

Celebrating the creative vision of artists working in clay, fiber, glass, metal & wood

# JRA QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2015



James Renwick Alliance

# THE JRA QUARTERLY

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*Cover Photo: A six string tenor ukulele inlaid with green abalone, made by Mike Mears. Photo courtesy of James Ryland.*

# PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Spring Craft Weekend (SCW) was over a while ago, but its afterglow still remains. I hope you all enjoyed it. Not only did we create warmth, friendship, and fellowship, but we also learned. We were following one of the tenets of the JRA mission: to foster education, scholarship, and appreciation for American craft. We did all that during SCW, and we continue to do it throughout the year.

To wit, our trips. In every trip, in every outing, in every journey the education of our members takes priority. Visiting artists, for example, we learn about their techniques, their muse. When we visit museums, it is always with the view of learning something new, something exciting, something historical. Even the visits to private collections become a source of learning. Why do people collect? What inspires them? What does craft mean in their lives? How does all that impact us?

To wit, our Distinguished Artists Series (DAS). I am so proud of what that series has accomplished. This year alone we were lucky enough to welcome to our midst Richard Jolley and Tommie Rush, Akio Takamori, Marilyn Pappas, the de la Torre brothers and Beth Cavener. We learn from them, learn their techniques, we are even invited, as with Marilyn Pappas, to participate and learn first-hand from them and their incredible techniques. Some of us still have the needles Marilyn gave us to create our own "masterpieces."

To wit, the Masters of the Medium. They all shared with us their inventiveness, their originality, their creativity. Their talks were inspiring and galvanizing.

To wit, the panel discussion during SCW. We were lucky to be enlightened by individuals with great erudition and wisdom. We learned!!

And our leaders, Pat Arnold, Rebecca Ravenal, and Clemmer Montague help us navigate the fields of knowledge with flair, with style, with great care and always with the purpose of enriching our members' minds and lives.

I very much hope you take full advantage of the education the JRA offers you.

Learn. Absorb. Master. Discover the great beauty that exists in learning. Just for the joy of it!!! Enjoy the summer. And please don't forget those less fortunate than us.

*Learn. Absorb. Master...Just for the joy of it!*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Giselle Huberman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Giselle Huberman  
JRA President

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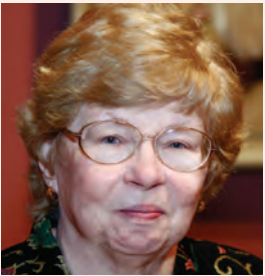
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## FROM THE EDITOR

You will no doubt notice some differences in this issue of the JRA Quarterly. The publication has a new editor and new designer, and new features including a note from our Director, an annual budget overview, and announcement of two new JRA awards recognizing artists.

We hope that you enjoy the new JRA Quarterly. Please let us know what you think; we love to hear from our readers. ■

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dear Members and Friends:



I assumed the role of Director on October 1, 2014 after three years as JRA Administrator. During this first year I have committed myself to the continued growth of JRA. I have streamlined office operations and institutionalized clear financial reporting. Another of my top priorities is to create more efficient business practices to support our many activities and our members.

I am thrilled to say that the re-launch of our website — [jra.org](http://jra.org) — is an exciting first step toward reaching these goals. Along with a new design, the new website has a robust e-commerce section that allows anyone to register for JRA events and trips. The website also reflects the new aesthetic of our weekly online newsletter, publicity materials and now, our new JRA Quarterly. The number of followers on our JRA Facebook page continues to grow and we expanded our social media presence to include Twitter (@jracraft) and Instagram (@jracraft).

The JRA currently has over 400 members. As we move into the second half of the year, I will be working closely with the membership committee and board to grow that number. It is our hope that our very robust and diverse programming will attract a new generation of craft enthusiasts. I welcome suggestions and comments on how we can improve our member experience.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery will reopen to the public on November 13 after a \$30 million renovation. We are all eagerly awaiting the reopening events and the unveiling of the JRA "named gallery" which our fundraising campaign made possible. Congratulations to the many dedicated members and friends who made this campaign a success.

Thank you to everyone for their ongoing support and I look forward to continuing to serve the JRA with enthusiasm and commitment. ■

*Cicie Sattarnilasskorn*  
JRA Director



1



2



3



Instruments made by Mike Mears.

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6

# CRAFT OF MUSIC

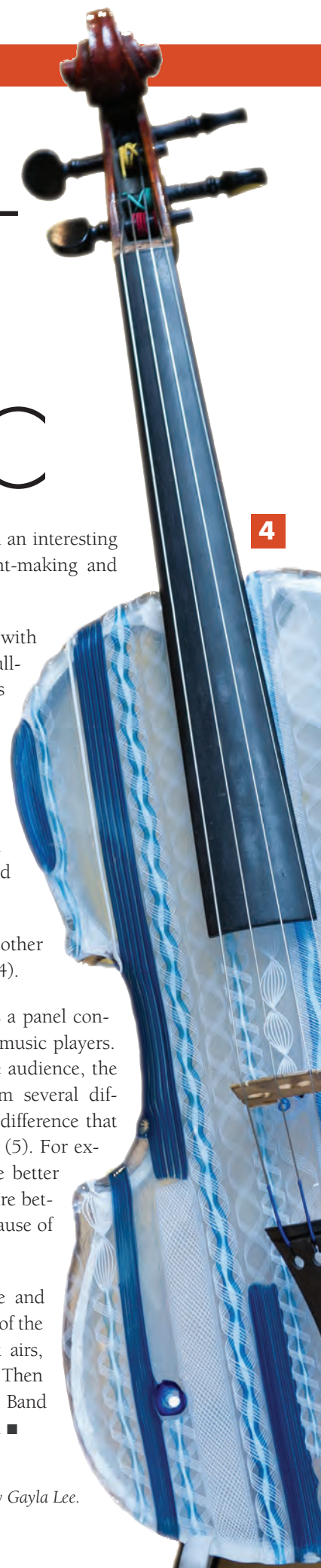
On February 7, the JRA presented an interesting program: the craft of instrument-making and performing.

