



JAMES
RENWICK
ALLIANCE

FALL 2004

Asheville and Penland

by Norman Mitchell, Bev Denbo, Harry Finger,
Larry Hawk, Anne Wright Wilson, and Diane Grainer

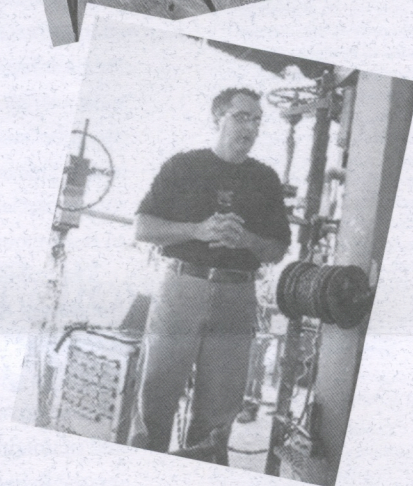
The Renwick Alliance trip to western North Carolina began on a beautiful, sunny day in Asheville, where we introduced ourselves to each other in the Heywood Park Hotel; a renovated former department store. We then walked to the studio of furniture artist Randy Shull. Randy's wall pieces, tables, and chairs, each covered with many layers of paint, were literally unveiled to us amid a chorus of oohs and aahs.

We visited the Blue Spiral Gallery for cocktails and saw works by Deborah Fritts, Lisa Clague, Gary Beecham, Mark Peiser, and Ben Owen III. Then it was up, up and up to the home of Hedi Fischer and Randy Shull overlooking the city. They have rehabbed this home in a most stunning way with wooden tubs and sinks, Randy's furniture, cantilevered decks, and a waterfall. They have works by Sergei Isopov, Bob Trotman, and Viola Frey. After a wonderful dinner we arrived at the hotel in time for the first presidential debate.

The next day, we visited Michael Sherrill's "mudhouse." The road was lined with apple trees, home-made apple cake was waiting for us in his huge studio, and his son Michah greeted us with examples of his acrylic-on-wood paintings. In Michael's own work, the world of the valley figures prominently, with found objects from the local environment dominating the wall of inspiration in his studio. His clean modernist approach interprets the life, death, and sex of plant life. Working in porcelain, he throws, extrudes, and alters the forms, which he combines with metal. His technique of firing and carving—three bisques, ten layers of color, carved patterns, glossy firing, sand blasting, and a final polishing—transforms the light on the surface and imbues the plant forms with a soul and a spirit. Michael recently returned from South Korea and is working on a public art commission.

At Hand in Hand Gallery, we met Chad Alice Hagan, her red hair radiating creativity and giving

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▲ Trip leaders extraordinaire:
Diane and Marc Grainer (top).

Michael Sherrill in his studio (bottom).

From the President

JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE

Quarterly

Fall 2004

The *Quarterly* is published four times a year by the James Renwick Alliance, an independent national nonprofit organization created to celebrate the achievements of America's craft artists and to foster scholarship, education, and public appreciation of their art. Founded in 1982, the Alliance helps support our nation's showcase of 20th century American craft, the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC.

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Full is a great time to visit museums in Washington, D.C. There are plenty of fine institutions to explore, and none is finer than the Renwick Gallery. I feel a great sense of pride when I go into the Renwick knowing that the James Renwick Alliance has provided funding to enhance the pleasure of those who visit this wonderful museum.

The Renwick Gallery was designed by the architect James Renwick for the wealthy banker, William W. Corcoran, during the Civil War to house his private fine art collection. It was completed in 1874. Corcoran's collection was on display in the building from 1874 until 1897, when Corcoran built a larger museum two blocks south on 17th Street because his art collection had outgrown his space. This is a problem that many current collectors appreciate even if few of us have the resources to resolve our space problems the way he did.

The original Corcoran building was eventually transferred to the Smithsonian Institution, and it reopened in 1972 as a museum dedicated to American crafts and decorative arts. Many of the original architectural features have been restored and maintained both inside and out. Upon entering the Renwick Gallery, you are immediately confronted with one of the great staircases in any building in the city. If you proceed up the stairs, you will be greeted by the Grand Salon, which displays an extensive collection of 19th Century paintings hung in the salon manner (i.e., several paintings hung vertically). The Grand Salon is a great location for public and private affairs where you feel the opulence of W.W. Corcoran's life style. Many of the 19th Century trappings blend in well with the contemporary craft objects which are exhibited on the first and second floor of the building. To my eye, it is a delightful juxtaposition of the old and the new.

