

 fall 2011

THE QUARTERLY

THE JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE

Fleur Bresler
One-of-a-Kind Award, 2012

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The year 2011 has been highly successful for the James Renwick Alliance and the Renwick Gallery, and the end of the year is a fitting opportunity to talk about this year's accomplishments.

We started out with one of the most successful Distinguished Artist Series ever, all five which sold out

months before the events took place, and the Renwick Gallery's Grand Salon was packed for the Sunday lectures: Mark Sfirri, Ubaldo Vitali, Judith Schaechter, Cliff and Holly Lee, and two conservators, Catharine Valentour and Jane Norman.

This was followed by one of the most successful financial Spring Craft weekends ever. Having five of the best artists in the country as Masters of the Media did not hurt: Jun Kaneko, Jon Eric Riis, Lino Tagliapietra, Linda MacNeil and Garry Knox Bennett. Along with One-of-a-Kind recipients Bernard and Sherley Koteen and four artists from the 2011 Renwick Invitational, we had a most successful weekend. We also changed the date to coincide with the invitational opening—another plus for JRA's recognition.

At the same time, Betsy Broun, The Margaret and Terry Stent Director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, announced that the goal for the Lloyd Herman endowment for a curator of American craft had been met, and many JRA members had contributed generously to this fund. She also announced an endowment for The Fleur and Charles Bresler Curator of American Craft and Decorative Arts, a title bestowed upon current curator, Nicholas Bell.

We also contributed to the acquisition of three pieces for the permanent collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery: Ubaldo Vitali's *Tureen*, 2001, Matthias Pliessnig's *Drift*, and Nick Cave's *Soundsuit*, 2009.

The upcoming year promises to be equally exciting with the 40th anniversary of the Renwick Gallery being celebrated with a very special exhibition *40 Under 40: Craft Futures*. Noting that at present the Renwick Gallery has only five works in the collection by artists currently less than 40 years of age, Nicholas Bell, The Fleur and Charles Bresler Curator of American Craft and Decorative Arts, organized a show designed to highlight the work of young (less than age 40) artists. The show is being documented in an extensive catalogue with funds provided from the JRA Dale Chihuly Publication Fund which will elaborate on new exciting trends and developments in the field of studio craft art.

Nicholas is making an extensive effort to acquire work of each of the artists in the show for the collection. He has been meeting with JRA members individually and in small groups and, thus far, from resources including JRA members, has confirmation for about half. He needs our help in completing the commitment to make these works part of the collection.

Now is the time for each member to make a commitment to this project by helping Nicholas acquire these works.



From the president...

Neah David Smith

Clemmer Montague

Clemmer Montague, JRA President

2012 SPRING CRAFT WEEKEND EVENTS ANNOUNCED

Spring Craft Weekend, March 23–25, is the major fund-raising event for the James Renwick Alliance. Each year the amount earned from weekend patrons' support, ticket sales and the silent and live auctions is used to fund the JRA pledge to the Smithsonian American Art Museum and operate the JRA. The JRA donation to American Art funds exhibitions and programs at the Renwick Gallery, acquires objects for its permanent collection and supports scholarship on craft through the James Renwick Fellowship program.

Gary Stevens is the overall SCW chair and Jackie Urow will chair the panel discussion on Saturday, March 24. Barbara Berlin and Sandy Mitchell are co-chairs for the Caucus afternoon and evening on Friday, and Lois Jecklin and Paul Parkman are heading the committee for the awards brunch on Sunday. Bonnie Schwartz is the gala chair, and Rebecca Stevens is in charge of the auctions, assisted by Elizabeth Ryland Mears, Brenda Erickson and Pat Arnold. Gwen Paulson is handling hospitality.

Honorees this year are the One-of-a-Kind award to **Fleur Bresler** and the Distinguished Craft Educator awards to:

Dr. Judith S. Schwartz, Paulus Berensohn Wendy Maruyama and Stephen Powell.

Invitations will be mailed to members in February with details on weekend events. Join us for a memorable Spring Craft Weekend. Weekend events include:

FRIDAY March 23, 2012

Patrons/Caucus Day. Mid afternoon private tours and an anniversary celebration at the Renwick Gallery. Renwick Gallery Director Emeritus Lloyd Herman talks about the Gallery's early days.

SATURDAY MORNING March 24

Panel discussion at the Smithsonian American Art Museum's McEvoy Auditorium.

Topic: *Japanese Influence on American Craft*. Moderator Halsey North. Panelists: Jack Lenor Larsen, Donald Friedlich, Wendy Maruyama and Dr. Judith S. Schwartz.

SATURDAY EVENING March 24

Benefit dinner and auctions at the historic Willard Hotel.

Preview reception for Patrons
Silent and Live Auctions
One-of-a-Kind Award

SUNDAY MORNING March 25

Awards brunch honoring four Distinguished Craft Educators: Dr. Judith S. Schwartz, Paulus Berensohn, Wendy Maruyama and Stephen Powell at one of the finest addresses in Washington, the St. Regis Hotel.

Shirley Jacobs, Patrons chair, sent out letters of intent to patrons in early November and will be following up with phone calls to confirm one's patronage.

Mark your calendars and plan to join the celebration. Contact the James Renwick Alliance at 301 907-3888 for event and ticket information or check www.jra.org.



Miriam Rosenthal

ABOUT THE RENWICK GALLERY

The Smithsonian American Art Museum celebrates the vision and creativity of Americans with works of art in all media spanning more than three centuries.

The museum's branch for craft and decorative arts, the Renwick Gallery, located on Pennsylvania Avenue at 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C., is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except December 25. Admission is free.

