

RENWICK QUARTERLY

March, April, May, 1990

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Spring Forum and Craft Weekend in Washington April 21-22

by Nancy Trimble Carter

The Craft Weekend in Washington is sponsored each year by the James Renwick Alliance, in conjunction with The Washington Craft Show. Come join us for a weekend whose activities will appeal to both artists and collectors alike. Highlights of the weekend include:

Saturday, April 21 9:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Annual Spring Forum, "American Craft: A Tradition of Excellence." Speakers will discuss their own work as well as that of emerging artists who will be on the leading edge of design and craftsmanship in this decade. Light snack provided. Renwick Gallery.

Speakers:

Michael W. Monroe, Curator-in-Charge,
Renwick Gallery

Edward S. Cooke, Jr., Curator of
"New American Furniture"
exhibition

Sharon Church, jeweler

Bill Carlson, glass sculptor

Nance O'Banion, paper and bamboo
constructionist

William Daley, ceramic artist

The weekend's events begin with the Alliance's Spring Forum. The 1990 Forum, "American Craft: A Tradition of Excellence", will focus on the new decade. The speakers are established artists who will describe visual trends they find intriguing and will introduce artists whose

media and techniques they feel will be influential in this decade. Mr. Cooke will discuss works in "New American Furniture," and how the artists were inspired to create pieces that interpret the legacy of craftsmanship and design from the past in twentieth century terms.

3:00 - 4:00 PM

Hospitality Suite, The Washington Craft Show. Visit the Craft Show and take a break at our hospitality suite to talk to exhibition artists. Entry tickets, light snacks and beverages provided. The Departmental Auditorium, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW.

Take this opportunity to relax and meet with craft show artists in a casual atmosphere. We'll serve an informal tea. After this respite, you'll return to the show with renewed vigor! (continued next page)



One of 100 crafts artists displaying at the 1990 Washington Craft Show is Annapolis, Maryland wood artist Daniel Hale with this whimsical bench.

7:00 PM

Preview the "New American Furniture" exhibition. Cocktails and a gala dinner will be served in the Grand Salon of the Renwick Gallery.

Saturday's events peak with a special preview of "New American Furniture" at the Renwick. Cocktails and a gala dinner will follow in the elegant Grand Salon. This will be a wonderful opportunity to speak informally with fellow craft enthusiasts as well as speakers from the Spring Forum.

Sunday, April 22 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

The chartered bus tour lead by B.J. Adams begins at the Renwick Gallery. View the private collection of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Mason. Private tour of the Ed Rossbach retrospective show at the Textile Museum, with light breakfast provided. Tour the private collection of Mr. and Mrs. Ron Abramson. Tour Sansar Gallery, with snack provided. (Very limited enrollment).

The weekend's events culminate with this special tour lead by Alliance board member B.J. Adams. After boarding the bus at the Renwick Gallery, participants will visit the home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Mason. The Mason's collection includes many outstanding examples of turned wood bowls. The group will then proceed to the Textile Museum for a private tour of the Ed Rossbach exhibition lead by curator Rebecca Stevens. Ed Rossbach's work is known for his combination of innovative design and unconventional materials. Before leaving, we will enjoy a light breakfast in the Textile Museum's Founder's Room. After leaving the museum, we will visit Anne and Ron Abramson, who have graciously opened their home to share their diverse and exceptional collection of contemporary crafts. Our final destination will be Sansar Gallery, featuring a show of sculptural tops by Christopher Weiland. Sansar will also exhibit furniture and craft objects by Ronnie Puckett, Mark Sfirri, Randy Schull and Silas Kopf. Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served at the gallery before we return by bus to the Renwick.

To register for the Craft Weekend, please fill out the form below. Enrollment priority will be given to those registering for all events. "Sponsors" may request one complementary ticket to the Spring Forum. "Patrons," "Benefactors" and "Collectors" may request two complementary tickets to the Forum.

Special pricing is available only to current Alliance members. Check to see if you have renewed your membership to qualify for these reduced rates. Cost for the complete weekend: \$190 for Alliance members; \$220 for non-members. Tickets may be purchased separately for each event on a space-available basis: Forum, \$65/\$75; Craft Show and hospitality suite, \$12/\$15; Preview, reception and dinner, \$85/\$95; Private tours, \$40/\$45. Alliance members who register before March 15, will have priority enrollment.

