

# RENWICK QUARTERLY

Dec., 1987, Jan., Feb., 1988

Published for the Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, by the James Renwick Alliance.

## “Lost and Found Traditions: Native American Art 1965-1985”

“From childhood we are watchers. It’s not done by talk. We quietly watch. We help our mothers gather materials. We stay around and learn. We do this for each other, now as in the past. At one time or another most of us are students, and then we are teachers.”

With these comments, Carl Ponca, an educator and member of the Osage Tribe, reflects the thoughtful commitment of Native Americans to their artistic heritage. Close to 300 of these artists from the United States and Canada are represented in “Lost and Found Traditions: Native American Art 1965-1985,” the first major exhibition of contemporary traditional American Indian art. The exhibition, which celebrates the continuum of Native Americans’ rich cultural and artistic heritage, continues at the Renwick Gallery through March 6, 1988.

American Indian artists incorporate the past into the present. Tradition, more than custom, belief or myth, is carefully transmitted from one generation to the next. This exhibition is a comprehensive presentation stressing the survival of the traditional art forms into the present day.

Included are a wide variety of objects such as textiles, pottery, baskets, jewelry and carvings. Works employing beads, quills, hides, fur, birch-bark, wood splints, bone and metal demonstrate the vital continuation and creative expansion of styles and techniques deeply rooted in the past.

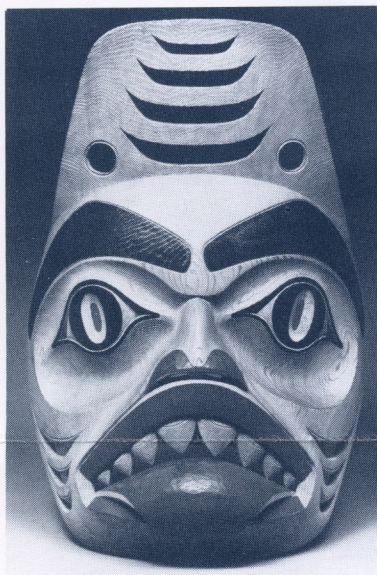
“Lost and Found Traditions” includes works from such diversified tribes as the Montagnais/Naskapi of Labrador, the Sioux and Blackfeet of the Plains, the Miccosukee of Florida, the Pomo of California, the Makah of Washington state and the Haida and Gitksan of British Columbia. The art of well over 100 tribes is represented. Objects range from work by a twelve-year-old apprentice to artistry by some of the most celebrated octogenarian tribal elders.



*Basket by Lucy Jones, Pima, 1980, willow and devil's claw, 6 3/4" x 24" diameter. Photo by Bobby Hansson.*

## **"Living Traditions: Native American Crafts" in Museum Shop**

The Renwick Gallery Museum Shop sales exhibition will feature works by a number of artists represented in the "Lost and Found Traditions" exhibition. Many of the items are strongly bound to the culture of Native American craft work; others have taken a different, sometimes whimsical, path, incorporating traditional techniques into contemporary tastes. Weaving, beadwork, pottery, leather, wood and a variety of other media are included. The sales exhibition continues through March 6, 1988.



*Mask by Jim Hart, Haida, 1981, red cedar, paint, 12 1/4" high. Photo by Bobby Hansson.*



*Winter Dream, 1986, 60" x 65", cotton, rayon and mixed fibers.*

Her recent work reflects this vision. Ten new large-scale weavings are on view at the Renwick Gallery in "Cynthia Schira: New Work," through February 14. "Reflections," a 1982 work, is also exhibited in the adjacent permanent collection galleries. This piece was purchased for the Renwick's permanent collection with assistance from the James Renwick Alliance.

Schira's own comments about lifestyle and commitment tell more of how she approaches her work: "I worry about the magazine articles I see now that give formulas for setting goals and priorities, as if it could all be that linear, as if life were that linear. Things do build on each other, and people do need goals, but they must be made in conjunction with life — with a feeling for the flow of life so that priorities don't become so rigid that they get in the way.

"If you totally devote yourself, say, to making an art fabric, then what will it communicate?"

## **"Cynthia Schira: New Work" Continues through February 14**

Everyday life is multi-textured for Cynthia Schira — a weaver, a mother, a teacher, a wife — who sees the various roles she leads as reflecting off one another, enriching and deepening, bringing what is important into better focus.