It all started early in the morning with set-up – including bringing a full-size row boat into the Katzen Arts Center rotunda (1). This row boat, named *Sephira*, is strung and thus, like all stringed instruments, must be tuned after it has been moved. Here the tuning was done by *Sephira*'s maker, Michael Brolly (2), before it could be played by JRA member Phil Brown (3).

The rotunda was soon filled with other spectacular stringed instruments (4).

The next part of the program was a panel consisting of instrument makers and music players. In response to questions from the audience, the panel compared instruments from several different makers, and discussed the difference that wood species makes in the sound (5). For example, mahogany instruments are better in recordings; those of rosewood are better for accompanying a singer because of the warmer sound.

The combined forces of Arcovoice and aMuse began the performance part of the program by playing some ancient airs, followed by a Bach concerto (6). Then Bill Emerson and the Sweet Dixie Band played their happy bluegrass tunes. ■



4

Fused glass violin made by Gayla Lee.

DISTINGUISHED ARTISTS SERIES

# Multi-faceted de la Torre Brothers

Einar and Jamex de la Torre, born in Mexico and now living and working in both Ensenada Mex. and San Diego, CA, were in town as part of the Distinguished Artists Series over the weekend of May 1-3. Their glass work, sometimes free-standing and sometimes site specific, clearly is reminiscent of traditional Mexican art both in its symbolism and use of color.

Both brothers attended California State University Long Beach, and ran a flame-working business. Then they branched out into larger work, which is what they demonstrated at the workshop.

The two of them worked in tandem, sometimes with Einar holding and adjusting the temperature of the piece being created and Jamex bringing shaped hot glass pieces to be added. Then those roles would be reversed. Often the scene was a three (at least) ring show with two or three assistants gathering, shaping, and bringing additional parts to be added.



Photo by Miriam Rosenthal

Initially the de la Torres made the head of the figure. When they were satisfied with it, they put it in a “garage” – a container to keep the head at a workable high temperature while the body was made.

One of the most intriguing processes that the add-ons went through was acquiring a pattern or texture. One of the brothers would spread frit on the marver and draw an intricate design in it. Then the additional piece – an arm or a leg – would be rolled through the frit, picking up the design before it was attached to the main piece.

The body was then transferred from a punty attached at the top to a punty at the bottom, so that the head could be attached. The two pieces were carefully smoothed and blended into a whole. Finally, everyone held their breath while the joined piece was knocked off the punty, caught and rushed into the annealing oven. ■

## DECORATED MAPS INSPIRED BY MARILYN PAPPAS

The January 24 Distinguished Artists workshop featuring fiber artist Marilyn Pappas started with a slide presentation showing how Marilyn uses maps in her art. The maps were of places around the Mediterranean that had meaning for her, and were embellished with weaving, embroidery, etc. Some maps became collages on which masks were placed and, through stitchery, incorporated.

Participants had brought maps with personal importance. They were given instructions on ways of decorating or enhancing them, and quickly became engrossed in their projects. Talk around the tables as participants worked was a recounting of travel taken or of wishes for visiting exotic places. It made for a delightful and unique time of sharing.

This workshop was successful largely because of Ms. Pappas’ skill as a teacher. Though known primarily as a fiber artist, her education was as a teacher, and she has been one for more than 50 years. As people worked she circulated, took note of what they were doing, listened to explanations of their focus, and made gentle suggestions for improved technique. She always hit just the right note! ■





Sam Chung, Professor of Ceramics, AZ State University.

## SPOTLIGHT ON CERAMICS IN ARIZONA

Diane J. Charnov

Art lovers, curators, collectors and makers were united as JRA members left the frigid days of Washington D.C.'s February far behind and headed to Phoenix for a private tour of artists' studios, world-famous museums, and architectural landmarks dotting the landscape of the Southwest. Led by Peter Held, the 2014 JRA Distinguished Educator, the group gained access to a world of art that traversed mediums, (ceramics, glass, wood and fiber studios) and encountered Taliesen West of Frank Lloyd Wright and structures created by Paolo Saleri at Cosanti.

Whether witnessing a bronze pouring at Cosanti, or enjoying dinner amidst the famed exhibition space of Arizona State University's (ASU) collection, members had countless opportunities to interact with master-craftspeople, scholars, and collectors. An evening meal at ASU's famed Ceramics Research Center was further enhanced by the open storage of ceramics, including pieces by such masters as Jun Kaneko, Richard Notkin and Akio Takamori.

Ceramics was at the heart of much of the tour as Kurt Weiser opened his studio and shared technical details and sources of inspiration as he showcased his porcelain globes and recounted the painstaking process of china painting, which may require "one hour for one eyeball." His artistry was as apparent as the technical mastery that formed the basis of his fantastic ceramic worlds. Susan Beiner's delicate and exotic botanical wall pieces burst with energy and projections that touched hearts and occasionally

sleeves of those who walked past while the tentacles of clay mimicked her cacti garden just feet from her studio.