The pride that I feel when going into the Renwick Gallery comes not just from how well contemporary craft looks in a 19th Century setting,

but also from how many of these beautiful craft objects were acquired through funds provided by the James Renwick Alliance. A prime example is the current exhibit of American studio furniture at the museum entitled *Right at Home*.

The exhibit, which is on view until January 17, 2005, presents approximately 60 furniture pieces of unique design and exceptional craftsmanship that were conceived and created by 47 artists in their studios. The pieces on view come from the permanent collection of the Renwick

Gallery, and over one-fourth of them resulted from the acquisition program of the James Renwick Alliance.

The impact of the Alliance can also be seen in the permanent collection on the second floor of the Gallery. This exhibit is rotated regularly, and shows a wide-variety of objects in all craft mediums from the Renwick's permanent collection. The Alliance has worked closely with the curators at the Renwick to select exceptional craft pieces, many of historical interest, in this growing art field.

Members of the Alliance should make regular trips to the Renwick Gallery to enjoy the very finest display of craft art. See you there.

John T. Kotelly

President

Over one-fourth of the pieces on view in the exhibit *Right at Home* resulted from the acquisition program of the James Renwick Alliance. I feel a great sense of pride when I go into the Renwick knowing that the James Renwick Alliance has provided funding to enhance the pleasure of those who visit this wonderful museum.

Welcome to the Renwick Gallery's New Curator!

The James Renwick Alliance welcomes Jane Milosch to the position of Renwick Gallery Curator. Ms. Milosch received her BA cum laude in art education, with a concentration art history and studio art/ceramics, from Wheaton College. She pursued graduate studies in art history at the University of Munich and the Akademie der bildenden Künste München. She also studied ceramics at the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University. She is fluent in German and Italian.

For the past four years, Ms. Milosch has been Curator of Collections and Exhibitions at the

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. Her recent major exhibition, *Art in Roman Life: Villa to Grave*, was celebrated as both a major academic effort and a popular success. She recently coordinated an international conference on wood-fired ceramics and prepared an exhibition of decorative art by Grant Wood. Earlier, she was a curator at the Davenport Museum of Art and in the Department of Modern Decorative Arts and Design at the Detroit Institute of Arts. The Alliance very much looks forward to working with her. ■

The James Renwick Fellowship in American Craft—A Research Opportunity

Once again, the Smithsonian American Art Museum is inviting applications for the James Renwick Fellowship for Scholarship in American Craft, funded by the James Renwick Alliance. The fellowship is available for research in American studio crafts or decorative arts from the nineteenth century to the present. The stipend for a one-year predoctoral fellowship is \$25,000, plus research and travel allowances. The stipend for a senior or postdoctoral fellowship is \$35,000, plus 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. Applications must be submitted by January 15, 2005, for fellowships to begin on or after June 1.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their proposals with museum research staff before applying.

For research consultation:

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Telephone (202) 275-1504
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Dr. Cynthia Mills
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For general information:

Amelia Goerlitz, Fellowship Administrator
SAAM Fellowship Office
Telephone (202) 275-1557
Email: fellowships@saam.si.edu ■

Thanks to the Alliance from SAAM

In August, Alliance President John Kotelly received a letter from Claire Larkin, special projects director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, thanking the Alliance for its support of the museum's hand-held education initiative. The letter states, "... it was the members of the Alliance who made the first and last donations, supporting us from beginning to end on both phases to date. We are extremely grateful. ...

John, a big thanks to you and the other members of the Alliance for your forward thinking and generous support of our hand-held education project. It has attracted a lot of attention in the museum world and points to the wave of the future. We could not have done it without you."

For further information on the project, see Claire Larkin's article in the Winter 2003-2004 issue of the *Quarterly*. ■

Alliance Exhibition at the Washington Craft Show

by Tina Coplan

A special exhibition presented by the James Renwick Alliance will form the show-stopping centerpiece of the 2004 Washington Craft Show on November 19 through 21 at the Washington Convention Center. "Masters of the Medium: Honorees of the James Renwick Alliance"

will feature approximately 25 works by the consummate craft artists who have received JRA awards. Pieces will be selected from the collections of Alliance members. Among the artists represented will be

John Cederquist, Dale Chihuly, Arline Fisch, Viola Frey, Marvin Lipofsky, Cynthia Schira, and Bob Stocksdale. The curator for this second of three annual exhibitions will again be Michael Monroe, recently named executive director and chief curator of the Bellevue Arts Museum in Bellevue, Washington.