Inquiries about the James Renwick Alliance should be sent to:

James Renwick Alliance  
5240 Nebraska Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20015

The Alliance gratefully acknowledges partial grant support for programs and this issue of the *Renwick Quarterly* from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, DC, a Federal Agency, and the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

What have you had time to experience?

"More than a goal, you need a path — also incredible patience and a belief in your ability to grow."

Schira's work, as she describes it, is referential, "suggestive rather than definitive," appealing to the viewer's emotional, rather than analytical, response. Her weavings, among the first to be acquired by major museums, are in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Chicago Art Institute, the Museum Bellerive in Zurich, the Rhode Island School of Design, and the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt Museum as well as the Renwick Gallery.

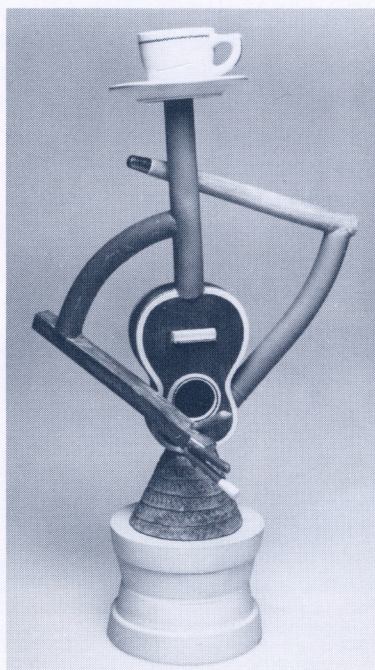
This exhibition was organized by the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas.

### **"Clay Revisions" A New Look at Old Forms**

Twenty-six artists working in clay will exhibit their own unique versions of traditional vessel forms in "Clay Revisions: Plate, Cup, Vase," scheduled to open at the Renwick on April 22 and run through September 5, 1988.

From Robert Arneson to Arnold Zimmerman, ceramists have dismissed function in these familiar forms. Each dinner plate, drinking cup and flower vase has itself become the subject matter, the source for exploration and innovation.

This exhibition was organized by the Seattle Art Museum. More information will be available in the next issue of the Quarterly.



*Cubist Coffee Cup,*  
Richard Shaw, 1985,  
glaze and decals  
on porcelain,  
30 1/2" tall.

### **"American Art Pottery 1880-1930" Will Open in Spring**

American ceramics grew from a tradition of poorly designed, mass produced pottery into a renaissance of stylistic decorative art forms. Late in the Nineteenth Century, potters took a new look at their materials, colors and shapes and created an entire movement in decorative arts that lasted well into the Twentieth Century.

Seventy-five major examples of work from this period are included in "American Art Pottery 1880-1930," which will be at the Renwick Gallery March 25, 1988 through October 23, 1988. The collection was recently donated to the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York by collectors Marcia and William Goodman.



*Vase, F. Rothenbusch,*  
1900, 7 1/2" high.



*Vase, Carl Schmidt, 1912, 5 3/4" high.*

### **Spring Forum Scheduled for Saturday, April 23, 1988**

Plans are underway for the Alliance's annual all-day forum which is held each spring in conjunction with the Washington Craft Show. The 1988 forum, "Clay: An Ancient Art in its Modern Aesthetic," will feature lectures by some of America's most outstanding makers, writers and curators of clay. This year's speakers include California clay artist Adrian Saxe; American Ceramics editor Michael McTwigan; and Seattle Art Museum 20th Century Curator Vicki Halper.

Tickets to last year's forum were sold out in advance of the program and we anticipate a sell-out crowd again this year. Mark your calendar for April 23. This event is sponsored by the James Renwick Alliance with proceeds going towards future education programs.



## NEWS from the Alliance

Roger Kuhn  
President

It is difficult now to recall that, little more than a year ago, the future of the Renwick Gallery was under review within the Smithsonian Institution and the Alliance was in a state of crisis. Then, last November, Assistant Secretary Tom Freudenheim announced the renewal of the Smithsonian's commitment to the Renwick as its museum for American craft. The sense of crisis was replaced by euphoria, and since that time the Renwick Gallery has experienced renewed vitality while the Alliance has entered a period of unprecedented growth.