Metrorail station: Farragut North (Red line) and Farragut West (Blue and Orange lines). Smithsonian Information: 202 633-1000; 202 633-5285 (TTY). Museum information (recorded): 202 633-7970. Web site: americanart.si.edu. Follow the museum on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, ArtBabble, iTunes and YouTube.

ON THE COVER

Fleur Bresler in her living room, surrounded by the objects of her affection—her wood art collection—is the James Renwick Alliance One-of-a-Kind award recipient. She was selected for her dedication to the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery, the wood art community, the Washington, D.C., area art and craft community, including VisArts in Rockville and the James Renwick Alliance. She will be recognized during Spring Craft Weekend at the Gala on Saturday evening, March 24. Look for a major article in the Winter issue of the *Quarterly*. Photo by Miriam Rosenthal

JRA BOARD MEETINGS*

Tuesday, January 17 @7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 15 @7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 10 @7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 8 @7:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 9 @2 p.m.

*Subject to change



Four Distinguished Craft Educators Cover a Wide Range of Experience

The four Distinguished Educators represent a wide range of experience in the teaching field: a former dancer turned potter, a furniture maker, a glass master and a professor of ceramics. They will be presented their awards on Sunday, March 25, at the brunch at the prestigious St. Regis Hotel.

Paulus Berensohn's (Penland, NC) teaching and writing has expanded the way we think about craft by inviting us to think deeply about the personal transformation that working with craft material implies and the way our practice in turn has the potential to transform our society and environment.

Paulus came into craft from an original perspective. As a young dancer in New York with Merce Cunningham he happened to observe Karen Karnes throwing pots. He “had to learn that dance,” as he has put it, and he has been thinking, writing, and speaking about craft practice as movement ever since. His seminal book, *Finding One's Way with Clay*, (Simon and Schuster, 1968) has been in print continuously since publication and is one of the most widely printed books in the field, an expansive counterweight to the tight canon of the time, Bernard Leach's *Potter's Book*. His practice of forming vessels by pinching proposed a slow movement decades in advance of the now well-known slow movement in food and invited a more mindful space into our studio practice.

What makes Paulus so significant as an educator is his invitation to think more deeply about what we are doing in transforming materials into objects and how we are transformed in turn by those materials and the objects we make. He invokes diverse sources from astrophysics to anthropology to poetry to get students excited about exploring the creative process. His recitations of poetry are famously moving, inviting students into a contemplative space of greater possibility. In fact, Paulus is a kind of poet-laureate of the craft field and he is frequently asked to say a poem at events around Penland. Also, his insights as a dancer into how we use our bodies in our studios, how the energy flows or is blocked during the motions of working with materials has been essential to helping artists work over long careers.



Paulus Berensohn

Dan Bailey

Paulus doesn't fit the profile of many craft educators. He is unique as an artist and as a teacher. He never taught for any length of time at an institution and incorporates many media within his own practice. His influence however has been undeniable and has transformed the conversation within the field. He is an American Original before ecology was on the radar, ever thoughtful, seeking, asking why we make objects and how they make us and inspiring others to take on that challenge. —Mark Shapiro

Wendy Maruyama (San Diego) is in the forefront of contemporary studio furniture makers. Her work is characterized by a sense of character and emotion, the bold use of pop culture iconography, and dualities—Eastern/Western, traditional/contemporary, feminine/masculine. In 2008, the Furniture Society presented her with the Award of Distinction. She has been the recipient of four NEA Crafts-

men's Fellowships and a Fulbright grant to England.

Maruyama is professor emeritus of the Furniture Design and Woodworking Program at San Diego State University, where she began teaching in 1989. Previously she taught at the California College of Arts and Crafts. She was recently an artist in-residence at Anderson Ranch Arts Center, where she focused on creating a digital film to be installed in a new piece of her furniture. From 1994–2000, she served on the board of trustees of the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts.

Her educator role has extended beyond the university. She has conducted workshops and served as artist-in-residence in the United States, Europe, and Asia. As the daughter of second-generation Japanese-



Stephen Powell



Wendy Maruyama

Americans and a resident of California, her interests and influences have looked west to the Orient for inspiration and insight. She has organized artist exchanges between students at San Diego State and Takumi Jyuku in Takatyama, Japan, as well as Hongik University in Korea. Through her work and these educational exchanges, she has expanded the global reach of American studio craft and enriched the range and possibilities of furniture-making for future generations.

—Brenda Erickson

Stephen Powell (Danville, KY) joined the Art Department at Centre College in 1983 to teach ceramics and sculpture. By 1985, he had built a glass studio; and in 1997, Powell designed and completed a new, state-of-the-art glass studio, which Centre opened as part of their new Visual Arts Center in January 1998.

Powell is an innovative artist who has used large scale murrine to create powerful, breathtaking works of art. He has taught and demonstrated his process extensively. Powell has participated in workshops, demonstrations, and lectures all over the U.S., as well as in Russia, Ukraine, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. He has demonstrated at several Glass Art Society conferences, at Glass Weekend in support of the Creative Glass Center of America, and at the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Powell has been honored with Kentucky's "Teacher of the Year" award in both 1999 and 2000. In 2004, he was presented with

the Acorn Award by the Kentucky Council on Post-secondary Education.

Stephen Powell teaches locally, nationally and internationally. He has built an excellent educational program and facility which have produced a stream of creative artists. He has been recognized in his home state for his academic prowess. —Jerry and Gwen Paulson

Dr. Judith S. Schwartz, professor, Department of Art and Art Professions at New York University (New York City), directs the Sculpture in Craft Media area (clay, metals, and glass) and teaches studio courses in ceramic sculpture.

