

## BOOKS AND VISUAL ARTS

**"M**y works are a diary of my continually changing inner life," says Betty White. "There is no separation between my life and my work. I am what I make."

Judging by her artwork, White is a sensitive, poetic person, and a profoundly original artist.

Born in Worcester, Mass., and now living in Toronto, White began her career as a fibre artist, and also studied papermaking techniques. This helps explain the origin of her mixed-media paintings now on display at the Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec.



**DOROTHEA  
KOZINSKA**

Pale, almost invisible at a distance, they speak of emotions and memories. Delicate drawings, and crumpled linen beings, appear on textured handmade paper like imprints of a feeling, traces of lives.

Layered, slightly frayed at the edges, these images speak of love and sadness, of passage of time, of the fragility of the human spirit.

In Birdman, an outline of a figure is barely visible, white on white, the shape like flattened origami, a being with wings and a human face.

Done in pencil on handmade paper, it resembles a winged messenger, some kind of angel, emerging, gently alighting in front of our eyes.

The Last Word, in chalk and pencil on bark, shows a little group of beings

huddled together in the centre of the sheet. They hover like shadows from a Chagal painting, enveloped in a shimmering, ethereal light. A larger face looms above, bestowing on them a gentle smile like a blessing.

Bathed in delicate pinks and yellows, the faces are childlike, innocent, ephemeral.

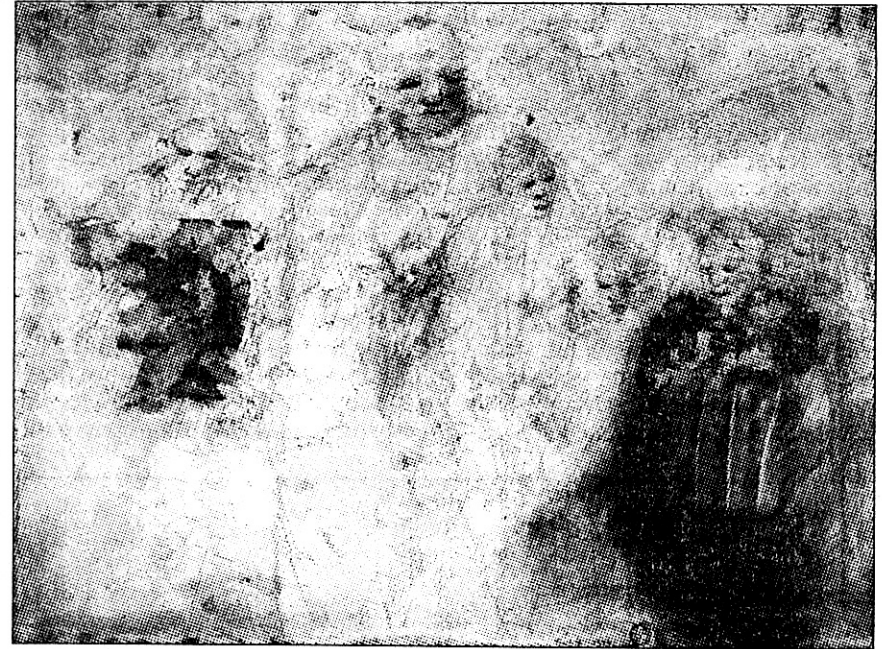
Some of White's works explode with colour: In the Burning Cradle, for example, a magnificent, powerful portrait, a face emerges from a burning orange glow, surrounded by a mysterious living light.

At times, her images speak of darker emotions. There are figures swathed in bandage-like strips of fabric, particularly disturbing in a piece titled Wrapped Woman. Against a dark, almost black background, the figure of a woman stands like an Egyptian mummy. Her face is blank and featureless, yet she speaks – of the invisible, of time passing, of the forgotten.

White applies her unusual technique to smaller works with equal success, and a series of evocative, compelling little portraits takes up one room of the gallery. What strikes the viewer are the eyes, tiny black pinholes, seemingly looking into our very soul. These wrinkled, textured images are disarming, and utterly charming.

White's works are complemented by beautiful ceramic vessels by Montreal artist Monique Bourbonnais. The two have already exhibited together, and there is a marvelous symbiosis between their works and media.

The textured, rough surfaces of Bourbonnais's vases, in muted, earthy tones, accompany with ease White's



**The Bead Game, by Betty White, whose mixed-media works are on show at the Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec.**

mixed-media creations, reflecting her monochromatic palette.

Some are decorated with scratches, abstract hieroglyphics, strange symbols resembling Japanese writing. The surface of other works recalls the texture of a weathered rock, a warm, terracotta expanse.

One work, Vaisseau "Par Monts et Par Vaux," stands out from the rest, a clay vessel folded like an envelope. Its rim is uneven, cracked, giving it the semblance of a desert artifact, an archeological find. Most original.

♣ Betty White, works on paper; and Monique Bourbonnais, ceramics, at the

*Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec, 2025 Peel St., until July 2. Open Monday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday to Friday 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 849-6091.*

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