During the spring, the Renwick initiated an ongoing display of objects from its permanent collection in a series of galleries specially remodeled for that purpose. Renwick visitors from all over the world are now able to see examples of the finest work by leading American artists in all of the craft media. The 1987 temporary exhibition program has included a monumental show of American Art Deco, while in smaller galleries two major artists, Dan Dailey and Cynthia Schira, were honored with one-person shows. The Renwick continued its exploration of 20th Century regional and ethnic crafts with exhibits of "Quilts from the Indiana Amish" and the current exhibition, "Lost and Found Traditions: Native American Art, 1965-1985"

Complementing these exhibitions, there has been a lively program of free public lectures and craft demonstrations. Last winter and spring, the Alliance sponsored a series of slide talks by artists represented in the permanent collection, and several lectures on studio glass have taken place this fall. There have been demonstrations by Amish quiltmakers and a variety of Native American craft-makers. The two largest audiences in the Renwick's history attended an evening lecture-with-music focusing on the Art Deco period, presented by architectural historian Leslie Freudenheim and pianist Ann Saslav, and the Alliance's April forum on Wearable Art.

This year, the Alliance added four more objects to the Renwick's permanent collection, chosen for acquisition by the Gallery's Curator Michael Monroe: an outstanding stoneware sculpture by Rudy Autio, purchased with a combination of Alliance funds and museum acquisition funds; an especially fine example of Tom Patti's glass; an exquisite porcelain vessel by Rudolf Staffel; and a marvelous translucent bowl by wood-turner Ron Kent, which the artist donated to the Alliance for the Renwick's collection.

Perhaps the most significant and exciting accomplishment of the Alliance this year was the establishment of the James Renwick Fellowship in American Craft, the first program of its kind to encourage scholarly research in the modern craft movement. Our members have already contributed more than \$8,000 to support the Fellowship, in addition to the \$1,000 received from the American Craft Council. However, we continue to seek funds for the project. The Fellowship, to be administered by the Smithsonian Institution's Office of Fellowships and Grants, will provide a period of up to a year's residence at the Smithsonian, using the research facilities of the Renwick's parent museum, the National Museum of American Art. The program has been widely publicized throughout the art history and craft communities, and inquiries are coming in from all over the country. Those wishing information about the Fellowship should contact the Office of Fellowships and Grants, Smithsonian Institution, Suite 7300 L'Enfant Plaza, Washington, DC 20560, or call (202) 287-3271.

The expansion of the Alliance's activities this year was made possible by a 55% growth in our membership and a 150% increase in contributions. None of this could have happened, however, without the hard work of our Board. The Alliance's educational activities, *The Renwick Quarterly*, our fund-raising program, and the initiation of the Fellowship are all the product of their time, talent and energy. We all — and I personally — owe them a large debt of gratitude.



At a late October meeting, Renwick Curator Michael Monroe (far right) presented works by a number of artists for consideration by the Alliance board and members of the acquisition committee. A report on this meeting will be in the next issue of the *Quarterly*.

## Public Programs Featuring "Lost and Found" Exhibition Artists

These free programs, presented in conjunction with the "Lost and Found Traditions" exhibition, are made possible with funding from the Primerica Foundation (formerly American Can Company Foundation), the Sacred Circles Fund and the Smithsonian Educational Outreach Fund.

**Dec. 3:** Creative Screen: Hopi: The Songs of the Fourth World: This film is a sensitive and accurate portrayal of the essence of Hopi life and thought, and includes comments by such notable artists as potter Dextra Nempeyo Quotskuyva and jewelry-maker Otellie Loloma. (52 minutes) At 11:00 AM and 12:15 PM.

**Dec. 11,** Craft demonstration: Joyce  
**12, 13:** Growing Thunder Fogarty, an Assiniboine/Sioux, will show how she works bead decorations into leather moccasins and garments. Now living in Arizona, she is known for her traditional moccasins, eagle feather war bonnets, leggings and war shirts as well as modern beaded medallion necklaces. From 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

**Dec. 17:** Creative Screen. Repeat of December 3.

**Jan. 8,** Craft demonstration: Basket-  
**9, 10:** maker Mary Green (Makah) from Neah Bay, Washington, will show how she designs and constructs her bear grass and cedar bark lidded baskets. From 11:00 AM to 2:30 PM.

**Jan. 14:** Creative Screen: "More Than Bows and Arrows" is a comprehensive look at the past and present of Native Americans — the prehistoric legacy of Indian societies and present contributions to culture in the United States. Narrated by Kiowa author and Pulitzer Prize winner Dr. N. Scott Momaday. (56 minutes) At 11:00 AM, noon and 1:00 PM.