For further information, contact:

Craft Weekend
6801 Winterberry Lane
Bethesda, MD 20817
(301) 229-2148

Registration Form

James Renwick Alliance
The Craft Weekend in Washington
April 21-22, 1990

I/we would like to register for the Craft Weekend in Washington. (Space for some events is limited. Priority will be given to those registering for all events).

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Day Phone _____

Evening Phone _____

Number of Tickets	Event	Cost (per person)	
		Alliance Members	Non- Members

_____	Craft Weekend (all events)	\$190.00	\$220.00
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If space is available, I would like to register for the following event(s) only:

_____	Spring Forum, "American Craft: A Tradition of Excellence"	65.00	75.00
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_____	The Washington Craft Show and Hospitality Suite	12.00	15.00
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_____	Preview, cocktails and dinner	85.00	95.00
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_____	Private tours of Rossbach show, Abramson and Mason collections, & Sansar Gallery	40.00	45.00
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_____	Total enclosed	\$ _____	\$ _____
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We urge you to register as soon as possible since enrollment is limited. Space cannot be reserved without payment. Make check payable to the James Renwick Alliance, and mail to:

Craft Weekend in Washington
6801 Winterberry Lane
Bethesda, MD 20817

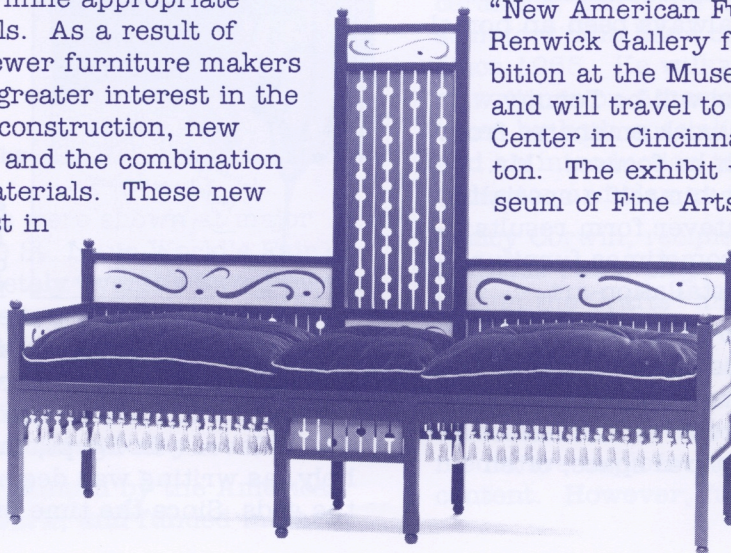
Best Works in "New American Furniture" Will Open April 20

Twenty-five leading American furniture makers will be featured in the exhibition "New American Furniture," opening April 20 at the Renwick Gallery. The exhibit will run through September 3.

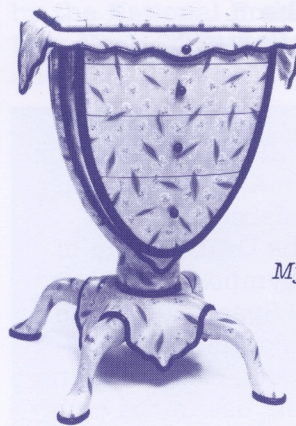
Showcasing pieces created specifically for this exhibition, "New American Furniture" will provide a serious examination of contemporary art furniture, offering a historical perspective of the craftsman's role and an analysis of furniture made by second-generation studio furniture makers.

According to Edward S. Cooke, Jr., Assistant Curator of the Department of American Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, "The first generation of studio craftsmen — those active in the 1950's and 1960's such as Sam Maloof, James Drenov, Tage Frid and George Nakashima — emphasized the spirituality and primacy of wood and the fundamental importance of technique."

Cook continues, "Second-generation furniture makers, most of whom graduated from furniture design programs established by the first-generation craftsmen, emphasize conception and design, then determine appropriate techniques or materials. As a result of their schooling, the newer furniture makers have demonstrated a greater interest in the history of design and construction, new technical possibilities, and the combination of wood with other materials. These new forms combine interest in design, whether traditional or innovative, consummate technical skills, and varied materials and finishes."

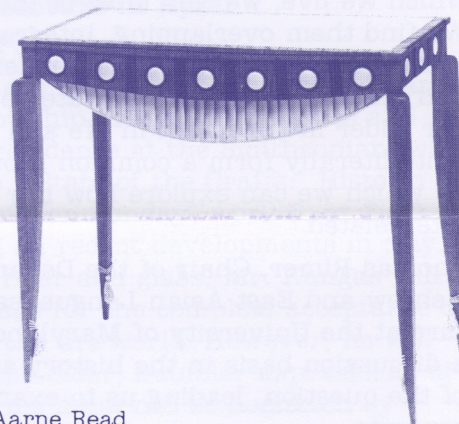


Mitch Ryerson, Bench, 1989, cherry, Baltic birch plywood, veneer-core maple, mohair, silk cord, rayon tassels, oil paint, 49"h x 66"w x 18"d.