The Alliance also will sponsor two lectures at the craft show on November 18. Jane Milosch,

newly appointed curator at the Renwick Gallery, and Robyn Kennedy, Renwick Gallery manager, will speak at 12:30 pm. Studio jeweler and writer Bruce Metcalf will talk about "The Evolution of Studio Jewelry: 1940-2004" at 2:30 pm.

"We are very pleased with our partnership with the Washington Craft Show," says JRA President John Kotelly. "This prominent event provides an excellent opportunity to introduce an expanded, interested audience to JRA activities—honoring leaders in the field, educating the public about our programs, and sharing our interest in collecting. Last year's exhibition was a great success and we look forward to this second banner year."

"The "Masters of the Medium" exhibition also will be on view during the craft show's 10th annual preview party on November 18, benefiting the Washington Cancer Institute at Washington Hospital Center.

Hours for the Washington Craft Show are Friday, November 19, 10 am to 8 pm; Saturday, November 20, 10 am to 6 pm; and Sunday, November 21, 11 am to 5 pm. The Washington Convention Center is located at 801 Mt. Vernon Place NW. General admission is \$12; senior citizens, \$11; children under 12, free. For show information, visit www.craftsamericashows.com or call (301) 654-5545. For preview information only, call (202) 877-6558. ■



▲ The Renwick Alliance display at last year's Washington Craft Show.

Craft Leaders Report

News from the Craft Leaders Caucus

by **Barbara Berlin**

Craft Leaders Caucus Benefits

(\$1000, \$1500 double)

The *Quarterly*, the newsletter and e-mail craft bulletin.

Invitations to Renwick Gallery openings and exhibitions tours conducted by artists and curators.

Opportunity to participate in extended craft study tours to artists' studios, private collections, and special exhibitions within the United States and abroad.

A twenty percent discount in the Renwick museum shop.

Complimentary book/catalog of a Renwick Gallery exhibition.

Opportunity to give an annual donor-level membership to a friend.

Vote on acquisitions to be funded by the Alliance for the Renwick Gallery.

Invitation to special programs.

Name listed on plaque in Renwick Gallery lobby.

One of the best ways to enjoy and get to know other Caucus members (and at the same time discover the richness of the craft world) is to join a Caucus trip. Our program is strong; we offer outstanding trips at fair and reasonable prices. The trips are led by Caucus members, often assisted by people who live in the area or are knowledgeable about a particular location. Our trip coordinators are Fran Burka and Laurel Mendelsohn. We are grateful to them, and to all the leaders and assistants who put so much effort into making our trips a wonderful craft experience, and more!

On tap for this November is a trip to Hawaii led by David and Clemmer Montague. Next spring we are pleased to offer a trip to Los Angeles on May 12-15. Nancy Schneider of the Caucus will be the trip leader. Assisting from the other end will be Anne Cohen, president of the Glass Alliance of Los Angeles, a Pilchuck board member, and a member of the advisory board of the Art Alliance for Contemporary Glass.

We see Venice in our future for the fall of 2005. The trip is expected to begin on September 4, and participants will have a chance to view the historic Venetian Regatta, which I know is a spectacular

event. Toni Gordon will be our leader, and she will be assisted by Sylvia Gardin Frederick of The Travel Bug, a luxury travel organization that specializes in Italy.

Next February, we intend to perk up the winter with our educational event, "An Evening of Learning." Judy Davis will chair the event, and our featured speaker will be Oscar Fitzgerald, the most recent James Renwick Fellow, whose research has focused on contemporary studio furniture. The event will be held at the home of Marc and Diane Grainer, whose superb studio furniture will accent the talk. Mark this on your calendar, and plan to attend on the evening of February 9.

Caucus Day during Craft Weekend will be Friday, April 15 next year. Planning is well under way. I'm pleased to report that the leaders will again be Jeri Gibber and Mallory Lawson. You will hear more about our plans in the future.

Finally, a reminder to current members that the time to renew your membership is approaching. I urge you to give serious consideration to upgrading the level of your membership. And I urge those who have not yet joined the Caucus to consider doing so. It's a membership you will enjoy! ■

Alliance Members Have Chosen the Next Masters of the Medium

Every other year, Renwick Alliance members select five craft artists to receive the Master of the Medium accolade. Honorees must meet four criteria:

- Consummate craftsmanship.
- Influence in the designed media field.
- Contributions to the craft field.
- Current or past membership on the James Renwick Alliance Honorary Board.