Throughout her career, she has continuously adhered to the principle of not only teaching but never forgetting her students given how hard it is for them to build a career as ceramists. After graduation, she remains an advisor, curator, teacher, and most of all, a friend to her former students. Her attention to the field of education extends into the public understanding of craft as well. In her role of increasing student and public awareness and appreciation for the field of ceramics, she lectures extensively and has published numerous journal articles, reviews of artists'

work and catalogues for both national and international journals, served as head juror to the World Ceramic Exposition Foundation in Korea and continues as a consultant to the Korean Biennale for the past 10 years.

Dr. Schwartz has presented lectures and moderated panels at the National Council on Education in the Ceramic Arts conferences (NCECA) since 1982. She is educational consultant to the Lenox China Company, president of the University Council for Art Education, and president of The Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts (and serves on its Board); She is on the board of *Studio Potter Magazine*, the K12 Ceramic Art Foundation and the Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred University. She is an elected member of the International Academy of Ceramics, and has received a JD Rockefeller III grant in Art Education and the Everson Museum's award for service and excellence in the field of ceramic education. She is an honorary member of NCECA and has chaired two national conferences; She is a trustee of the Howard Kottler estate and has facilitated the publication of two books about the president of the established Museum of Ceramic Art (to be located in Long Island City).



Judith S. Schwartz

Venice as We Have Never Seen Her...

I saw Venice as I have not seen her before. Somehow she seemed easier to navigate, to comprehend and to absorb. Perhaps it was the two terrific Venetians who met us Saturday afternoon to introduce us to their world, one an American expatriate, the other her Venetian husband. Perhaps it was the perfect October weather, creating softer, more subtle light on the Byzantine-like palazzi and sparkling off the constantly moving water in the Grand Canal in the early morning rush hour. Whatever it was, we all fell in love or renewed our relationship with this wonderful city, the whole of it being greater than all the little pieces. Perhaps it was because as I read John Julius Norwich's 1989 *A History of Venice* each night before going to sleep, I began to see Venice as a city with a history substantially different from other European cities, more Byzantine than western.

Whatever the reason, the Venice study tour was the most spectacular of all the Craft Leaders Caucus study tours ever. (But we say that about all study tours once we return home.) The most memorable visits were to the collections of a number of foundations (private museums), funded by individuals that we never would have seen otherwise. The long three-hours lunches were a welcoming treat for us who always rush through lunch eating a sandwich or bowl of soup.

Our first lunch was with Lino and Lina Tagliapietra on Sunday, October 16, as he was off to Portland, Oregon, the next day. Each lunch or dinner was created especially for us by the chefs or friends of our hosts: appetizers, exotic aperitifs, polenta, pasta, risotto with fall wild mushrooms, veal cheeks, fish, great wines and digestives and, of course, tiramisu or gelato for dessert.

The glass factories of Murano were the major craft feature: small family run places, internationally recognized galleries, and famous glass artists such as the studio of Davide Salvadore and his delightful sons Marco and Mattia. We all had a chance to blow glass there and to visit the studio and home of JRA Master of the Medium of Glass Lino Tagliapietra hosted by his charming wife Lina.

We also met Toni Gordon who championed the work of glass sculptor Livio Seguso in both his home in Venice and his studio on Murano, visited two families with their collections: one an expert in the historic glass of Paolo Venini, the other an antiques dealer, and some of us went to the opera house La Fenice and stood behind posts to hear *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The one day we spent outside of Venice was on a rainy day to visit to Andrea Palladio's Villa Barbaro at the village of Mazur with its site-specific Paolo Veronese frescos. We lost our hearts again when we arrived at the restaurant Locanda Baggio Da Nino, owned by Nino and Antonietta Baggio. Half the group took a cooking class from the friendly staff (the other half visited the hill city of Asolo). We made ravioli, fried veggies, shrimp and tagliatelle with duck sauce under the watchful eye of the master chef; we then ate what was cooked. Subsequently we all sat down with the returning group for a lunch of polenta, risotto, ravioli, veal cheeks and tiramisu (or gelato for those who passed up tiramisu).

And who can forget getting into and out of water taxis on choppy water as the boat swayed up and down and sideways. Nor the visits to the Romanesque/Byzantine Basilica of Sante Maria e Donato and its bell tower on

Murano, the Santa Maria Maggoire and its cloister and monks' cells, now a research library, and, of course, Santa Maria della Salute, our vaporetto (waterbus) stop. And what about the Biennial on the worst day of the trip or the arsenal where, at one time, the greatest ship builders of the world designed and constructed the fastest trading and war ships on the seas.

This amazing study tour was brought to us by Anne Mehninger, Leslie Genninger and Michele Benzoni, and encouraged by Mallory Lawson.

Just think, a week without American pizza!

Next up is Houston, May 9–13. —Clemmer Montague



Terry Beaty disembarking from a water taxi



Massimo Micheluzzi showing how to work cold glass to Jane and Norman Jacobs and leader Michele Benzoni



In Murano visiting the Romanesque/Byzantine Basilica of Sante Maria e Donato



Deena Kaplan blowing glass with Marco Salvatore



Lunch with Lino and Lina Tagliapietra



Anne Mehringer making ravioli



David Landau, expert collector of Paolo Venini glass



Lois and Dirk Jecklin in Murano (no, not Chihuly)



Sheer joy for Elizabeth Doyle with her treasure and its makers Marco and Mattia Salvatore

Making A Difference: JRA Video Makes its Debut in September



Amanda Barrett, Barbara Berlin, Robyn Kennedy and Mallory Lawson, organizer, gathered together at the preview of the JRA video, "Making a Difference."



The JRA video preview found JRA members having a good time. Gwen Paulson shows off her "prize."



The director and producer of the video, Martin Huberman, and his wife Mariana were at its opening. Marty interviewed all those in the video, put it together and then helped to buy a television on which to show it.