A highlight of the trip was a visit to the studio of Don Reitz, considered one of the most influential ceramic artists who forged a new direction in clay, marked by abstraction, and revived the long dormant process of salt firing. Peter Held designed a specially curated exhibition of Reitz's pieces including works from his wood and salt-fired kilns that showcased his raw energy and autobiography in clay. Members were further treated to a tour of the anagama kilns etched into the sloping desert vista. A special thanks goes out to Clemmer Montague for her hard work in organizing a trip that enabled JRA members to come together over a shared passion and return to February's freeze undaunted and warmed by memories of an incredible excursion. ■



Photos by Clemmer Montague



Dan Dailey with his cast glass wall.

### Kathy Furlong and Michele Manatt

From May 4-7, JRA members visited Boston to see it through the eyes of Caucus member Chris Rifkin. We toured her new home which was designed and built for her world-class collection of glass, fiber, furniture, jewelry and paintings. The trip's theme was learning about the cultural institutions that Chris supports and visiting many of the local artists Chris commissioned to make distinctive pieces for her home.

The first evening, Chris hosted a welcome dinner at her Hingham home and included several artists:

- Dan Dailey who built a wall of cast glass tiles using his line drawings;
- Mark Del Guidice who built the kitchen cabinets and family room bookcases, adding his unique hieroglyphics;
- Jay Stanger who built a bedroom door with marquetry on both sides, as well as a 52 foot long wall installation.

Over the next three days, we toured those artists' studios and visited cultural organizations and institutions that Chris has supported, intermixed with other collections and artists in and around Boston. Highlights included:

- The newly redesigned Harvard University Art Museums;
- The MIT Glass Lab with Peter Houk, artist and director and Erik Demaine, artist and mathematician whose folded paper sculptures were showcased in the *Renwick Gallery's 40 under 40: Craft Futures Exhibition*.

It was another content-rich and thoughtfully balanced trip that featured all perspectives of many involved with craft, ranging from studio collector to museums, and was enjoyed by all.

Thank you, Chris Rifkin, for welcoming us to your world, to Michael Rotenberg for commentary about Boston, and a HUGE shout out to Clemmer Montague for extraordinary planning and coordination. ■

## JRA Award Given at Baltimore ACC Show



Left to right: Stacey Webber, Lisa Klakulak, Chris Amundsen, Exec. Dir. of ACC, and Rebecca Ravenal. Photo by Miriam Rosenthal.

### Rebecca Ravenal

The inaugural James Renwick Alliance Award of Excellence for Innovation in Craft was presented to two artists at the American Craft Council (ACC) show in Baltimore this February. The awards went to Lisa Klakulak (fiber), and Stacey Lee Webber (metal).

The JRA partnered with ACC to create this award which highlights artists who are using innovative techniques or materials in their work. A JRA jury (Judy Weisman, Marc Grainer and Sean Hennessey) reviewed exhibitors in all media at the show and chose those two deserving artists. The jurors liked the idea of splitting the total prize amount and giving the additional exposure to two young artists as a boost to their careers.

Stacey Webber ([www.staceyleewebber.com](http://www.staceyleewebber.com)) was chosen for her ability and vision to take mundane materials such as screws and coins and hone them into finely crafted objects with a sense of elegance, flair and fun. Of her craft, Stacey says: "I love the handwork when it comes to metals, the strength of material. You have to beat it into submission, you have to struggle with it. You have to be a strong-willed person to make it do what you want."

Lisa Klakulak (<http://strongfelt.com/>) was chosen for bringing one of the oldest fiber techniques (felt) into the 21st century. She transforms the felt to create fresh and beautiful sculptures for the body and the home. She writes: "My work often addresses issues related to human vulnerability and the resulting need for physical security and mental defense through the materials used, the methods employed and the concepts referenced."

Each artist was awarded a \$500 prize, a lovely glass sculpture specifically designed for us by Tim Tate and given guaranteed entry into the next ACC show. It is intended that this will be an annual award at the Baltimore ACC show. ■





Brigitte Savage

# ARTFUL EXPLORATION OF ANNAPOLIS



Joe Dickey

area artists about the “how to’s” of their work. On Saturday, April 11 it was the turn of Annapolis, as a group of JRA members set out to explore the arts and crafts there.

Our first stop was at the gallery and studio of Burton Blistein, who produces symbolic sculptures in bronze. Burt sees his work as forming a continuous, interrelated series, with each sculpture amplifying and complicating the meaning of the others. The overarching schema, he said, was suggested by Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. In his home-built studio/foundry Burt explained and demonstrated the various phases of the extremely complex lost wax process—from the idea, to the sketch, to the wax model, sprueing, gating and investing the model, wax burn-out and the pouring of hot, flaming bronze into the mold, followed by sandblasting, chasing and patination.

The next stop brought us to glass artist Viki Keating and her in-home studio in Riva, Maryland. Viki loves color. It is the first thing she thinks about when designing a piece. “Glass is an exciting way to deal with color because the palette is endless and you have the added benefit of light. When the glass transmits or reflects light, many exciting effects can be achieved,” Viki says.

A short drive from the Keating Studio brought us to the lovely farm house and workshop of wood turner Joe Dickey in Davidsonville, Maryland. Nationally known for his wood turning, Joe is also a well-known blue grass musician and banjo player.

Burton Blistein in his studio.



Photos by Miriam Rosenthal

Viki Keating

The day ended with a visit to the Mitchell Gallery on the campus of St. John’s College where Art Educator Lucinda Edinberg led us on a tour of the “Ahmet Ertegun Collection.” The exhibition presented modernist works from the Baker Museum’s largest and most significant single collection, amassed by the late Ahmet Ertegun, the Turkish American musician and business man (St. John’s College alumnus), best known as the founder and president of Atlantic Records.