Alliance members have chosen the following five artists to be honored on Sunday, April 17, 2005, during Craft Weekend:

Ceramics Wayne Higby

Fiber/Baskets Lia Cook

Glass William Morris

Metal/Jewelry Robert Ebendorf

Wood/Furniture Judy McKie

Craft Events Elsewhere

by Brenda Erickson

Glass

- ▶ A retrospective of **Gallé: A Centenary** can be seen at Broadfield House Glass Museum in Kingswinford, UK through January 30.
- ▶ The Louisville Glassworks in Louisville, KY highlights **International Flameworking** through January 1.
- ▶ **Ginny Ruffner, Creativity: The Flowering Tornado** stops at the Contemporary Center of Virginia in Virginia Beach through January 30.

Fiber

- ▶ Sadye Bronfman Winner Kai Chan has a solo show, **Kai Chan: A Walk in the Wilderness**, through January 2 at the Textile Museum of Canada in Toronto.
- ▶ The celebration of Maine fiber art continues with **TEXTiles: Artists Using Fiber Language**, at the Farnsworth Art Museum in Rockland, ME, thru February 20, and with **Woven for the Wall** at the University of New England Art Gallery in Portland, ME, through January 30.
- ▶ **Autumn Invitational: Grown Up Figures** is at the Fiber Art Center in Amherst, MA through December 31.
- ▶ Recognizing two masters in fiber art, the Johnson-Humbrickhouse Museum in Coschocton, OH, presents **Retrospectives: Nancy Crow and Dorothy Gill Barnes**, through January 2.
- ▶ **Challenging Tradition: New Directions in Fiber** can be seen from December 3 to January 29 at the Las Cruces Museum of Fine Art in New Mexico.
- ▶ **Danish Hand-Knotted Carpets** will be at the Danish Museum of Decorative Art in Copenhagen until January 16.

Clay

- ▶ **Gwyn Hanssen Pigott, Caravan 2** travels to the Surrey Institute of Art and Design in Farnham, UK through December 17.
- ▶ **The Poetry of Clay: The Art of Toshiko Takaezu** continues through March 6 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.
- ▶ **The George E. Ohr National Arts Challenge 2004**, curated by Michael Lucero, will be held from November 12 through December 31 at the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art in Biloxi, MS
- ▶ **Naked Truth: International Wood Fire Exhibition** continues through January 9 at the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. The show and accompanying conference were organized and coordinated by Jane Milosch, the new curator at the Renwick Gallery.
- ▶ The Bergstrom-Mahler Museum in Neenah, WI, presents **Shades of Clay, A Multi-Cultural Look at Contemporary Clay** through January 2.

- ▶ **Inferno: The Ceramic Art of Paul Soldner** continues through December 11 at the American Museum of Ceramic Art in Pomona, CA.
- ▶ **Paula Winokur: Transcending Memory – Ceramic Sculpture** is at the Contemporary Museum in Honolulu through January 2.
- ▶ The Kentucky Museum of Art + Design, Louisville shows **Asian + American = Ceramics: A Fusion of Cultures** through January 1.

Wood

- ▶ **Cabinets of Curiosities** will be at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, WI from November 20 to January 23.
- ▶ The Montreal Museum of Fine Art hosts **Ruhlmann: Genius of Art Deco** from November 25 to February 27.
- ▶ **George Nakashima; Nature, Form & Spirit** is at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles through January 12.
- ▶ **Dovetailing Art and Life: The Bennett Collection** (Garry Knox & Sylvia Bennett) will be at the San Francisco Museum of Craft + Design until January 31.

Metal

- ▶ The Racine Art Museum continues the series, **The Artist Responds: Albert Paley and Art Nouveau** until February 2.
- ▶ The National Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis honors **Master Metalsmith: Harriete Estel Berman**, through November 21.
- ▶ **The Enamels of Annemarie Davidson** continues until November 28 at the Long Beach Museum of Art in California.
- ▶ **The Castellani and Italian Archaeological Jewelry** will be at the Bard Graduate Center in New York City until February 6.
- ▶ **Japanese Metal Art** will be on view until January 9 at the Danish Museum of Decorative Art in Copenhagen.