**Jan. 29,** Craft demonstration: Mask-maker  
**30, 31:** Dempsey Bob (Tlingit/Tahltan) from Prince Rupert, British Columbia, Canada, will carve his red cedar masks and decorate

them with sea lion bristle, paint, abalone and cowrie shells and tanned smoked-hide straps. From 11:00 AM to 2:30 PM.

**Jan. 28:** Creative Screen: Repeat of January 14.

**Feb. 11:** Creative Screen: "Native American Art: Lost and Found." Originally created to accompany the exhibition, this documentary portrays the wealth of art currently being produced by American Indians. Fourteen artists, who are featured in the exhibition, show their work and express their thoughts on its personal and historic meaning. (22 minutes)

"Totem Pole" and house posts carved by Native Americans of the West Coast reflect complex tribal social systems and mythology, and demonstrate the importance attached to kinship, rank and the display of wealth. (27 minutes) At 11:00 AM, noon and 1:00 PM.

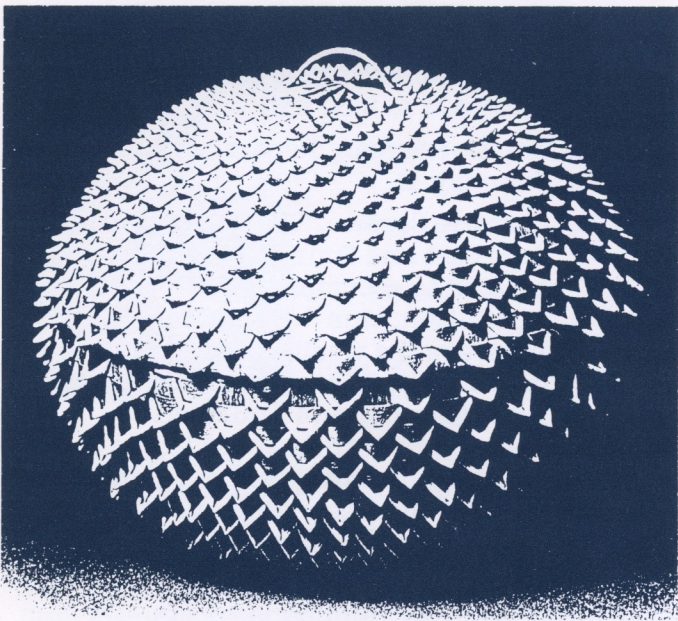
**Feb. 12,** Craft demonstration: Rug-maker  
**13, 14:** Mae Jim (Navajo) from Ganado, Arizona, will show how she designs and weaves her handspun wool into Ganado-style rugs. From 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

**Feb. 25:** Creative Screen: Repeat of February 11.

**Feb. 26,** Craft demonstration: Silversmith  
**27, 28:** Roderick Kaskalla (Pueblo) from Santa Fe, New Mexico, will fabricate jewelry using such materials as silver, turquoise, green snail shell, jet and coral. From 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM.



*Bear Effigy Pot*  
Lolita Begay, 1983,  
Navajo Reservation,  
clay, paint, 7 1/8" x 4 3/4" diameter.  
Photo by Bobby Hansson.



*Porcupined Spherical Basket* by Edith Bonde, Ojibwa, 1981, black ash splints, 7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" x 8<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" diameter. Photo by Bobby Hansson.

## Renwick Gallery Public Programs January, February, 1988

**Jan. 10:** Illustrated lecture: Neil Tetkowsky, ceramic artist, whose work "Orange Swirl" is currently the Renwick Gallery's Featured Object, will discuss his large-scale pieces. The artist retains the wet, fresh and plastic qualities of his material, and enhances their texturally-rich surface with his restricted color palette. Co-sponsored by the Mogul Gallery. Free. At 3:00 PM.

**Jan. 17:** Illustrated lecture: Robert Kehlmann, glass artist, will trace the development of his work with glass from the leaded panels of the '70's to recent abstract two-dimensional works in which he superimposes sandblasted and glazed glass over acrylic paintings. Co-sponsored by the Anne O'Brien Gallery. Free. At 3:00 PM.

**Jan. 24:** Illustrated lecture: Concetta Mason, glass artist, will discuss her small-scale sculptures which involve the controlled break-up and reconstruction of the traditional vessel form. These

pieces are then sandblasted and enameled to form several brightly patterned components that are reassembled to create a new object. Co-sponsored by the Maurine Littleton Gallery. Free. At 3:00 PM.