"Making A Difference," the JRA video, was previewed on Saturday, September 10 at the home of Giselle and Ben Huberman. Photos by Paul Parkman

New Year's Eve Fun(d)raiser
8:30 p.m., December 31, 2011
to 12:30 a.m., January 1, 2012

Call the JRA Office to sign up,
301 907-3888

RENWICK CURATOR SEEKS 40 UNDER 40 PIECES FOR THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

Nicholas Bell, the Fleur and Charles Bresler Curator of American Craft and Decorative Arts, has a goal to acquire as many of the objects as possible from the *40 under 40: Craft Futures* exhibition for the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery's permanent collection. The exhibition opens July 20.

Since the number of objects and the list of artists is long, he feels it would be more advantageous to meet personally with James Renwick Alliance members to discuss these acquisitions for the permanent collection. He will provide a list of prices and explain the process of how to acquire objects either individually or in groups of several people. He already met with JRA members in early December and will continue to do so as needed.

40 under 40: Craft Futures is presented in honor of the 40th anniversary of the Renwick Gallery. Nicholas selected the artists and is organizing the exhibition. The museum

intends to acquire works by every artist in the exhibition for the permanent collection to mark the anniversary. The artists included in the exhibition originate from every region of the United States and five countries.

40 under 40: Craft Futures is organized by the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Fleur Bresler, the Ryna and Melvin Cohen Family Foundation En-

dowment, the James Renwick Alliance and the Windgate Charitable Foundation generously support the exhibition in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Renwick Gallery. The publication is made possible by the James Renwick Alliance Dale Chihuly Publication Fund. Nicholas Bell may be contacted at the Renwick Gallery at or 202-633-2847 or by email at belln@si.edu.

Vivian Beer, 2008
Slither.walk.fly
Steel and Automotive Paint
38 x 95 x 45.75 inches
Courtesy of the artist and
Wexler Gallery, Philadelphia, PA



Wexler Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY PLANNED BY COMMITTEE

New Year's Eve, December 31 from 8:30 p.m. to January 1, at 12:30 a.m. is a second major fun(d) raising event for the James Renwick Alliance, and everyone is invited—at a cost. Proceeds will replenish the JRA Dale Chihuly Publication Fund, a restricted fund which supports Renwick Gallery publications.

The party, hosted by Benjamin and Giselle Huberman at their Potomac, MD, home, will be limited to the first 100 people to sign up and pay. The price is \$250 per person and includes \$50 in chips to be used at Craft Casino. The tax deductible amount is \$125.

The JRA Store, where party goers can exchange their chips (or buy more, if needed) for fabulous events and things, will be packed full of goodies: a box of homemade pickles, a weekend in a beach house, large wall-sized photographs, lessons with craft artists, craft objects, handmade scarves, goblets, jewelry, etc. The committee is accepting donations for the store, not necessarily objects, but weekends, dinners, restaurant events, play tickets, etc. Giselle has organized special entertainment, featuring the American Crafties who will be singing and dancing (Giselle, Sandy Mitchell, Elmerina Parkman and Clemmer Montague). Music will accompany the evening's activities, and the person who wins the

"Name the Art" will get a bottle of champagne to take home. Bubbly will be served at midnight, and traditional New Year's Eve songs will be part of midnight festivities.

Artists can purchase their tickets by donating work at a value of \$250, which will then be used as prizes in the JRA Store.

The buffet dinner is catered, and members are donating wines, beverages and appetizers. Valet parking is available, and guests are requested to drive to the front door and leave keys with the valets.

Planning the party are: Giselle Huberman, chair; Ben Huberman, Sandy and Norman Mitchell, Mallory Lawson, Shirley and Randi Jacobs, Elmerina and Paul Parkman, Clemmer and David Montague, Marilyn Hardis, Bonnie Schwartz, Miriam Rosenthal, Pati Young and Brigitte Savage.

Tickets are still available, so contact the JRA office at 301-907-3888 or admin@jra.org if you want to attend, donate items for the JRA Store, or provide food, beverages or services.



JRA New Year's Eve Fun(d) raising party planners are: Sandy Mitchell, Randi Jacobs, Shirley Jacobs, Mallory Lawson, Elmerina Parkman, Norman Mitchell, Brigitte Savage, David Montague, Paul Parkman, host Giselle Huberman, Marilyn Hardis, Clemmer Montague and host Ben Huberman. Pati Young, Miriam Rosenthal and Bonnie Schwartz are not pictured. Photo by Miriam Rosenthal

First in 2012 Distinguished Artist Series: Insights on Caring for Collections

By Barbara A. Wolanin

The theme of the October 29 and 30 programs was “Challenges of Caring for Collections of Craft and Decorative Art in a Home.”

During the Saturday workshop, a dozen JRA members expanded their knowledge of the conditions most damaging to our beloved craft art. The session was led by two of the experienced objects conservators who worked on the striking objects from the White House collection now on display at the Renwick Gallery. Catharine Valentour and Jane Norman, both with years of experience at the Smithsonian Institution and in private practice, showed images to illustrate principles relevant for every collector and every object from archaeological to contemporary. They emphasized basic and essential preventative measures, such as keeping temperature and humidity as moderate and stable as possible to avoid mold or corrosion (from too much humidity) or cracking (from dry air and heat). They offered a useful suggestion about gradually acclimating objects brought from different parts of the world, possibly by placing them with silica gel in an enclosure to stabilize conditions.