Across the Media

- ▶ **Josef and Anni Albers: Designs for Living** may be seen through February 27 at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York City.
 - ▶ The Mint Museum of Craft + Design shows **The Nature of Craft and the Penland Experience** through January 30, and **Don Reitz: Clay, Fire, Slat and Wood** through December 31.
 - ▶ **Collect**, an international art fair for contemporary objects sponsored by the British Crafts Council, can be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London on January 12-17.
 - ▶ **Stuff – Ingenuity and Critique**, in concert with Danish Crafts, is at Harbourfront Centre in Toronto through December 23.
- Link onto the Alliance Web site calendar at www.jra.org for other venues and more listings of exhibitions and events.**

**The James Renwick Alliance is proud to
acknowledge the support of the following Gallery Caucus Members**

**The James Renwick
Alliance Welcomes
New Members!**

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(703) 255-3107

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Patina Gallery

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Phone: (505) 986-3432
Toll free: 1-877-877-0827
email: info@patina-gallery.com
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www.rduanereedgallery.com

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www.sansar-gallery.com

Sienna Gallery

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www.snyderman-works.com

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Chicago, IL 60610
(312) 573-1400
marxsaunders@earthlink.net

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Phone: (505) 995-8513
Fax: (505) 995-8507
www.thirteenmoonsgallery.com

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(215) 923-7030
www.wexlergallery.com

Asheville and Penland continued from page 1

us a glimpse into her interest in dyed objects. A teacher at Penland, the University of Wisconsin, and Cranbrook, she became fascinated with hand-felted wool in New Zealand. Color and dyeing are her particular interest.

Hand felted wool is the oldest textile, predating weaving and basketry. Working with Australian merino wool and tussati silk fibers for her scarves, she creates some very unusual patterns. Her pieces are incredibly soft—you will see scarves on many of the trip's participants. Her wall pieces are dyed using a resist process; she adds found objects—pebbles, marbles, coconut husks.

Stoney Lamar—tall and thin, white-haired, and sporting a purple shirt—greeted us at his studio. With no formal training, Stoney takes his inspiration from Cycladic sculpture from the Mediterranean. He views his vessels as architectural, and his focus is on what surrounds the vessel. He initially focused on turning wood and then moved toward sculpture, working in both wood and steel. Form, movement, gesture, and attitude dominate his surface environment. He sees himself as an arbiter among material, process, and aesthetic and wants the aesthetic to win.

The wood grain and its character are his primary concerns. To his sandblasted surfaces he applies four coats of milk paint. As he rubs the paint, the color recedes, revealing the grain pattern as the paint reacts to the tannins in the wood. Presently working in carob wood from California, he combines the transformed wood and grain, adding metal to create his sculptural, non-objective forms. Working with Stoney was Mark Gardner, a young and talented artist who creates intricately surfaced pieces which, when you pick them up, are as interesting on the other side.

We anticipated and were treated to a dinner at the Purple Onion Restaurant, a wonderfully

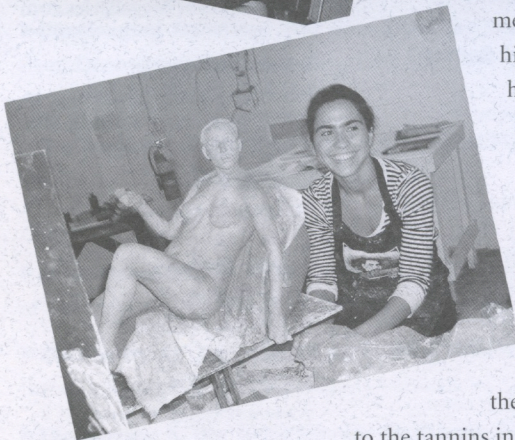
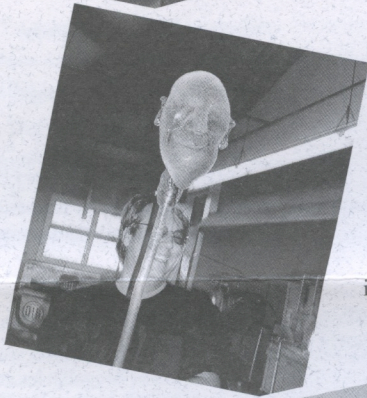
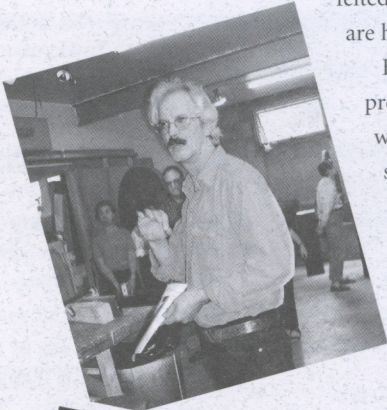
local place with amazing food run by Stoney's wife in an old building.