Paul Sasso, No, You Get Out Of My Garden, 1989, bent laminated Lauan plywood, yellow poplar, curly maple, wenge, curly maple and wenge veneers, acrylic paint, Rohplex, 30"h x 23"w x 19"d.

In examining this second generation of craftsmen, "New American Furniture" explores the craftsmen's connections to the small shop cabinetmakers of the past, their relationship with the first generation, and their fit within contemporary culture.



John Dunnigan, Table, 1989, Fiddleback mahogany, Rhodoid, silk crepe, silk cord and tassels, upholstery buttons, 30"h x 35"w x 17"d. Upholstered by Aarne Read.

Among those with work created for the exhibition are Peter Dean, Tom Loesner, Kristina Madsen, Wendy Maruyama, Alphonse Mattia, Judy McKie, Mitch Ryerson and Rick Wrigley.

"New American Furniture" comes to the Renwick Gallery following a premier exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and will travel to The Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati after leaving Washington. The exhibit was organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and was made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts.

"Crafts and Fine Arts in the Living Space: Separate or Same?" Symposium on March 11

by Lilian Thomas Burwell

Members of the audience will be invited to join in an open dialogue between artists and other professionals, on Sunday, March 11, from 10:00 AM to 3:30 PM, in the Grand Salon of the Renwick Gallery. The symposium "Crafts and Fine Arts in the Living Space: Separate or Same?" will explore the philosophical and aesthetic relationships between craft and fine art, as demonstrated in their use in the environment of the interior.

The question of delineation between these two fields has a history. Where is the line? What form does it take? How rigid is it? Does it actually exist at all?

In our interior spaces, particularly the ones in which we live, we find most of the visual arts. We find them overlapping, integrating, constantly defying the Western tendency to sort and label. Because our private spaces reflect our wider involvement in life and culture, they quite literally form a common ground on and by which we can explore how the arts are interrelated.

Thomas Rimer, Chair of the Department of Hebrew and East Asian Languages and Literature at the University of Maryland, will provide a discussion basis in the history and tradition of the question, leading us to examine broad contexts.

Ann Yonemura is Associate Curator of Japanese Art at the Freer and Sakler Galleries. She will expose us to the essential unity in Japanese art and culture. She will help us to realize an art which forms action and reaction in a country where there has always been an homology of the arts.

The third discussion leader will be Tommy Simpson, an artist whose work emanates from the point of view on which he focuses. Mr. Simpson does not consider himself a specialist, because his art takes whatever form results; sometimes it is painting, sometimes furniture, sometimes sculpture or installation art.

Painting is transformed to sculpture in the work of Sam Gilliam as his canvasses drape into the interior during the seventies. They become the space. His "craft" continues to move from wall into sculptural space, often architecturally.

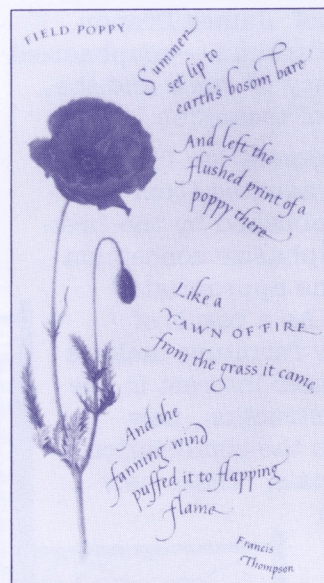
Rick Wall will illustrate the work of several artists who demonstrate the philosophical and aesthetic interrelationships of crafts and fine arts. He will show his own furniture making become sculpture, become furniture making.

As an artist whose own work insists that art is art is function, Lilian Thomas Burwell will serve as opening commentator, moderator and...provocateur, in what promises to be an exciting day in the month of the lion. Please come to add your own presence and input.

"Four Contemporary Calligraphers" is First Exhibition to Come from James Renwick Curatorial Fellowship

Vicki Halper, the first James Renwick Curatorial Fellow, curated the new exhibition, "Four Contemporary Calligraphers," which will be on view May 4 through October 28, at the Renwick Gallery. Working under the sponsorship of the James Renwick Alliance, Ms. Halper was in residence at the Renwick for several months in 1989, developing comprehensive proposals for Renwick exhibitions which will circulate nationwide.