A no-host dinner at the romantic Severn Inn across the river from the Naval Academy completed a wonderful day of exploring, studying, learning and friendship making. ■

# SPRING CRAFT WEEKEND



All photos by Miriam Rosenthal

## AWARDS BRUNCH

A: Representatives of the Smithsonian's Women's Committee joined JRA for brunch. From left: Sharon Fawcett, Susan Labovich, Suzanne Noonan, Bunny Huebner, Wendy Wall, and Sandy Mitchell.

B: Masters of the Medium awardees after the award ceremony. Left to right: Steve Polaner (standing in for his wife Karen LaMonte), Silas Kopf, Michael Banner, Richard Shaw and Michael James.

C: Keeping everything organized were Director Cicie Sattarnilasskorn and Program Manager Catarina Castruccio-Prince.

# SPRING CRAFT WEEKEND



G



I



H



J



K

## GALA

G: The beautiful setting at the Willard InterContinental made ready for guests by Bonnie Schwartz and Raeanne Hytone.

H: David and Clemmer Montague happily showing off their well-deserved Distinguished Service Award for extraordinary service to the JRA.

I: Norman and Sandy Mitchell having a lovely time at the Gala dinner.

J: Master of the Medium in fiber Michael James with Rebecca and Gary Stevens.

K: To bid or not to bid on the glass violin? The violin was made by glass artist Gayla Lee especially for the JRA auction.

## CAUCUS DAY

D: Caucus Day participants listen to Conductor Angel Gil-Ordoñez speak about Conducting as Craft.

E: Attendees delight in examining the jewelry of Allan Gerson, made by printing on precious metals.

F: Tomato hors d'oeuvres being prepared by Chef Alex Levin and cookbook author Joan Nathan.

# THE CRAFT MUSEUM: IDEALS AND PRACTICE

Photo by Miriam Rosenthal.



What do museum curators think about when their museum is closed for renovation? If they're the curators of the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery Nicholas Bell and Nora Atkinson, they think about what a craft museum should be in the 21st century. There is now emerging a new generation of craft makers and new materials are being used. Craft is now more interdisciplinary – less tied to the traditional five media. How should a craft museum respond to the changes? What should it plan to be in the future?

To discuss these questions, an impressive panel was assembled. The keynote speaker was Sir Christopher Fraying, Professor Emeritus of Cultural History at London's Royal College of Art, and fifteen others who are actively involved in museums, art schools and a craft support organization.

Because of the wide variety of backgrounds and points of view represented, an equally wide variety of views on what a craft museum is today and what it is becoming were presented. It began with Prof. Fraying's comprehensive overview of the history of the way craft making has been taught and the place the resulting objects have in society. Several speakers discussed the relationship between the artist, the art, and the viewer and how it is changing, including adding performance art within a museum setting. "Maker spaces" are being used to involve the otherwise passive observer in the creative process. Also various strategies for preserving the perspectives of artists, from scrapbooks and photos to digital recording to create an oral history were discussed.

Fraying's address is available as an archived webcast at <https://youtube.com/watch?v=OwlQXwsuCiQ>. ■



## JRA MEMBERS TRAVEL WIDELY DURING 2015-2016

### Clemmer Montague

Seven tours to destinations near and far are on the agenda for JRA members through November 2016.

- The Corning Museum of Glass and the Finger Lakes region of NY state for July 21-24 with visits to the Rochester studios of Albert Paley, Wendell Castle and Nancy Jurs, Michael Rogers, and Michael Taylor as well as visits to Alfred University to meet renowned ceramicists.
- A study tour to Tulsa, OK, set for September 24-29, offers delightful and informed collectors, mature artists and world-class restaurants. The tour will include an excursion to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, AR. Basket maker and 2012 Distinguished Artist Leon Niehues is on the agenda.
- A 2016 study tour to Archie Bray Foundation, dedicated to the enrichment of the ceramic arts near Helena, MT. Archie Bray provides facilities for the creation of artistic objects to all who are seriously interested in any branch of the ceramic arts. The tour will be led by Peter Held.
- The Kilns and Craft of Japan, October 6-21, 2015, led by ceramist Jeff Shapiro who lived in Japan for about 10 years as an apprentice and practicing ceramist until he returned to the New York area to set up his studio and kilns.
- Prague, the Czech Republic, is in the initial planning stages for May 21-27, 2016, organized for the JRA by Katya and Douglas Heller of Heller Gallery, New York.
- San Diego, Caucus study tour. Past JRA Distinguished Educator Wendy Maruyama and several other JRA members from San Diego area will be advising.
- Japan, a second tour is planned with Jeff Shapiro in October 2016.

These are not all the tours which will be offered; others may be added as the opportunities arise.

For more information on these tours or to register, visit [jra.org](http://jra.org) ■

# THE DECORATIVE ASPECT OF CRAFT



certainly one of the high points of the Spring Craft Weekend was the discussion of “The Decorative Impulse” by a distinguished panel assembled by Bruce Metcalf. Panel members were Garth Clark, specialist in modern and contemporary ceramic art; Ulysses Dietz, curator of decorative arts at the Newark Museum of Art; Molly Hatch, conceptual ceramicist; and Judith Schaechter, stained glass artist.

Ulysses Dietz gave us an historical framework, pointing out that in the 19th century decoration was seen as turning an ordinary object into art. More highly and intricately decorated objects were perceived as more valuable because of the time it took to produce them.

Then, at the turn of the 20th century, there began a period when “form follows function” was the mantra. A new geometric style dictated that anything that did not contribute to the usefulness of the design was to be excised. This approach was evident in architecture, furniture design, and in styles of ceramic and glass objects. By mid-century the unadorned surface was the default. And the abstract approach was used in craft so that all was structure and form; there remained no place to decorate.