On Saturday morning we were bussed to the very impressive Penland School of Crafts with its beautiful 400-acre hillside grounds, its gallery, and its workshops and classes in all the major craft categories — clay, wood, glass, metal, fiber, weaving, photography, printing, etc. On our arrival, we received a brief but excellent introduction by Kathryn Gremley, the gallery exhibitions manager, who described Penland's background, objectives, and activities. We then toured the gallery, with its exhibit area of excellent work done by its outstanding array of instructors as well as various resident artists and students. It is an impressive and diverse display of craft work.

The School conducts classes throughout the year with a broad diversity of students with various backgrounds, interests, and levels of training and experience. Their ages range from the twenties into the forties. Some students stay for the two-week classes and longer, and there are some resident students who stay for a three year period participating in instruction and in their own training and craft creation.

After our Gallery visit, we were guided through the various craft workshops and class areas on the site, where we saw specific work underway and where we could also speak with the instructors, artists, and students. (An example of the diversity of the students was a young woman who is a reading teacher in Seattle and who has taken eight weeks off to do ceramics work at Penland.) It was a very impressive visit and tour. Certainly observing the work of the outstanding glass artist Douglas Ohm as he created one of his unique glass faces was exciting. We had a quick but very wonderful opportunity to be at one of the great craft education and training institutions in the country.

After lunch in the Penland dining room, the afternoon started with a visit to one of the resident artists, Christina Cordova. Her sensitive figurative sculptures make it clear why her work is in such demand. We then broke up into groups to visit various studios. One group started at the studio of Cynthia Bringle, which included a few colorful fiber works by Edwina, her twin sister and our tour guide. Cynthia herself started a vase form while



▲ (From top to bottom)
The Alliance group visits
Stoney Lamar.

Douglas Ohm displays
a freshly created piece.

Christina Cordova with one
of her figurative sculptures.

enthusiastically answering all sorts of questions from the group.

The second stop was the glass studio of Rick and Valerie Beck. Rick described the process he uses to get the glass to create his large tools by recycling glass from damaged or rejected glass objects—everything from elephants to Christmas trees, some of which were parading on shelves and railings around the studio. Our final stop was the studio of the acknowledged founder of the current studio glass movement, Harvey Littleton. We were lucky enough to have him there to vividly describe his early years and the strong influence of his family's history on the glass industry.

The other half of the group went to see Richard Ritter, John Littleton, Kate Vogel, and Billie Ruth Sudduth. Richard showed us how he puts together extremely thin pieces of glass (which he makes himself) to make an interesting long color combination. After everything has solidified, he is able to cut thin slivers of these combinations and add them to other pieces of glass. Recently he is making oval forms with all this color, cutting off the two ends, and then putting them on the ends of a smaller piece which has had its ends cut off. It almost looks as if an egg has hatched out of its shell.

John Littleton and his wife Kate Vogel are continuing to do all kinds of interesting glass work with hands and faces. They showed us how they make their molds around someone's hands and then fill the molds with wax and eventually with glass.

Last but certainly not least was Billie Ruth Sudduth. She calls her basket company JABOB. That means "Just a bunch of baskets." She

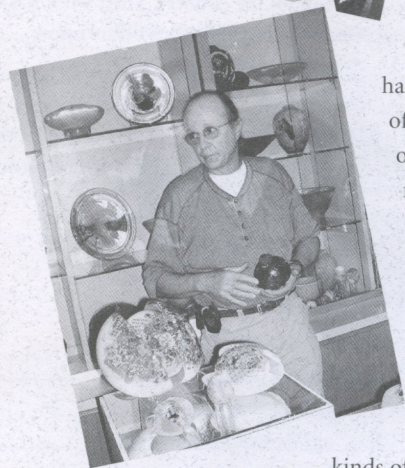
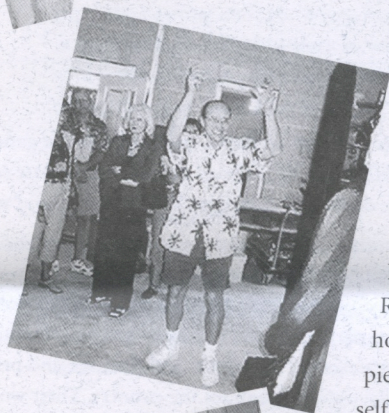
explained her mathematical formula for making baskets. Recently she has begun using gourds for the body and curling thin strips of wood for decoration. The only one she had ready for purchase was snapped up immediately. We had a difficult time tearing ourselves away from these fascinating artists.