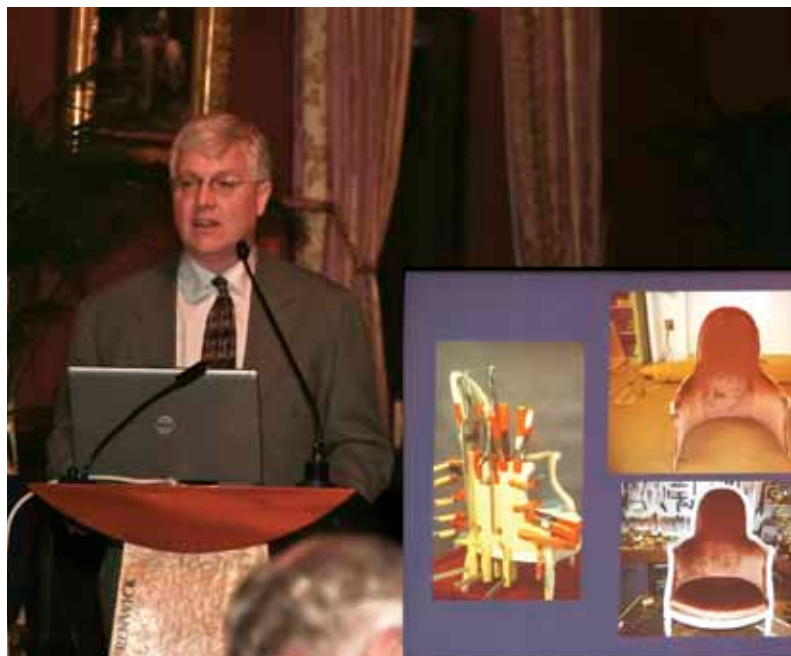
The second big enemy of art on display is light. Collectors can minimize damage by installing ultraviolet film on windows, using UV Plexiglas in frames, or by rotating pieces periodically. Thirdly, damaging pollutants include dust, cooking oils, and gases—which can even come from wooden display cabinets. Vigilance is needed to watch out for pests. Finally, thinking carefully about where things are displayed and how something



Jane Norman and Catharine Valentour, objects conservators, led a hands-on workshop/discussion focusing on pieces in a wide variety of mediums brought in by participants seeking advice about best ways to display, maintain, and store their pieces, and how to know when to call on the services of a professional conservator. **BELOW**, William Allman, Curator of the White House talks about caring for White House decorative arts which are in use daily. The inset photos show how a chair is restored for strength yet keeps its original form. Photos by Miriam Rosenthal

will be lifted before moving it can prevent breakage. Some pieces have “inherent vice” because of materials that will deteriorate.

Valentour and Norman emphasized the importance of collectors documenting each object with an assessment of condition and photographs of all sides, especially important if it gets damaged. They suggested having professional conservators work done on objects that might end up in a museum. After discussion over lunch, the conservators examined damaged pieces brought in by participants. The group ended at the Renwick Gallery hearing more about some of the objects the conservators had treated.





Joining Clemmer Montague, JRA president, on October 30 at the talks on conservation for the Distinguished Artists Lecture Series “Experts, Experts and Curators” were William Allman, Curator of the White House, JRA organizer Barbara Wolanin, Eryl Wentworth, Executive Director of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, and Bruce Schuettinger, a furniture and wooden artifacts conservator. Photo by Miriam Rosenthal

EXPERTS, EXPERTS AND CURATORS

The presentations of the three experts who spoke on Sunday in the Grand Salon dovetailed with the Saturday program and with each other. We were privileged to have Eryl Wentworth, (since 2004 the Executive Director of the American Institute for Conservation and its foundation), explain how a conservator is trained, usually in one of the four graduate programs in North America, and how the AIC provides ongoing training and the foundation of its code of ethics and standards and guidelines for treatment.

Wentworth explained the six primary actions conservators take, and explained how collectors can search for conservators by specialty and location on the AIC Web site at www.conservation-us.org. Bruce Schuettinger, a furniture and wooden artifacts conservator, worked for almost 30 years on furniture and wooden artifacts, many in museum collections. He spoke about various ways furniture in use over many generations is vulnerable to

damage, including “fashion updating.” He stressed environmental stability and proper maintenance—including *not* using most of the polishes and cleaners sold for wood that can cause severe damage over time, and focusing on gentle dusting. He showed examples of many historic pieces on which he worked and explained how scientific analysis and historic research play important roles in conservation. The White House Curator, Bill Allman, who has been caring for objects there since 1976, told how presidents would usually redecorate and get rid of the old furnishings in “garage sales” until Mrs. Kennedy envisioned the White House as a museum as well as a residence and hired the first curator.

Schuettinger’s fascinating stories about particular pieces and how conservators met challenges such as making a historic chair stand up to heavy use or dealing with fly specks covering the gilded plateau used as a centerpiece made the audience eager to go down to look at the exhibition with new appreciation.

Distinguished Artist Workshop Debra Fritts February 11, 2012

Debra Fritts, well-known sculptor and teacher, has won national recognition for her work in ceramic sculpture through invitational exhibitions and awards, museum exhibitions, private collections and publications. Her sculptures were included in *Form and Imagination*, honoring women ceramic sculptors at the American Museum of Ceramic Art, Pomona, California and are in the permanent collection at the Fuller Museum in Massachusetts. Her one of a kind sculptures are hand-built and multiple fired with a painterly glazed surface. The work is a continuous story of awareness and the celebration of daily living.

On Saturday, February 11, Debra Fritts will offer a one-day hands-on figurative clay workshop. Students will quickly build a head by pinching and coiling. Facial features will be demonstrated by pushing from the inside of the form and by the addition of clay. Personal inter-

pretations will allow the work to have a spiritual connection between the sculpture and the maker. Some surface treatments will be explored using slips and underglazes.

In addition, Debra Fritts will present a lecture on her work on Sunday, February 12 at 2 p.m. in the Grand Salon at the Renwick Gallery.