Garth Clark argued that since modern craft is a branch of decorative art, almost all craft is decorative, and that decoration has never been more alive than it is today.

The common familiarity with historic designs and pattern tradi-

tions are used by Molly Hatch in her work to provide access points for the viewer. Decoration, she believes, tells the viewer how to relate to a craft object. For example: is it precious or every day?

The high degree of detail in Judith Schaechter’s work is intentionally used to demonstrate her investment in the piece. Details take time; to embellish is a demonstration of love and caring. And, she says, if she doesn’t care about a piece, why should anyone else?

At the end of the program, in response to audience questions, panelists became speculative about the future of craft.

Positive reactions were expressed about 3D printing. It can create forms that cannot be made in any other way. Bruce found it interesting that objects could be generated by computer, produced by machine and then assembled by hand resulting in an amalgam of approaches. Garth believes a revolution is coming, but that art is having a hard time finding a way to use this technique to advantage.

Ulysses commented that young people now interact actively with art forms such as computer games. They haven’t learned how to interact “passively,” that is with only their eyes and brains. His concern is that “still” art will get lost in the future.

Lots of ideas and good thinking were exchanged. The program is available as an archived webcast at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0isp3H1Dumo>. ■



DICK FRYKLUND



We see Dick Fryklund at JRA events as a quiet observer. Now you have the opportunity to get acquainted with the very interesting man behind the observer.



Dick has pursued a wide variety of endeavors, but always in the background has been his passion for woodworking. This passion was first fostered by Dick's father who was a woodworking instructor. The access to tools and to guidance helped: he was making furniture during high school, and took an industrial arts major in college.

Then World War II intervened. Dick was drafted the day after he graduated. The Army trained him as a radar observer which meant he and a pilot flew at night over enemy territory, with Dick watching the radar screen and the pilot preparing to attack – but they never spotted any “bad guys.”

Following his discharge, Dick found newspaper reports of world events interesting and decided that news writing would be a worthwhile occupation. He got a job at a small local weekly newspaper followed by job shifts to larger newspapers, obtained a Master's in journalism, and then was asked to join the old *Washington Star*.

His writing assignments focused on government, and his writing skill and analytic ability were such that he became a foreign correspondent, reporting from Europe and on both the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Dick recalls that prior to a trip to report on the Vietnam War he landed an interview with President Johnson. His focus was getting the President to make a statement on what should be done about the war. Johnson kept sidestepping the question and

finally handed Dick one of his beagles, enlisting his assistance in pressing the dogs' feet into some fresh cement. So much for global affairs!

After leaving the *Washington Star*, Dick spent some time working as Deputy Asst. Secretary for Public Affairs at the Pentagon, writing and doing analysis for the Rand Corporation, and then for the American Petroleum Institute. In all of these positions his experience in political and international affairs was invaluable – and represented quite a journey for a man from rural Nebraska!

While in Spain to write about Franco Dick visited an orphanage. Though it had not been his intent, he left the institution having adopted a baby girl. He took the child to Paris where he and his wife were living. Life as a parent was so satisfying that his wife asked him to return and get a boy this time.

On one of his trips home he went to an exhibit of wood turning at the Renwick, was captivated, and decided to branch out into this new aspect of woodworking. He went to training programs and demonstrations – notably by Phil Brown. When he decided to purchase a lathe, Marshall Jacobs helped him locate one. So, now the collection of wood art that Dick lives with consists of traditional furniture pieces and contemporary turned pieces.

When he retired he settled on North Carolina's outer banks remembering pleasant childhood family trips there. His son introduced him to whitewater kayaking, and Dick was hooked. He organized a kayaking group which took camping trips, created kayak trails, explored most of the islands and inlets on the sound, and became the Commodore of the Outer Banks Paddling Club.

A very impressive resume indeed! ■



Marsha Gold, a member of the JRA for fifteen plus years and a current Board member, has spent a lifetime developing a craft collection that fits within the constraints of a limited budget and space. Her 2013 book *Crafting a Life: Travels through My Collections* is her effort to pull together, in a

cohesive way, her collections and what they mean to her. We thought Marsha's vantage point on collecting would resonate with others and so we posed some questions to her.

### What Got You Started in Collecting Craft?

I think I've always been engaged with craft, even as a child. Somehow craft connected me with something tangible and with people across the world. As a child of the Jewish labor movement and 60s, I liked the labor and tactile sense of handwork. Still today, I explore funky neighborhoods, visit craft shows or artists, and travel where I seek out unique objects.

### What Criteria Do You Use in Deciding to Collect an Object?

The objects I collect have to "speak" to me. Usually that is because they reflect my interest in the whimsy of everyday life and/or the beauty of form and texture. My collection also

tends to be colorful. I look for objects that are well made. I'm acquiring memories, not just objects. So a lot of my acquisitions come through my travel both with the JRA and on my own. I may not remember where I got the object, but I almost always remember how it was obtained: often directly from the artist or from sellers closely connected to them.

### Have You Become Friends With Artists Whose Work You Have Acquired?

Yes. That is very important to me. I run into a number of artists again and again and now we can be Facebook friends as well. At craft shows I will stop and chat with people whose work I know and have acquired. It's great to follow artists as they grow and see how their work evolves. That personal connection makes the object I acquire even more special.