On Sunday morning, we set out for the apartment of Andrew Glasgow, executive director of the Furniture Society. What we found was an inspiration to live minimally while surrounded by beautiful art, beautifully displayed. Randy Schull was a major presence. He not only had designed the kitchen but had provided a cantilevered ceiling with indirect lighting as well as bookcases, wall art, a coffee table, a dining table and chairs, and a curvy blue bed. Also on display were clay works by artists such as Mark Hewitt, Dan Anderson, Mark Shapiro, Wesley Anderegg, and Roger Carsaw. Several of us vowed to pare down or reorganize when we returned home so that our collections could be seen in a more serene setting.

We then moved to the mountaintop home of Pam Whitlock and Richard Davidson. Pam's weaving studio takes up one end, with mountain views on three sides. She does production weaving of beautifully colored chenille scarves, wraps, and pillows. Richard has turned the basement into a machine shop, where he makes wind chimes by the dozen, inspired by Calder, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Buckminster Fuller. We had a beautiful brunch on their deck overlooking the mountains.

And finally, the Southern Highlands Craft Guild. The shop is a great place for holiday shopping—beautiful and full of hand-crafted objects, both traditional and contemporary. The second floor, reached by a long ramp overlooking the shop, had an exhibition of historic crafts of the area. The current exhibit was a collection of "working quilts" 80 to 100 years old. The featured local artists in the Focus Gallery showed scenic tapestries and stained-glass roundels.

All in all, this was another superb Alliance trip. Many thanks to the leaders, Diane and Marc Grainer, who built on their extensive area familiarity to show us the very best. ■



▲ (From top to bottom)
Cynthia Bringle answers
questions from the group.

Rick Beck enthusiastically
describes his glass tech-
nique while Bev Denbo and
Karen Rotenberg look on.

Richard Ritter with his
glass pieces.

The James Renwick Alliance Distinguished Artist Series Furniture and Fiber

In conjunction with the 2004 and 2005 exhibits, *Right at Home* and *High Fiber*, at the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the James Renwick Alliance is sponsoring three Distinguished Artist Series events by master furniture and fiber artists. Each event will be a hands-on lecture/workshop in which the artist will demonstrate his or her distinctive techniques, discuss sources of inspiration, and offer participants an opportunity to create objects of their own. Each will run from 10:00 am until 3:00 or 4:00 pm. Locations will be announced later.

The size of the workshops is limited, and they will be filled on a first come, first served basis; placement will be guaranteed only upon receipt of a registration form and payment. The workshops are priced at \$45 for members and \$50 for non-members.

WORKSHOP

Artist Series Workshop: Bonnie Bishoff

Techniques to create blended sheets of clay veneer for a small box

Saturday, January 8, 2005

Bonnie Bishoff, Rockport, Massachusetts. Bonnie Bishoff has been collaborating with her husband, J.M. Syron, in the design and making of furniture since 1987. They “strive to create objects that continue to reveal their beauty over time with patterns that engage the eye, forms that are sensual, and color that harmonizes throughout.” Their work has a strong resonance with the basic elements of design found in nature.

The primary materials used in the creation of their furniture are wood, polymer clay, and fabric. Their use of polymer clay as veneer, tile, and vessels utilizes repetition of pattern from slices of cross-section design. Because repetition plays such a large part in the design element of the polymer clay surfaces, fractal geometry—like that found in shells, plant forms and even cells—has been an inspiration for them. While working with polymer clay, they also

use techniques from other media, such as mokume gane from metal or *millefiori*-like canes from glass, as they create surface patterns with the depth and complexity of highly figured wood.

Among their other collaborative professional experiences, Bonnie and her husband are founding members of the Furniture Society and have served on the Artist Advisory Board of the Fuller Museum. They have participated in seminars and presentations nationally and are represented in galleries, exhibitions, and private and corporate collections throughout the country. Their work has been included in numerous books and publications on furniture.

In this hands-on workshop, Bonnie will demonstrate techniques to create blended sheets of clay which will be folded or wrapped to create different canes of increasing complexity. These sheets of veneer will then be used to create a small box. All supplies will be furnished.