Date/Time: Saturday February 11, 2012, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Location: Flux Studios, 3708 Wells Avenue, Mount Rainier, MD 20712 (www.fluxstudiosdc.com for directions)

Limit: 20

Individual Workshop Cost:

JRA Member \$30
Non-Member \$40

Entire Four-Part DAS Series:

JRA Members \$100
Non-members \$140

For more information or to register, please e-mail admin@jra.org.



Debra Fritts

JRA Provides Funding to American Art to Purchase Nick Cave's *Soundsuit* (2009)

The James Renwick Alliance Board of Directors, at its November 8 meeting, unanimously agreed to provide an additional \$23,000 to its Acquisitions Committee to apply to the purchase of a fiber piece entitled *Soundsuit* (2009) by Chicago artist Nick Cave for the Smithsonian American Art Museum's permanent collection. The Acquisitions Committee, which met on December 6, accepted the recommendation from Nicholas Bell, The Fleur and Charles Bresler Curator of American Craft and Decorative Arts. The special allocation of funds is not counted against the FY2012 pledge which JRA makes to American Art.

The Acquisitions Committee is composed of founding members and past presidents, current board of directors and board members off the board for two years and Craft Leaders Caucus members. The quorum of at least 20 or 1/3 of the committee membership vote was present at the event which was combined with the monthly board of directors meeting. A total of 49 votes including absentee ballots were counted for the piece and six against.

Nicholas Bell introduced the history and provenance of this *Soundsuit* with photos of a retrospective of Cave's work.

During the past five years, Nick Cave has soared to acclaim for his fiber-based sculptures which he calls "Soundsuits." These fanciful costumes are covered with a vivid array of materials including beads, sequins, buttons, and human hair. The blending of cultural and artistic traditions is a key feature of Cave's work. He is particularly



Nick Cave *Soundsuit*, 2009. Photo by Mary Tait

interested in the tension between "low craft" and "high art." Many of the *Soundsuits* resurrect outdated or overlooked craft forms. *Soundsuit* (2009) is an extraordinary patchwork of appliquéd and crocheted items which emerged from the hobby craft movement of the 1970s. Doilies and hot pads cover the front of the sculpture while the back is embellished with colorful bottle cap trivets crocheted in the shape of butterflies and bunches of grapes. These wonderfully kitschy materials are found or recycled and then sewn to the suit by hand. This acquisition resonates with countless other artists and objects in the Smithsonian American Art Museum collection.

Cave got the idea for the suits after watching footage of the 1991 Rodney King beating. The incident prompted Cave to reflect on his own identity as a black man. His first suit, made entirely of twigs, was conceived as a

shield or second skin that would provide anonymity and protection from the outside world. Cave's subsequent costumes have followed the same principle. Race, gender and class are all obscured so that the viewer can experience the work without prejudice or prejudgment. No part of the wearer's identity is ever exposed in a *Soundsuit* and yet the human body remains at the core of the suits—literally and figuratively.

Cave is fascinated by the expressive potential of movement. During college he studied dance through an Alvin Ailey program in Kansas City, and many of his earliest suits were created for performance. In fact, the term "sound suit" was born when Cave stepped into the first suit and heard the rustle of twigs as he moved. Today, not every *Soundsuit* is intended to be worn, but the idea of performance is implicit in all of them. The design

Nick Cave

Born Fulton, MO 1959
Resides Chicago, IL

Soundsuit, 2009
mixed media, 96" x 33" x 22"

Education: Cranbrook
Academy of Art, MFA 1989
Kansas City Art Institute,
BFA 1982

Selected Public Collections:
Brooklyn Museum
Museum of Arts and Design
Milwaukee Art Museum
High Museum
Pennsylvania Academy
of Fine Art
Wadsworth Athenaeum
De Young Museum
Mint Museum

of the suits—their extravagant color and ornamentation—is also informed by a wide range of ritual customs and costumes from Haitian voodoo flags and Tibetan textiles to the ceremonial attire of Mardi Gras Indians in New Orleans.—Smithsonian American Art Museum

JRA Day, JRA Bay Presented Work of Talented Artist Members



Photos by Clemmer Montague

ABOVE, JRA artist members participated in JRA Day. **BELOW,** Founder and organizer Mallory Lawson and Membership Chair Pati Young kept busy during the day. **BOTTOM,** JRA Bay, previously loved objects from JRA members, attracted a good crowd.



ABOVE, Barbara Magid, volunteer, assists a prospective buyer with her purchase.



A beautiful fall morning greeted the 4th JRA Day, which was held once again at the Woman's Club of Chevy Chase on Nov. 19.

A steady stream of attendees and holiday sales kept everyone hopping. We were able to enroll several new members and promote the work of many of our talented artist members.

Thank you to Fran Abrams, Lynn Bechthold, Karin Birch, Ann Byron, Eric Celarier, Analya Cespedes, Susan Cohen, Denise Dickens, Sarah Dufendach, Margaret Flaherty, Lin Foa, Jan Maddox, Mara Mayor, Sharron Parker, William Peirce, Carol Radin, Miriam Rosenthal, Chris Shea, Judy Weisman, Estelle Vernon and Richard Webster for participating. This was a challenging event with set up, the show, and break down all in one day, and they came thru like troopers. We were excited to see the fine work of six new artists and we remain impressed with the overall high level of professionalism and artistic integrity within our group.



It takes a JRA Village to put on an event such as this, and it would not have happened without the hard work and dedication of the following people: Elizabeth Doyle, Brenda Erickson, Dick Fryklund, Jere Gibber, Marilyn Hardis, J.G. Harrington, Tina Heller, Ben and Giselle Huberman, Cookie Kerxton, Barbara Magid, Elmerina and Paul Parkman, Sandy Mitchell, Clemmer and David Montague, Irene Sinclair, Gary and Rebecca Stevens, Cicie Sattarnilasskorn, and Pati Young. Thank you also to the many members who donated to JRA Bay, which continues to be a fun and efficient way to recycle secondary market craft items.