### Is There Anything Else You Want To Add?

I'm not rich, an artist, or an expert in craft, but I've found that the objects in my collections are me. They reflect my passions, my experiences, my values, and my tastes. My collection is "eye candy" I can see every day and smile. Pursuing my interests in crafts also has enriched my life by connecting me to people, organizations and communities I might never know. The James Renwick Alliance has been very valuable in expanding my horizons. ■

MARSHA GOLD



Sarah Warren

JRA FELLOW PUBLISHES ARTICLE IN

## JOURNAL OF MODERN CRAFT



My interest in craft history was largely born of my own childhood experiences at the Rhinebeck, NY Craft Fair, which ran from 1973-83. As the child of a frequent exhibitor, I delighted in the carnivalesque atmosphere, the seemingly endless array of exquisitely crafted things, the smell of fresh-mown grass, and, of course, the gigantic ice cream cones. Because of this, I conceived of my scholarly project as beginning with an examination of Rhinebeck, the first American craft fair with a national profile. In writing my proposal for the Renwick Fellowship, my interest was bolstered by Jessica Shaykett, librarian at the American Craft Council (ACC). Jessica had the material I needed, and she and other ACC staff were eager to have a scholar examine their craft fair archives.

Therefore, when I learned that I was the 2013-14 James Renwick Fellow, I spent a week at the ACC archives in Minneapolis, which provided almost all of the information necessary to write a scholarly account of Rhinebeck.

The result was "Selling Rhinebeck: Confrontation, Profit, and the 'Mass Anxiety Attack' of the Northeast Craft Fair," published in the *Journal of Modern Craft* (JMC) in July 2014.

It was Nicholas Bell, the Fleur and Charles Bresler Senior Curator of American Craft and Decorative Art, who suggested that I use my mother's work in the article. The result is this photo of me wearing one of my mother's quilted suits from 1982. I am deeply grateful to the James Renwick Alliance for their support of this work. ■

SARAH WARREN



## A CHANCE TO BE HANDY

On July 23 you will have a chance to be handy (actually handi) while you socialize and enjoy craft beer at the JRA-sponsored Smithsonian American Art Museum's Handi-hour!

The event was begun several years ago by Renwick Gallery program staff who wanted to encourage young people to experience the museum in a new and interesting way. The program offers participants an opportunity to enjoy a happy hour environment in a museum space – while crafting. The July 23 event, though sponsored by the JRA, will be held at the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Luce Center since the Renwick is still closed for renovation.

Participants arrive at 5:30, have their ID's checked, (you must be 21 or over), pay a fee, and are given printed instructions for the project of the evening. Green-aproned staffers will be present to answer questions and help find needed supplies. There will also be how-to videos available on the featured craft – which is still a mystery at this writing. Local musicians will provide background music.

Feedback from attendees has been that the Handi-hours have been fun. It is interesting to see what others make, and to meet new people. For more information about Handi-hours visit [www.americanart.si.edu/handi-hour](http://www.americanart.si.edu/handi-hour). ■

## LETTERS OF THANKS

When the dust had settled after the Spring Craft Weekend (SCW) of 2015, the JRA office received a number of letters thanking the SCW organizers for making the weekend so rewarding. We thought you'd enjoy reading some excerpts:

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*“What a wonderful weekend! You folks are all terrific, and I want to offer my sincerest thanks and appreciation for all that you did to make this award and the associated events a huge memory that will last a lifetime.”*

*“It was [a] stunningly delightful weekend, and Michael and I are planning to join JRA so we can come as attendees to future events. Thank you for EVERYTHING!”*

*“The whole weekend was filled with interest (and fun). I enjoyed the opportunity to renew old acquaintances. So to have been included was a memory that I will carry long into the future.”*

*“I had a great time, my fellow panelists awed me and the big treat was a lady by the name of Gigi.”*

*“ I had an utterly fantastic time and I want to let you know, it was your TLC that made it so! Thank you so much for all your hard work. It was obviously a labor of love and so I appreciate it all the more. I have never felt so welcome!”*

*“Thank you and thank you to all of the JRA for making this past Spring Craft Weekend such an amazing event! I came home with much to think about, many new friends, and inspiration to boot! I can't say enough what a pleasure it was.”*

Now, please let us hear your thoughts about the JRA. Send messages to [JRA.org](http://JRA.org), atten. Quarterly Editor. ■



Design: Rhoda Baer



ANNOUNCING  
THE INAUGURAL  
JRA  
CHRYSLIS AWARD  
*for Emerging Craft Artists*

2016 FOCUS: FIBER ART

Nikki O'Neill

The JRA is pleased to announce establishment of an annual award recognizing an emerging craft artist showing merit, skill and innovation in art. The awardee will receive a \$5,000 grant, complimentary membership in the JRA for one year, an invitation to participate in the 2016 JRA Spring Craft Weekend events, and have an opportunity to give a brief presentation about their work. Finalists may be recognized with an Honorable Mention and a 1-year JRA membership.

In our inaugural year (2016), the focus for the award is on emerging fiber artists. In subsequent years we will solicit nominees in other media. An independent panel of jurors will recommend which of the nominees will be selected to receive the award. We have committed funding for the first four years, with JRA member Darcy Walker sponsoring the 2016 award.

Each of the prior five years' Masters of the Medium and Distinguished Educators in fiber will be asked to nominate up to three candidates. A "Call to Artists" will appear in the August/September issue of American Craft magazine. We will also solicit nominations from faculty teaching arts at universities with craft programs.

