

When Beaders Unite

Diane Fitzgerald

In the Keweenaw Peninsula of northern Michigan, winters are long and cold, but the local beadworkers don't mind. They just get out their beads and go to work. The winter of 2006 was a little different though, as they took on a special challenge.



Long Shadow Time, Cynthia Coté



River Watch, Jacquie Coté



Reflections of the Past—Copper Memories, Joanne Polzien



Aurora, Marlene Herman

With funding cuts and budget limitations, the Copper County Community Arts Council (CCCAC) that serves the Keweenaw Peninsula found itself wondering how it could continue beyond 2006. Inspired by Jeanette Shanigan's bead quilt project to support breast cancer research, a small group of beaders, including Pamlynn Hansen, Peg McNinch, Cynthia Coté, and Christine van Domelen, met to discuss a similar group project to benefit the CCCAC. Soon an idea was launched.

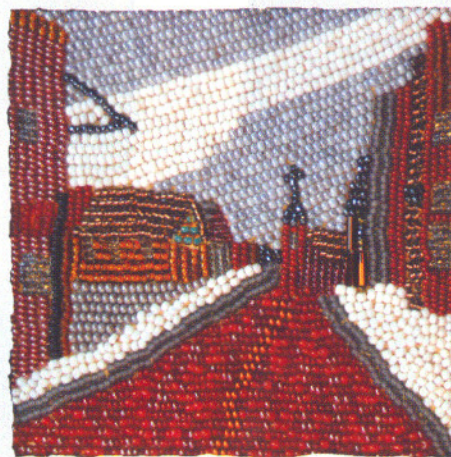
Their concept was to create diminutive artworks celebrating the beauty of nature that abounds in the scenic peninsula, which also has a

rich history of copper mining and timber. Each piece would be a 3½" beaded and embellished square on a 5½" square of Ultrasuede. Since artwork is often framed and matted, they chose this manner of assembling and displaying the pieces to give the work a professional finished appearance. Some twenty beadworkers volunteered for the project and, along with the Ultrasuede and guidelines, each received a small bag of copper seed beads, which not only contributed to the theme of the exhibit but also helped unify it. Many who created squares had never done bead embroidery, so they learned a new technique to explore with seed beads.

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Keweenaw Lights, Pamlynn L. Hansen



Historical Road Brick Sets Record Straight, Julie DePaul



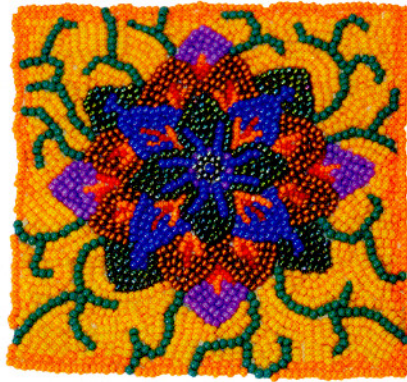
The Big Rock Tumbler, Theresa Coté



Keweenaw Impressions, Johnnie DeBernard



Hancock Pathways Above and Below,
Phyllis Fredendall



Silk Road, Abby Sue Fisher



The Iris Garden, Jane Hiltunen



Howlin' at the Moon, Erika Faust



Memories of Spring, Loretta Coté



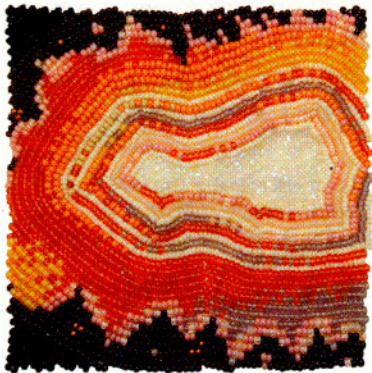
Old Friend Raven, Erika Faust



The Lakeside Sauna, Kate Hintz

Please share *your* bead group's story!

This wonderful project by the bead-ers of the Keweenaw Peninsula is definitely not the only such story of beading together for a good cause. We know there are plenty of worthy beadwork community projects happening everywhere. Please share your group's story by e-mailing us a brief description of your project and a picture to beadingdaily@interweave.com. We'll be featuring the best of these inspiring community projects at [beadingdaily](http://beadingdaily.com)!



Agate—A Slice of the Past, Amy Forsell



Deco Dragonfly, Peg McNinch

“EACH IS A TRIBUTE TO THE MAKER’S SKILL AND LOVE OF HER KEWEENAW HOME.”



Hope, Ann West



Superior Conglomerate, Christine van Domelen



C is for Copper, Priscilla Trenchard

When the finished squares began to arrive at the art center, they far exceeded the hopes of the organizers. The squares were grouped into seven arrangements, then matted and framed. To raise money, the CCCAC secured a raffle license and sold tickets throughout the summer at various arts events where the seven groupings were displayed. Ticket sales exceeded \$2,500.

The tiny artworks portrayed wildflowers, agates, birch trees in winter, a chickadee, northern lights, and even a wolf howling at the moon

on a snowy night. Each is a tribute to the maker’s skill and love of her Keweenaw home. This story offers one more shining example of how, when beaders unite, they can accomplish great things. ♦

Diane Fitzgerald is a beader, bead collector, and an author. Her most recent book is *Zulu Inspired Beadwork: Weaving Techniques and Projects* (Interweave Press, 2007). You may contact her through her website, www.dianefitzgerald.com.