A survey is being developed for participating artists from the last four JRA Days to see how we can improve. A committee will convene early next year to assess the future of the event and evaluate the results. If anyone would like to join us, please feel free to contact me.—Mallory Lawson

JRA HAD A SUCCESSFUL YEAR SAYS THE TREASURER



The well-attended JRA general annual membership meeting was held in the Grand Salon of the Renwick Gallery on October 4. JRA members had the opportunity to hear from JRA President Clemmer Montague and meet the two new

JRA vice presidents Giselle Huberman, vice president of development and Gary Stevens, vice president of programs. Gary, who was out of town, was introduced by past-President, Anne Mehringer. The goals of each office were discussed as well as how the positions will free up the JRA President to focus on other important tasks essential to the smooth running of the JRA. The important part was the report of J.G. Harrington, treasurer, who announced the success of Spring Craft Weekend 2011 and pronounced the financial status of the Alliance as good.

Further, attendees heard from Nicolas Bell, the Fleur and Charles Bresler Curator of American Craft and Decorative Arts, on the upcoming *40 Under 40* exhibit which will feature 40 artists under the age of 40 and will commemorate the Renwick Gallery's pending 40th anniversary this coming Spring. His message was a plea for JRA members to contribute to the purchase—either individually or in groups—of works in the exhibition. Then, Robyn Kennedy, Gallery chief, spoke briefly about *Something of Splendor: Decorative Arts from the White House* and led a curatorial tour of the exhibit.—Pati Young

ABOVE, J.G. Harrington, treasurer, addressed the annual JRA membership meeting audience on October 4 in the Grand Salon, dazzling all with figures on the financial status of the organization.

BELOW, Igal and Diane Silber of Laguna, CA, and Washington, D.C., were at the annual membership meeting at the Renwick Gallery.



Photos by Miriam Rosenthal

OBITUARIES

We shall miss them greatly...

James Renwick Alliance caucus member **Evelyn Asrael**, 86, wife of Stanley Asrael for 64 years, died on November 3. She was the mother of Dale, Lynn (Tad) Grodzki, Wendy (Jeff) Allen, and Loren; sister of Sidney Shore (deceased), and sister-in-law of Marsha Shore.



Evelyn graduated as an RN in 1946 from Sinai School of Nursing, Baltimore. She practiced her profession at Columbia Hospital, was a homemaker, a board member of League of Women Voters of Montgomery County and was employed by the Jewish Community Center of Rockville's Program for Senior Citizens.

Friends may call at the Asrael home. Friends may be received for a Memorial Gathering in her honor on December 18, 2011 at 1 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center, 6125 Montrose Road, Rockville, MD 20852. Memorial gifts may be made to the

American Cancer Society, an organization Evelyn supported.

A past JRA Fellow, **Lynn Jones Ennis**, died unexpectedly on July 26, 2011. Dr. Ennis was Associate Director and Curator of the Collection at The Gregg Museum of Art & Design at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. In 1993 she received the James Renwick Alliance Fellowship in American Craft; her research project was "Penland School of Crafts: The Early Years." Her research and interests included 20th Century American craft history, specifically the issues of creativity, creative process and voice and southern women's history.



Dr. Ennis wrote and lectured extensively on the early years of the Penland School of Crafts. She also curated exhibitions of the work of Tom Spleth, Sonya Clark and Thomas Sayre and worked on the exhibition of Robert Ebendorf's *Retrospective* which traveled to the Renwick Gallery.

2011 USA FELLOWS WINNERS

Jon Eric Riis, JRA 2011 Master of the Medium of Fiber/Tapestry, **Sonya Clark** who is a JRA artist member, and **Beth Lipmann** whose glass piece *Bancketje* (2003) JRA purchased for the Renwick Gallery collection have been named as three of the 50 USA Fellows for 2011.

Sonja is chair of the Craft and Material Studies department at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond. She creates textile works, sculptures, installations and photographs and uses hair as a material to address race and identity issues.

Jon Eric Riis from Atlanta, GA is an internationally known contemporary fiber artist in tapestry.

Glass artist Beth Lipman produces large-scale, three-dimensional renditions of still life in clear blown glass, which are glittering depictions of abundance and chaos.

United States Artists (USA) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to investing in America's finest artists and to illuminating the value of artists to society. The USA Fellowship grants program awards of \$50,000 to outstanding performing, visual, media, and literary artists.



Clemmer Montague

We received word this week that Jan Peters, co-owner of del Mano Gallery in Los Angeles (a Gallery Caucus member) died this week after a long fight with cancer. She is shown here with Eric Serritella, ceramic artist, at SOFA Chicago 2010. We will post any additional information when available.

Craft Enthusiasts Come Together at SOFA Chicago, November 3–6, 2011



In early November, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in the 18th Annual International Expositions of Sculpture Objects & Functional Art, affectionately referred to as “SOFA” in Chicago. Members of the James Renwick Alliance came from all across the country to take part in this renowned event. The trip was especially exciting for me as it was my first craft fair and my first trip to Chicago. I had heard great things about both SOFA and the city of Chicago and I was not disappointed on either count. The quality of the works represented in the galleries was quite exceptional and the energy at the Navy Pier was infectious. It was very interesting to meet the gallerists and to speak with artists about their processes and how they create their works.

From the Resources center, I met many interesting individuals who work at various organizations all in support of craft art. It was also a nice opportunity for the public to learn more about the JRA. I was particularly delighted to meet members of the James Renwick Alliance who live outside of the metropolitan DC area. It was evident throughout the weekend and especially during the Saturday brunch that this is truly a very close knit group of crafts supporters. It was also heartening to see how the James Renwick Alliance and those affiliated with our organization are held in very high regard by the larger craft community.

