

UNIVERSITY OF REGINA ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
THE DR JOHN ARCHER LIBRARY

2003-4

GARRY GAUDET INTERVIEWS OF
ANTHONY THORN

FEBRUARY 2004

REVISED
APRIL 2009
MARCH 2017

ELIZABETH SEITZ

Biographical Sketch: Anthony Thorn is the pseudonym of Arthur Goldman, the son of Leon and Dorothy Goldman, born in Regina in 1927. He is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan (BA, 1947) and pursued graduate studies in English literature at the University of Chicago.

Thorn began to paint in 1948. His first studies in painting were in Regina with Kenneth Lochhead followed by studies in figure drawing at the Chicago Art Institute, studies in oil painting techniques with Frederic Taubes at the Banff Centre, studies in stained glass design at the Centre d'Art Sacré, Paris, and drawing at the Academie de la Grande Chaumière, Paris. In 1955 Thorn was apprentice to the muralist David Alfaro Siquéiros in Mexico and studied in acrylic technique with Jose Gutierrez. In later years he studied watercolor and sumi painting with Mataichiro Isoda in Kyoto, Japan, and metal-smithing in Corfu, Greece.

His work has been exhibited with galleries across Canada but also in France, Mexico, the Canary Islands and the United States. About 40 of his works are in corporate and public collections in Canada. Notably in the collections of the Saskatchewan Arts Board and the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and the Greater Victoria Public Library; they consist of paintings and carved works in gold leaf, ivory and other precious materials.

As an educator, along with various teaching in Toronto, Thunder Bay and Victoria art classes, his main academic teaching was as a Lecturer in Fine Arts at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay (1977 to 1979) and an Instructor in painting for the Department of Extension of the University of Victoria (1981 to 1984). He wrote as an art reviewer and critic for the publication *Toronto Citizen* (1971 to 1972)

Anthony Thorn passed away in 2014.

Biographical Sketch: Garry Gaudet was born in Saskatoon and raised in Regina. He began a radio career in Saskatoon at age 17. Subsequently he worked in radio, educational TV and print in Regina, Edmonton, Vancouver and Nanaimo for more than 25 years. Garry also wrote columns ("A Different Drummer") for Stanley Burke's *Nanaimo Times*, and sold freelance articles to *NUVO Magazine*, *The Canadian Lawyer*, *The Professional Skater*, *The Tyee*, and various other periodicals.

As a mature student Garry studied Arts at Malaspina College, focusing on Political Science, English, Geography, Philosophy, and Sociology. He also studied Spanish in Guatemala, and at the University of Victoria and Queens University. Gaudet became head of media relations and public information at Okanagan University College, Kelowna from 1986 to 1997 during the school's evolution from "college" to "university college".

Among the founders of the Attic in Regina, Gaudet is a still-active musician, having played with such professionals as Tommy Banks, Diana Krall, Bill Watrous and "Peanuts" Hucko.

Gaudet interviewed Regina-born artist Anthony Thorn at his Oak Bay, BC studio on January 27, February 18 and March 7, 2000, researching for a profile article, "For the Honour of the Art", which appeared in *NUVO Magazine*, Spring 2001. In 2017, Gaudet edited the original audio cassettes, adding short musical interludes between sections and removing pauses and inadvertent noises. The resulting compact disk was deposited in the Archives in March 2017 and was included with the original 2003 accession comprised of 4 audio cassettes as described below.

This collection is open to researchers.

THORN INTERVIEW AUDIO CASSETTE TAPES - 2000

Tape 1 - Side 1 JANUARY 27

Current health concerns (decline in circulation, vision in right eye), smoking
 Reflections on retirement, daily routines
 Student experiences in Europe led to fascination with, study of gilding
 Religious art, calligraphy
 Books (two major classical influences), traditional art practices
 Youth in Regina, Saskatoon university days, writing poetry, adoption of pseudonym
 Parents' conflicting attitudes toward choice of a career in art
 Realization that his career would be art (Mexico, 1955)
 Decision to live and work in Canada after some years abroad
 Some Toronto experiences (galleries, studio)
 Move to Victoria - shift into carving and gilding as main work
 Early years: The mystery of the Lumsden Mural

Tape 1 - Side 2 JANUARY 27

1990 Cancer surgery - influence on artistic direction
 Religious carving. Importance of Judaism in his life, anti-Semitism in Victoria
 "Wall Jewels" - how they developed; practice of gilding.
 Meeting with a master Victoria gilder, who taught Tony "For the Honour of the Art"
 About Copal - classic oil painting technique, risks and hazards of use
 Geraniums – the glory of Cadmium Red
 Concern about life span, with ideas for another ten years (he got 14!).

Tape 2 - Side 1 JANUARY 27

On teaching – passing skills to amateurs, acolytes, university students
 Comments on "self-expression" through art; artists who portray negative moods in work
 Genesis of the geranium in his work (Jack Hodgins)
 Serendipity impacting Thorn's career - living in the Canary Islands/Leo Koshino
 Victoria vignettes/ "The Queen's Peace" /The Ivory carver, friend Mira
 Chicago University - "Dust of books on your head", Choose!
 Mentor, teacher Ken Lochhead (Regina)
 Starving artist years, marketing art (learning "Ways of the World") family business

Tape 2 - Side 2 JANUARY 27

On policy of refusing commissions, "peace in the studio"
 Book of work extant, 1178 listed, most sold, donations to galleries
 Pricing of work, quality of materials used (impressionists, Van Gogh)
 Artistic fulfillment, financial independence, community involvement
 Recognition by Canadian Cultural Property Review Board – "Outstanding Significance and National Importance."
 Career satisfaction: "I have no higher ambition...but I would like to teach somebody".
 Supporting art: "Neither business nor government has any obligation to the artist"

Tape 3 - Side 1 February 4

Earliest drawing lessons, borrowing sister Lyn's paints
Recollections of first teacher (Regina neighbour)
Adoption of pseudonym "Thorn" - later almost stopped being Arthur Goldman
On being true to oneself and its costs (Toronto experience with an agent)
Discussion of Mourner's Kaddish

Tape 3 - Side 1 February 18

The day of acting out repentance (morsels of bread for the seagulls)
On keeping moods out of art - Sarajevo
Spontaneity of music/invention, vs. conservatism in art
Wife's influence on lifestyle, work

Tape 3 - Side 2 February 18

On recognition of his work
Levels of artists - the bureaucracy and hierarchy of visual art world
Teaching at Lakehead University
Artists' treatment of models, ethical practices
The importance of Light
Fanatics and Fashions - New York "Colour Field" movement
How my eyes see light in my environment and my work, studio light available
Current art fashions immaterial - 'I treat certain things as verities and am content with them"

Tape 4 - Side 1 March 7 (73rd birthday of the artist)

Toronto tenants strike
Study with Frederic Taubes - major influence on Thorn's work and teaching style
Technical comments on copal, pigment ground glazes etc.
David Siquieros (Mexico) - assisting on mural, resisting artist's Marxist philosophy
Music as an influence on work
Gould Goldberg Variations (tape runs out during conversation)

THORN INTERVIEWS ON COMPACT DISK - 2017

Compact Disk #1 compilation of audio cassette tapes 1 to 4.

http://ourspace.uregina.ca/Thorn/2003-4_Interviews/