ARTIST SERIES: “FURNITURE AND FIBER” REGISTRATION

I would like to attend the following workshop(s)

(check each one you wish to attend)

Bonnie Bishoff, Saturday, January 8, 2005

\$45 members \$50 non-members

Lindsey Rais, Saturday, March 12, 2005

\$45 members \$50 non-members

Ellen Kochansky, Saturday, May 14, 2005

\$45 members \$50 non-members

Name(s)

Address

City

State/Zip

Telephone: Day

Evening

Guild affiliation, if any

My total payment is \$ _____ I am paying by Check _____ or Credit Card _____

Credit card number (Visa, MasterCard, or Discover)

Expiration date

Name on credit card

WORKSHOP

Artist Series Workshop: Lindsay Rais

Exploration of knotless netting to create a three dimensional object

Saturday, March 12, 2005

Lindsay Rais, Milford, Pennsylvania. Lindsay Rais is a new-generation basket maker. She creates three-dimensional objects by focusing on transforming mundane materials into something extraordinary. Common and found materials such as pistachio shells, paper clips, clothing tags, scrap metal, and steel washers have intrigued her from her early years growing up on a farm. In that environment, rusted machinery and tools being repaired became imprinted in her psyche. She learned to see the usefulness in everything that surrounded her and with that, the beauty and value of ordinary materials.

She is drawn to repetitive processes—as evidenced by the repetitive looping of knotless netting in her work, which is very similar to the knitting and crocheting that she was introduced to in her youth. “I choose to work in wire because of the way that wire holds its shape, allowing me to create volume and achieve transparency of form. Due to the wire’s stability, every loop and

curve of the netting remains in clear view and the observer is able to read how the netting was created.”

Rais received her BFA from Kutztown University in 1996; since then her work has garnered numerous awards. She has exhibited nationally and has been included in a myriad of publications. She has been a guest lecturer and a workshop instructor, and has served as adjunct faculty in several locations. “As an artist, I have built a vocabulary of forms, materials, and methods that define my work. By applying this vocabulary to strong, simple forms I am able to direct the focus of my baskets to the remarkable textures created by the wealth (or lack thereof) in the materials and by the intricate netting”.

Lindsay Rais will guide the workshop participants in their own exploration of knotless netting. She will give demonstrations of creating volume using knotless netting and the incorporation of various common materials. Attendees will then create a three dimensional object using those techniques.

WORKSHOP

Artist Series Workshop: Ellen Kochansky

Techniques to create transparent, layered silk organza album pages with images copied on vellum

Saturday, May 14, 2005

Ellen Kochansky, Pickens, South Carolina. The art form for Ellen Kochansky is the quilt. She has learned, however, that the metaphor of a quilt has many more possibilities than the literal concept. Her works are included in numerous museum and corporate collections. She has lectured, taught, curated, and exhibited both nationally and internationally, and has received numerous grants and honors. “My past as a quilter has involved many redefinitions of the classic ideas, from two to three dimensions, scale, structure, and purpose. Thousands of my quilts are still on beds, but current concerns are more about the content than the surface, and often involve meaningful or even difficult debris.”

She now engages individuals and groups in a ceremonial process of collecting and contributing their “meaningful trash” to tell their stories through the “quilts” that she creates, using their

castoffs in repetitive modular units. “The things we throw away are all still with us. Transforming them thoughtfully into images or products which reminds us of our history, or our wastefulness, or our unfinished business can be a life’s work. Objects retain the power to transport us.” She is on a quest to transform and raise the value of materials normally thrown away.

Ellen Kochansky will conduct a hands-on workshop in which attendees “will create transparent pages resembling an album, using images copied on vellum and glued between layers of silk organza. The theme is a challenging one: What can we learn from our history which can help to inform the future?” Participants will bring photos or images and text or handwriting that speak to the past or future. A copier will be used to create the images to be incorporated into the organza.

To sign up for the artist series workshops, please fill out the form and mail or fax, along with payment, to the JRA office.

Attendance is limited. The Alliance cannot give refunds in case of cancellation. All participants are responsible for providing their own food and beverage. A list of paid participants will be at the door for each event.

Make checks payable to the James Renwick Alliance. Please send your payment with this form to:

James Renwick Alliance
4405 East West Highway, Suite 510
Bethesda, MD 20814

Or Fax: (301) 907-3855



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