

Interviews and Observations:

Nancy Bingham is a well known potter and has been making pottery for almost 40 years. She lives in the San Juan Islands and loves it. Much of her inspiration comes from the island. Whether it's the blue and green theme of her pottery inspired by the plants and water, or the many birds, fish, and animals of the islands painted on her creations, or something else she sees on her inspirational walks, the fact that she lives in and loves these islands is evident in her work. Nancy believes that the islands are a good place for artists. There are few traditional jobs so there are more opportunities for artists and the locals are a good market. Nancy will take commissions for gifts and mugs and things for businesses. The gifts are often for weddings or birthdays and you can often find her pottery at local shops and businesses. Sometimes tourists will buy her pottery. While most of her materials come from outer sources, she sometimes makes things from clay straight off local beaches. This community does other things than inspire her, too. She caters her pottery to the market. She keeps evolving and never stops changing. She loves the freedom to create and often learns from others. Nancy's studio and land is evidence of her inspiration and work. Lots of her work is around her studio, on the gate, in the garden. It's easy to see from the green leaves where she gets her inspiration from. Inside the studio, clay is everywhere. Whether untouched or fired or ready to be fired or painted or glazed or in scrap form, it's everywhere.

Gregg Blomberg is a knife and tool maker, including adzes. He sometimes carves wood with the tools that he makes and has been for maybe 30 years. He discovered Lopez Island after living on a sailboat and got interested in Northwest Carving. He likes carving because it doesn't change and affect the island and it's

natural beauty very much. He says that the community is real and supportive and believes that this community is much better than money. Gregg gets a lot of his inspiration Native American's of the land and their culture and stories. This is evident in his workshop. There are pictures of natives and their culture and a wolf head that has been carved by him that obviously has native american influences. He likes it because you have to look deep inside yourself and your connection to the island and your "spirit animal" (his is a wolf). Often his clients buy his tools by mail order and use them for making musical instruments, boat building, lots of different craftwork. Gregg sometimes uses local cedar and other wood for his crafts. Sometimes inspiration comes from other people.

Steven Brouwer is a boat builder of Lopez Island and is currently working a large boat which is in the middle of his workspace. He has lived here for about 30 years and likes it because of it's smallness. He knows lots of people and the small community allows him to participate more. The local customers will buy his furniture and he mostly takes custom order. A lot of his work is inspired by what his customers want because he is trying to please them but he can use lots of creativity. Sometimes the local water influences the design of his boats. He says that his business is mostly spread through word of mouth. He sometimes uses local old growth yellow cedar but imports lots of his wood. He likes boats because they make you think and use your brain. A belief of his is that to get the experience and knowledge, you really have to do something.

Makenna Henrikson is an aspiring blacksmith who uses many different techniques to shape metal. She likes living on Lopez because there is a high concentration of craftsmen and therefore, many techniques. The community and landscape intersect in many ways, humans are part of nature on the island, and

everyone is family. She really enjoys paying attention to the landscape and being part of it. The community supports her and everyone is in touch and encouraging. A lot of her inspiration comes from these connections and commissions she takes. She likes to make things affordable and sells to locals. A lot of her friends and family use her craft, like her parent's have things made by her in their house and her friend's store has something made by her too. Most of the time, she does trades. She likes to call herself a "maker" because she makes things, including spoons, home furnishings, things that are useful to the community, and things of her own inspiration.

Summary of Findings

After interviewing, observing, and experiencing these craftsmen on Lopez Island, I found that the island does affect the artisans and craftsmen. One of the most common things that I found was that the small culture is a big part of each craftsman's infatuation with the island. The small community is great because you get to know a lot more people and participate more. Most craftsmen and artisans know each other and can therefore share their work and make connections. The nature and people are often very connected. This nature is a big part too. In some people's work, their inspiration that comes from the island and its natural beauty is very evident. Whether it's Nancy's blue and green, or Gregg's tools that don't affect the island and its natural wonders, or just the way that people love the beauty and the way it makes them feel, the artisan's and craftsmen love the natural island.