous publications are *Only a Miner: Studies in Recorded Coal-Mining Songs* (University of Illinois Press, 1972) and *Wobblies, Pile Butts, and Other Heroes: Laborlore Explorations* (University of Illinois Press, 1993). He is currently preparing a book on the traditional art of tinsmiths.

Elizabeth Higgs, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Western Illinois University. She was the director of *Georgia Living History: The Southside Community of Valdosta* (1996), an oral history research project and exhibition on black-owned businesses during the Jim Crow years. In addition to her folklife fieldwork in the American South, she has conducted research and published on women and labor in Brazil.

Teresa Hollingsworth received an M.A. in Folk Studies from Western Kentucky University. As a staff folklorist in the State of Florida Folklife Program since 1993, she has coordinated the annual Florida Folk Heritage Awards and has developed a range of educational programs. She previously served as the Folklife Coordinator for the Kentucky Folklife Program and the Maine Folklife Center.

Joanne Hyppolite is a doctoral candidate in the Department of English at the University of Miami, where she is completing a dissertation on Caribbean-American women writers. She is the author of two children's novels: *Seth and Samona* (1995) and *Ola Shakes It Up* (1998), both published by Delacorte Press. She is currently working on an adult novel, set in Miami.

Remko Jansonius received an M.A. in cultural anthropology from the State University of Utrecht in the Netherlands and has conducted field research in Papua New Guinea, Cameroon and Florida. He served as Curator of the Objects Collection at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida from 1992 to 1997. He currently is Curator of Collections and Exhibitions at the Ziff Jewish Museum of Florida on Miami Beach.

Jonathan E. Kay received an M.A. in Folk Studies from Western Kentucky University. In 1998 he assumed the position of Folklorist at the Stephen Foster State Folk Culture Center in White Springs. He was the author/designer of two computer-based multimedia exhibits for the Kentucky Museum: *Roads, Rails, and Rivers* (1997) and *Life on the Kentucky Frontier* (1997).

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Contributors

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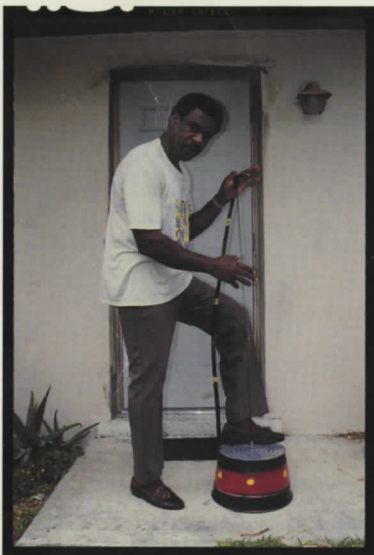
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