I look forward to seeing you all in Chicago next year.

—Cicie Sattarnilasskorn, *JRA Administrator*

LEFT, Cicie Sattarnilasskorn at the JRA table in the Resources center at SOFA. Photo by Clemmer Montague



When the Safeway store in Bethesda at the corner of Bradley and Arlington Boulevards was rebuilt, a team of architects, Safeway real estate managers and local artists from the Washington Glass School planned a new building incorporating artistic elements using recycled materials from the old building. On December 11, JRA members were told the story of the creation of the unique cast glass tile windows in the street level parking garage by the people who were responsible for the process: Safeway Area Real Estate Manager Renee Montgomery, artists Michael Janis and Erwin Timmers, Safeway Director of Public Affairs and Government Relations, Gregory Ten Eyck. Photo by Miriam Rosenthal

GLORIOUS ANNIVERSARIES

Spring Craft Weekend 2012
March 23–25
Sign up to be a Patron

Gala Evening: Good Food, Good Company, Good Auctions at the historic Willard Hotel

Stimulating Discussions: *Influence of Japanese Art on American Craft*, Smithsonian American Art Museum's McEvoy Auditorium

Brunch with the Distinguished Educators, Sunday, March 25 at the St. Regis Hotel

Save the Dates! (JRA events in red)

December

31 New Year's Eve Fun(d) Raising Event Party, Home of Ben and Giselle Huberman, 8:30 p.m.–12:30 a.m. January 1

January 2012

17 JRA Board meeting, Brenda Erickson

29 Craft Leaders Caucus: Evening of Learning: Nancy Selvin: How It All Began—California Ceramics, 1960–1970, 2:30–4 p.m. at the home of Norman and Sandy Mitchell

February

11 Distinguished Artist Series, Ceramist Debra Fritts, Flux Studios, Potluck TBA

12 Distinguished Artist Lecture, Debra Fritts, Renwick Gallery Grand Salon, 2 p.m.

14 JRA Board meeting, Gary Stevens

March

SPRING CRAFT WEEKEND:

23 Caucus Day 2 p.m. Visits to Collectors' homes and an anniversary reception at the Renwick Gallery with special guests.

24 10:30 a.m.–12 noon Panel Discussion on *Japanese Influence on*

American Craft: Moderator Halsey North, Very special panelists: Jack Lenor Larsen, Donald Friedlich and two JRA Distinguished Educators: Wendy Maruyama and Dr. Judith S. Schwartz, McEvoy Auditorium, Smithsonian American Art Museum.

6 p.m. Gala/auctions, Historic Willard Hotel. Patrons pre-reception to view auction items. Fleur Bresler One-of-a-Kind recipient recognition.

25 10:30 a.m.–1 p.m. Distinguished Educators Award Brunch, Prestigious St. Regis Hotel: Paulus Berensohn, Wendy Maruyama, Stephen Powell, Dr. Judith S. Schwartz.

April

10 JRA Board meeting, Judy Weisman

11–15 General membership study tour to Pittsburgh

18–22 Smithsonian Craft Show

19–22 SOFA New York

28 Distinguished Artist Series, Michael James Master Class, TBA, Potluck TBA

29 Distinguished Artist Series Lecture, Michael James, Renwick Gallery Grand Salon, 2 p.m.

SMITHSONIAN CRAFT SHOW: APRIL 18–22

Celebrating the Creative Spirit of America is the theme of the 30th Anniversary of the Smithsonian Craft Show of the Smithsonian Women's Committee on April 19–22, 2012. The preview night benefit is Wednesday, April 18.

The show takes place at the National Building Museum at 401F Street, across the street from the Judiciary Square red line Metro stop.



Anne-Lise Auclair-Jones and Ann Peel are the co-chairs of this year's show, and Wendy Somerville Wall is the president of the SWC.

Widely regarded as the country's most prestigious juried show and sale of fine American craft, the Smithsonian Craft Show is produced by the Smithsonian Women's Committee to support education, outreach and research at the Smithsonian Institution. Exemplifying innovation, creativity, technical merit and the entrepreneurial spirit of America, the 30th Anniversary Show will feature 121 distinguished craft artists, each reflecting the

story of contemporary American craft in one of 12 categories: basketry, ceramics, decorative fiber, furniture, glass, jewelry, leather, metal, mixed media, paper, wearable art and wood.

Further details about tickets, exhibitors, special events, raffle and on-line auction are at www.SmithsonianCraftShow.org



The Craft Leaders Caucus members met Steve Cole (left) of Arlington and his collection of traditional baskets made by current living basket makers at the Craft Leaders Caucus Collector's Journey program on September 25. Steve, Tina Heller, Caucus organizer, and Nicholas R. Bell, Renwick Gallery curator, look over his glorious collection. Photo by Clemmer Montague

JAN 15 FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE

The Smithsonian American Art Museum and its Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., invite applications for research fellowships in art and visual culture of the United States. A variety of pre-doctoral, post doctoral, and senior fellowships are available.

Fellowships are residential and support independent and dissertation research. The stipend for a one-year fellowship is \$30,000 for pre-doctoral fellows or \$45,000 for senior and postdoctoral fellows plus generous research and travel allowances. The standard term of residency is twelve months, but shorter terms will be considered; stipends are prorated for periods of less than twelve months.

Deadline: January 15, 2012. Contact: Fellowship Office, American Art Museum, (202) 633-8353, AmericanArtFellowships@si.edu.

For information and a link to the online application, visit www.AmericanArt.si.edu/fellowships.