**Feb. 21:** Illustrated lecture: Fritz Dreisbach, glass artist, currently working in Seattle, Washington, will give a talk entitled "A History of 25 Years in Glass: A Personal View." Examples of his work are in the Renwick Gallery's permanent collection. Co-sponsored by the Maurine Littleton Gallery. Free. At 3:00 PM.

## Recent Contributions to the James Renwick Alliance

The following members of the Alliance have given their support to the special fund for the James Renwick Fellowship in American Craft. We hope more members will join them.

### Benefactors

American Craft Council  
Karen Johnson Boyd  
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The Sydney and Frances Lewis Foundation

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Jane and Harvey Rich  
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David Tannous

In addition, the Alliance welcomes the following new contributing members:

### Donors

Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Oken  
Veena Singh/  
Sansar Gallery

Mrs. Philip C. White

### Other

Andra Sigerson Patterson

## Work by Clay Artist Neil Tetkowski Donated to Renwick Gallery

"Orange Swirl," a superb example of Neil Tetkowski's large-scale works in earthenware, has been given to the Renwick Gallery by Sharon Lawrence and Kara Lawrence. Thrown on a potter's wheel, using 150 pounds of clay, Tetkowski's work extends the traditional potter's techniques to new limits. The artist has fully exploited and retained the wet, fresh, plastic qualities of his material throughout the creative process.

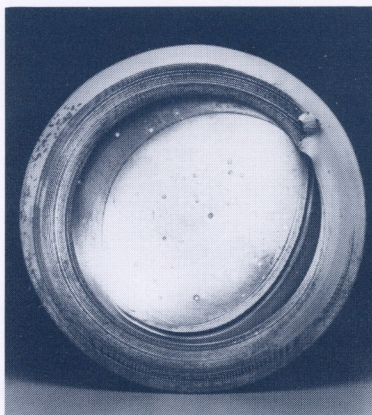
The broad rim of the disk, inscribed with a series of parallel lines, records the spinning motion of the wheel and acts as a frame for a deep, intimate vista. Tetkowski's restricted palette of glazes — orange, white, yellow and dark brown — enhances the texturally rich surfaces, suggesting a landscape or stellar field spun and distorted by centrifugal force.

Over three feet in diameter, "Orange Swirl" breaks the barrier of traditionally scaled pottery. Tetkowski does not want his work to resemble known forms. Within this large, wall-

mounted disk, he purposefully denies the usefulness of the platter form.

"A four-foot platter carries a different message than an eighteen-inch platter," he explains. "People respond differently. A piece this large confronts you; it demands a response."

Born in Buffalo, New York, where he resides and maintains a studio, Tetkowski earned his B.F.A. from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University in 1977, and an M.F.A. from Illinois State University in 1980.



*Orange Swirl*, Neil Tetkowski, 1983, thrown disc of red earthenware, more than 3' diameter. Renwick Featured Object, a gift from Sharon Lawrence and Kara Lawrence.

## To Join the Alliance

The James Renwick Alliance welcomes the support of all who share in its admiration for the creative vision of artists working today in the craft media. Members' contributions enable the Alliance to sponsor educational programs in contemporary crafts, to support the activities of the Smithsonian Institution's museum of 20th Century American craft, the Renwick Gallery, and to enlarge the national collection of American craft at the Renwick.

Membership in the Alliance, renewable annually, provides the following benefits:

- All members receive the Alliance's publication, *The Renwick Quarterly*.
- Donors (\$100+) receive *The Renwick Quarterly* plus — invitations to special receptions for artists, and exhibition tours conducted by artists or curators; a complimentary catalog of a major Renwick Gallery exhibition, and discounts on the Alliance's Spring Forum and all Craft Study Tours.
- Sponsors (\$250+) receive the above benefits plus — one complimentary ticket to the Spring Forum held each year to coincide with the Washington Craft Show; and the opportunity to attend training lectures and exhibition tours conducted for Renwick docents.

- Patrons (\$500+) receive the above benefits plus — an additional complimentary ticket to the Spring Forum; and two complimentary tickets to an Alliance Craft Study Tour.
- Benefactors (\$1,000+) receive the above benefits plus — membership in the Alliance's Acquisitions Committee, which allocates Alliance funds for the purchase of objects proposed for acquisition by the Curator of the Renwick Gallery.

To join the Alliance, please complete the form below and mail it with your check to the James Renwick Alliance, 5240 Nebraska Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20015. Contributions are tax deductible.

- 
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