Artist applications and all supporting material must be received by November 1, 2015. Submit information to: JRA ATTN: CHRYSLIS AWARD, 4405 East-West Highway, Suite 510, Bethesda MD 20814, or electronically at [www.jra.org](http://www.jra.org). For more information visit [www.jra.org](http://www.jra.org) or call 301.907.3888. ■

SAVE THE DATES

NOTE: What follows is a listing of upcoming JRA events as of press time. But with the dynamic work of JRA's Program Committee, new events are constantly being added to the calendar, and events sometimes change dates. So, to keep abreast of what is coming up that you don't want to miss, please check these sources: The weekly email bulletin; The JRA website, at [JRA.org](http://JRA.org).

|             |  |                 |  |
|-------------|--|-----------------|--|
| <b>2015</b> |  | August 23       | Reception and Artist talk                    |
| June 19-20  | Trip to Brooklyn, NY                           | September 12    | Tour of Fleur Bresler collection             |
| June 27     | Dinner at VOLT – auction item                  | September 24-29 | Trip to Tulsa, OK and Crystal Bridges Museum |
| June 28     | Caucus summer social                           | October 1       | Afternoon tour of Glenstone Museum           |
| July 21-24  | Craft Study Tour to Finger Lakes & Corning, NY | October 6-21    | Caucus trip to Japan                         |
| July 23     | Handi-hour at SAAM, sponsored by JRA           | November 13     | Reopening of the Renwick Gallery             |
|             |  | November 17     | Annual Membership Meeting                    |
|             |  | December 5      | JRA Day                                      |
|             |  | December 31     | New Year's Eve Party                         |

JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE  
**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**

For the year ended September 30, 2014

Comparative Totals for 2013

*(See Independent Auditor's Report and notes to financial statements)*

|   | UNRESTRICTED       | TEMPORARILY<br>RESTRICTED | 2014<br>TOTAL     | 2013<br>TOTAL     |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Revenues and Other Support:</b>      |                    |                           |                   |                   |
| Membership dues                         | \$ 90,526          | \$ —                      | \$ 90,526         | \$ 81,700         |
| Special event dues                      | 161,339            | 11,450                    | 172,789           | 204,914           |
| Other income from special events        | 211,177            | 5,412                     | 216,589           | 252,206           |
| Program services – trips                | 74,343             | —                         | 74,343            | 78,367            |
| Contributions and grants                | 2,450              | 297,489                   | 299,939           | 24,697            |
| Contributed securities                  | 9,626              | 19,418                    | 29,044            | 11,759            |
| Interest and dividend income            | 30                 | 1                         | 31                | 32                |
| Gain (loss) on sale of securities       | (438)              | —                         | (438)             | (375)             |
| Other income                            | 1,805              | —                         | 1,805             | 353               |
| Net assets released from restriction:   |                    |                           |                   |                   |
| Satisfaction of program restrictions    | 123,745            | (123,745)                 | —                 | —                 |
| <b>Total Revenues and Other Support</b> | <b>674,603</b>     | <b>210,025</b>            | <b>884,628</b>    | <b>653,653</b>    |
| <b>Expenses</b>                         |                    |                           |                   |                   |
| Program service                         | 814,093            | —                         | 814,093           | 356,637           |
| Management and general                  | 36,317             | —                         | 36,317            | 34,346            |
| Fundraising                             | 17,448             | —                         | 17,448            | 14,955            |
| Special event expenses                  | 221,341            | —                         | 221,341           | 256,641           |
| <b>Total Expenses and Losses</b>        | <b>1,089,199</b>   | <b>—</b>                  | <b>1,089,199</b>  | <b>662,579</b>    |
| Change in Net Assets                    | (414,596)          | 210,025                   | (204,571)         | (8,926)           |
| <b>Net Assets, beginning of year</b>    | <b>356,046</b>     | <b>39,718</b>             | <b>395,764</b>    | <b>404,690</b>    |
| <b>Net Assets, end of year</b>          | <b>\$ (58,550)</b> | <b>\$ 249,743</b>         | <b>\$ 191,193</b> | <b>\$ 395,764</b> |

The accompanying Statement of Activities is an excerpt from our audited financial statements, which are available upon request. The Statement of Activities reflects the financial activity for the Organization for the year ended September 30, 2014.

# RENWICK REOPENING

Back in December of 2013 we all bid temporary farewell to our beloved Renwick Gallery. Its closing for major renovation was necessary but sad.

Now, in a little under the projected two years, a reopening date has been announced: November 13, 2015!

The Smithsonian American Art Museum is planning a number of events to celebrate the reopening, including a ribbon-cutting on November 13 followed by an open house in the Gallery. That night the popular “Handi-hour” will return to the Renwick with craft beer, music and special guests. Then, on November 14, there will be a family festival.

The building, designed by James Renwick to display the private art collection of William Wilson Corcoran, was opened as a gallery in 1874. It is considered to be the first American building created to showcase art and is a beautiful Beaux Arts structure. But its age was showing. The major renovation restored its inte-

rior and upgraded its infrastructure. It has newly developed LED lighting and all new systems so that, in the words of Smithsonian American Art Museum Director Betsy Broun, “We’ll go from being one of the Smithsonian’s most greedy energy consumers to being one of its most efficient.”

To make this reopening quite special, the initial exhibit, WONDER, will consist of site-specific installations from nine contemporary artists, including Jennifer Angus, Chakaia Booker, Patrick Dougherty and Leo Villareal. They were asked to create work that responded to the historic building’s galleries.

What a treat it will be to see our modernized Renwick Gallery and these artworks designed to celebrate it!



Yinka Shonibare, MBE, *Lady Walking a Tightrope*, United Kingdom/Nigeria, 2006. Newark Museum 2007.5 A and B. Purchase 2007 Helen McMahon Brady Cutting Fund. Image courtesy of the Newark Museum.

# The Textile Museum REOPENS with a Loan from SAAM

The Textile Museum has reopened in a brand new home on the Foggy Bottom Campus of George Washington University.