The four calligraphers in the exhibition, Ghen C. Y. Fu, Shelia Waters, Avraham Cohen and Mohammed V. Zakariya, represent the highest achievement in each of their traditions of Chinese, Latin, Hebrew and Arabic.



Sheila Waters, *Field Poppy*, 1961, watercolor on vellum. Text by Francis Thompson.

Scribes have been at work since the first writing systems emerged over 5000 years ago. In Sumeria, Babylon, Greece and Rome, they were often slaves. In Egypt, they were considered holy, as writing was deemed a special gift from the gods. Since the time of Moses, Jewish

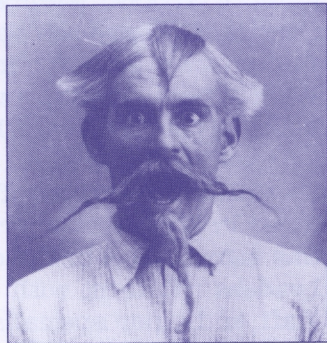
scribes have been creating ritual parchments under stringent standards of fabrication and design. Islamic masters are often described by the number of holy Korans transcribed during a lifetime. The greatest Chinese calligraphers have often been the greatest poets.

The history of writing is the autobiography of humankind, as Ms. Halper points out. The earliest known examples of writing reflect our basic needs, unchanging over the millenia: Sumerian accounting, Egyptian agricultural records and incantations for the dead, Phoenician trade documents, Chinese prayers, Palestinian scriptures and Greek poetry. According to the Nineteenth Century calligrapher and author Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad Ash-Shaybani:

“Calligraphy is the tongue of the hand, the delight of the conscience, the ambassador of the mind, the inheritor of thought, the weapon of knowledge, the companion of absent friends, the converser with them over long distances, the depository of secrets, and the register of events.”

George Ohr Pottery On View at Renwick Gallery Through June 3

“George Ohr: Modern Potter (1857-1918)” will continue at the Renwick through June 3. Ohr’s eccentric pottery is more popular today than it was at the turn of the century when his work was barely known outside his native Mississippi. Dating from 1882 through 1907, the 82 glazed and bisque works featured in the exhibition emphasize the beauty of Ohr’s vessels as well as his whimsy.

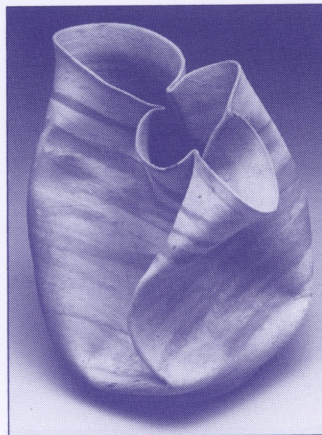


George Ohr

Although his ceramics were shown at major exhibitions and at the St. Louis World’s Fair of 1904, Ohr was completely overshadowed by the achievements of more traditional potters. His twisted and crumpled forms, his boldness of color, the directness of his manipulation of the medium, and his distinctive blend of humor and art are far more appreciated today.

The exhibition was organized by the American Craft Museum, New York, and funded in part

by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Dillenberg.



George Ohr, *Vase*, ca. 1898-1907, 5" x 5 5/8" x 4 1/2". Private collection, New York, NY. © John White, from *Mad Potter of Biloxi: The Art and Life of George E. Ohr*, with permission from Abbeville Press.

James Renwick Fellows in American Crafts Will Lecture in April

by Elmerina Parkman

Matthew Kangas, recipient of the second James Renwick Fellowship in American Crafts and currently in residence at the Smithsonian, will give a lecture, “State of the Crafts: Historic Turning Point?” on Sunday, April 8, at 3:00 PM. Touching on recent developments in clay, wood, metal, fiber and glass, Mr. Kangas will present the case for the complete acceptance of the crafts by the art world. However, he will caution that the older, humbler expressions of functional forms must not be neglected by critics, art historians and museum curators.

Mr. Kangas, a Seattle art critic and curator, is researching “Two Aspects of American Ceramics: Sculpture, Text.” In the first segment, he will focus on the chief geographic centers for ceramics, and write a series of essays on 13 sculptors who have created important works since 1965. He will also assemble a collection of writings on American ceramics, including those by both specialist and general critics, and add an introduction to explain changing attitudes toward clay as fine art.

