

WHY PIGGY-BANKS ?

So often in life, trivial choices reveal themselves to be very fruitful, and this discovery was indeed the case. In 1995, Jocelyne worked out of her gallery and workshop located in Old Montreal. During many years, conventional painting remained her passion until she decided to explore different forms in which puzzle shapes began to support her paintings.

In May of 1995, the birth of her friend's daughter, Tamara, prompted her to search for an original gift. A fortunate meeting with a known ceramist lead her to the solution : the idea of a small piggy-bank made of pottery simply amazed her and provided a unique, practical and original idea for a beautiful painting. The effect of acrylic paint on a ceramic piggy-bank was fantastic. A work of art as well as a symbol for saving money made for a successful blend.

There was a new challenge : painting on a volumetric surface what the artist usually painted on a flat canvas. Still, she was curious to find what other experiences had been made in terms of artistic compositions on different shapes and forms only to realize that others had explored moving, rounded or strangely formed objects for their visual art. Whether it be vases from antique Greece or the ever famous *Fabergé* egg from France. And Matisse, from whom she had such admiration, has also painted on dinner plates.

Jocelyne had begun to paint on ceramic piggy-banks, and these quickly became the admiration of her clientele. At the beginning, she worked by herself in her Old Montreal workshop where people could visit and see her at work. Now her new work has become more and more popular with art lovers. Later, she had the opportunity to carry on her work in a country setting. A gallery operator in Old Montreal offered to acquire her entire production of piggy-banks. Since 1997, she carries on her work in a unique workshop by the lake. Already 1600 of her artistically created piggy-banks were sold throughout the world.

Her work is displayed at the *Yves Laroche Gallery* in Old Montreal, the *Gallery Petit Champlain* in Quebec City, the gallery *Chez-Moi* in Baie St-Paul, the gallery *Symbiose-Art* in Montreal, the gallery *Dimension-Plus* in Montreal and at *Le Balcon d'Art* in St-Lambert

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SAVINGS...are the basis of all progress and of civilization in general... (after François Dirisia)

A quick survey of the history of humanity shows us that the desire to save occurs at all times among all peoples. Piggy banks in the form of different animals are a secular tradition. From the end of the XVIIth century, the chicken next to the piglet, was also a symbol of utility.

During the XVIIIth century, the Age of Splendor, the great porcelain manufacturers had no interest in producing objets like piggy banks which sooner or later were bound to be broken. The few examples which have come down to us date from the XIXth century and were produced either by little-known factories or by workshops of minor importance which did no imprint their name on their work.

It is therefore impossible to establish with any certitude the provenance of the majority of piggy banks, big or small, made in the XIXth century. Rarely of procelain, they were often made in enameled terra cotta by country potters and were sometimes painted. In fact, piggy banks with similar shapes and decoration have been found in England, Holland, Scandinavia and Germany.

The pig has in fact been raised in China for nearly 8000 years, and it was early on considered the most important of the domestic animals. The Chinese frequently offered pigs to the gods but they never used them as artistic themes. It was only in the XIXth century that pigs were used for piggy banks and that was probably due to Western influence.

In the XXth century, the pig has often been an allegory for economy. In centuries past, piggy banks were relatively rare and, even in the XIXth century, they did not occupy a predominant place among the multitude of objets made in the form of animals.

Nonetheless, the pig was considered a symbol of health and happiness as early as the Baroque period. It was associated with the idea of saving due to its qualities such as fertility, rapid growth and sobriety.

In the late Middle Ages, the pig became one of the attributes of St. Antoine. This ermit-sain visited people with animals suffering from contagious diseases. His name is remembered in "Les petits cochons de Saint-Antoine", a charity which helps the poor.

It is therefore understandable that piggy banks were made in the shape of a symbol considered as friendly as the pig. We do not, however, know when piggy banks appeared for the first time. The oldest known ones in general use were made by potters in ceramics.

Fortunately, piggy banks continue to be popular in the XXth century. Simple or elaborate, they attract collectors and have found their way into museums, to give us great pleasure...

**Reference: Peter Hans (1984) "L'Histoire de l'Épargne, de l'Antiquité à nos Jours."
(Editions de l'Épargne, Paris"**