The Museum’s inaugural exhibition is *Unraveling Identities: Our Textiles, Our Stories*. Drawn from The Textile Museum’s renowned collection and loans from other major institutions, this exhibit explores individual, social, spiritual, and cultural identities past and present. The contemporary artworks in this exhibition reflect the ambiguous and nuanced nature of twenty-first century identity.

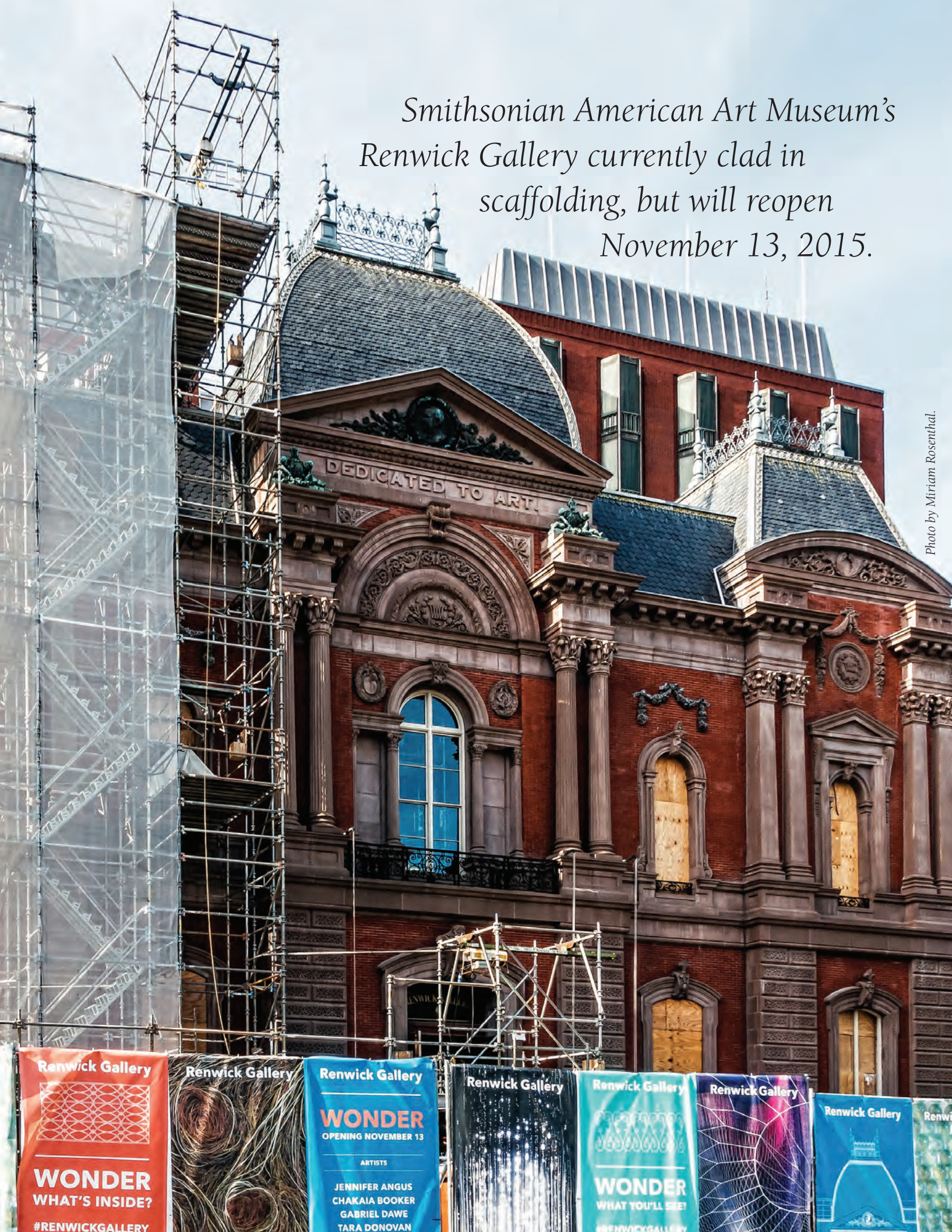
These contemporary works ask provocative questions whose answers are often open-ended. For example, a sculpture by Yinka Shonibare *Lady Walking a Tightrope* subverts common assumptions of cultural identity. The headless figure, clothed in Victorian costume, is ethnically unidentifiable. She is dressed in fabric that is associated with West Africa but, in fact, is a product of European manufacturing. Who is this lady? Is she European or African? Or is she both? ■

“*Unraveling Identities: Our Textiles, Our Stories*” is on view through August 23, 2015 at The Textile Museum, 701 21st, NW, Washington, DC.

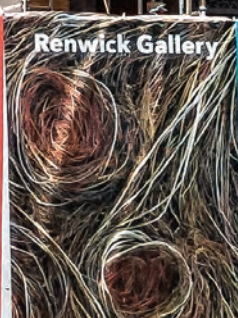
**Rebecca A. T. Stevens** *Consulting Curator, Contemporary Textiles, The Textile Museum and JRA member*

*Smithsonian American Art Museum's  
Renwick Gallery currently clad in  
scaffolding, but will reopen  
November 13, 2015.*

Photo by Miriam Rosenthal.



Renwick Gallery  
**WONDER**  
WHAT'S INSIDE?  
#RENWICKGALLERY



Renwick Gallery  
**WONDER**  
OPENING NOVEMBER 13  
ARTISTS  
JENNIFER ANGUS  
CHAKAIA BOOKER  
GABRIEL DAWE  
TARA DONOVAN



Renwick Gallery  
**WONDER**  
WHAT YOU'LL SEE!  
#RENWICKGALLERY



Renwick Gallery