Nancy Corwin, recipient of the first James Renwick Fellowship, will lecture on “New Content in the Crafts” at 3:00 PM, Sunday, April 29. In her talk she will discuss the origin and role of meaning in the crafts. As Dr. Corwin notes, “Many fiber artists, furniture makers, ceramists and artists working in other craft media are exploring narrative and symbolic content. However, functional forms also carry

(continued next page)

various levels of meaning. A key question for crafts today is: What layers of meaning exist in craft objects and how do we perceive these?"

Dr. Corwin was assistant professor of art history at the Kansas City Art Institute in Missouri, and while in residence at the Smithsonian, conducted research for her book, *A Critical History of Fiber Art as Part of the Post World War II Crafts Revival in America*.

The James Renwick Fellowships are designed to encourage scholarly study of the historical, aesthetic and intellectual aspects of the studio craft movement and are supported by the National Museum of American Art and the James Renwick Alliance.



News from the Alliance

by Jerome Paulson

The most thrilling Alliance activity is the acquisition of new works for the Renwick Gallery. Michael Monroe, Curator-in-Charge, and his staff select a group of objects to add to the nation's permanent collection of craft art. The Alliance's acquisitions committee views the individual works. That committee, chaired by board member Lee Eagle, consists of all board members and all donors at the \$1000 level and above. The acquisitions committee then votes on which objects the Alliance will fund, in whole or in part.

On February 1, the acquisitions committee met to consider five different objects. Michael Monroe and Jeremy Adamson made interesting presentations about each object and artist. The acquisitions committee voted to participate in the purchase of four of the works presented for our consideration. Your donations made it possible to add a non-functional ceramic tea pot on a stand by Ralph Bacerra, a non-functional poured glass vessel by Howard Ben Tre, a library ladder with shelf by Daniel Jackson, and a writing desk with barrel front by Jere Osgood to the Renwick's permanent collection!

The Alliance spends your donations primarily to support the purchase of objects for the permanent collection. The Smithsonian matches each dollar which the Alliance commits. Increased support from our members allows the Alliance to do more to enlarge the Renwick's permanent collection, the nation's collection of craft art.

One of the major challenges facing any organization is communications. Our primary method of communicating with you is this *Renwick Quarterly*. We have one of the highest quality publications of its type. It serves the Alliance and the Renwick Gallery. Dalene Barry writes some and edits all of the *Quarterly*. All of the layout and design work is done by the Alliance's founding President Charlie Gailis.

It is very exciting to announce the creation of a new component of the James Renwick Alliance, the Craft Leaders Caucus. Conceptualized by Rebecca Stevens, Sherley Koteen, Paul and Elmerina Parkman and Mel and Lee Eagle, the Craft Leaders Caucus will assist in building the nation's preeminent collection of American crafts at the Renwick Gallery. The Craft Leaders Caucus will also provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, and a national network of craft supporters to stimulate appreciation and broaden understanding of this rapidly evolving area of visual arts.

Membership in the Craft Leaders Caucus is limited and the yearly contribution is a minimum of \$1000. Members of the Craft Leaders Caucus will have the opportunity to come together twice a year. One meeting will be in Washington. It will provide an opportunity for members to meet with Renwick staff, federal arts policy makers and to participate in an acquisitions meeting. The second meeting will occur in a different part of the country which has significance to the craft movement. The Leaders will meet with craft artists, museum staff and other specialists in the field.

Andrea Uravitch, Nancy Trimble Carter and a host of Alliance members are working hard to create a wonderful Spring Forum. Elsewhere in this issue of the *Quarterly*, Nancy provides you with detailed information about the forum speakers and events. I know that this Spring Forum will be the best in a series of excellent programs. I invite each of you to join us in Washington for this interesting and exciting event!

Renwick Gallery Public Programs March, April, May 1990

March 14:

Illustrated Lecture: Renwick Public Programs Coordinator Allen Bassing will discuss the history of the Gallery and the relationship between its architect James Renwick, and the art collector William Wilson Corcoran. Free. At noon.

March 15:

Film Series: *Why Man Creates*, an Academy Award-winning film that explores the importance, difficulties and mystery of man's creativity. (25 minutes). *Earth, Fire and Water* is a survey of contemporary American ceramics narrated by Orson Wells, showing the work of Schreckengost, Voulkos, Soldner and others important in the post World War II period. (26 minutes). Free. AT 11:00 AM, noon and 1:00 PM.

March 29:

Film Series: Repeat of March 15. Free. AT 11:00 AM, noon and 1:00 PM.

April 8:

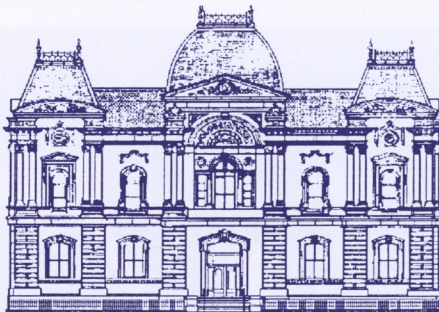
Illustrated Lecture: Mathew Kangas, a James Renwick Alliance Fellow, will discuss "State of the Crafts: Historic Turning Point?" Touching on recent developments in clay, wood, metal, fiber and glass, Mr. Kangas will present the case for the complete acceptance of the crafts by the art world. However, he will caution that the older, humbler expressions of functional forms must not be neglected by critics, art historians and museum curators. Sponsored by the James Renwick Alliance. Free. At 3:00 PM.

April 12:

Film Series: In *With These Hands*, eight contemporary artist craftsmen express their thoughts, ideas and motivation about their work and lifestyles. Insights about the creative process come from J.B. Blunk (wood sculpture), James Tanner (ceramics and glass), Dorian Zachai (tapestries), Paul Soldner (pottery), Clayton Bailey (fantasy figures), Peter Voulkos (pottery), Harry Nohr (wooden bowls) and Toshiko Takaezu (clay and fiber). (60 minutes). Free. At 11:00 AM, 12:15 PM and 1:30 PM.

April 22

Illustrated Lecture. John Cederquist, furniture artist and faculty member of Saddleback Community College, California, will discuss his work in the context of the contemporary furniture movement. He uses fixed-point perspective to explore the relationship between reality and illusion. Cederquist's work is alternatively disorienting and delighting, challenging the viewer both visually and intellectually. In the current Renwick exhibition, "Tradition and Innovation: New American Furniture," his work *Le Fleuron Manquant* ("The



Missing Finial") is based on a highboy by John Townson of Newport, one of colonial America's master craftsmen. Free. At 3:00 PM.

April 26:

Film Series: Repeat of April 12. Free. At 11:00 AM, 12:15 PM and 1:30 PM.

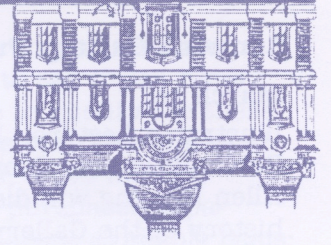
April 29:

Illustrated Lecture: Nancy Corwin, former James Renwick Alliance Fellow, will discuss "New Content in the Crafts." Where does meaning lie in the crafts? Many fiber artists, furniture makers, ceramists and artists working in other craft media are exploring narrative and symbolic content. However, functional forms also carry various levels of meaning. A key question for crafts today, as Ms. Corwin sees it, asks what layers of meaning exist in craft objects and how do we perceive them? Sponsored by the James Renwick Alliance. Free. At 3:00 PM.

May 10:

Film Series: *An Eames Celebration: Several Worlds of Charles and Ray Eames*. The Eames — architects, furniture designers, film makers, photographers — are shown in their unique California home. Excerpts from some of their many films are included in this all-encompassing film including Lounge Chair, Fiberglass Chair, Toccato to Toy Trains, Tops and Parade. (60 minutes). Free. At 11:00 AM, 12:15 PM and 1:30 PM

Inquiries about the James Renwick Alliance should be sent to:
James Renwick Alliance
6801 Winterberry Lane, Bethesda, Maryland 20817



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1990 Washington Craft Show Set for April 19-22

One hundred craft artists from 46 states have been selected from among more than 1,200 applicants to participate in the 1990 Washington Craft Show at the Departmental Auditorium, April 19-22.

The Craft Show is Washington's only national, juried, non-profit exhibition and sale of fine one-of-a-kind and limited-edition crafts. Work presented include basketry, ceramics, fiber, glass, jewelry, leather, metal, paper, wood and mixed media.

Jurors for this year's exhibition were Christina

Bertoni, ceramist and associate professor, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI; Sharon Church, jeweler and chairperson at the University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA; and Paul Smith, consultant and director emeritus of the American Craft Museum, New York City.

The Women's Committee of the Smithsonian Associates sponsors and organizes the annual show to provide seed money and ongoing support for a variety of Smithsonian research and education projects.



Displayed at the Craft Show will be these metal basket and vase forms by **Christopher Ellison** of Holcomb, New York.