



**THE QUARTERLY** winter | spring 2011



Jenna Goldberg  
*Asterisk Cabinet, 2010*

**JAMES RENWICK  
ALLIANCE QUARTERLY****EDITOR**

Clemmer Montague

**ASSISTANT EDITOR**

Johanna Thompson

**ART DIRECTOR**

Donna Sicklesmith-Anderson

**PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR**

Miriam Rosenthal

**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Miriam Rosenthal

**WRITERS**

Mallory Lawson

Johanna Thompson

**PROOFREADERS**

Johanna Thompson

Elmerina Parkman

James Renwick Alliance  
4405 East West Highway, Suite 510  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
Phone 301 907-3888 / Fax 301 907-3855

*The Quarterly* is published three times a year by the James Renwick Alliance, an independent national non-profit organization, created to celebrate the achievements of America's craft artists and to foster scholarship, education, and public appreciation of craft art. Founded in 1982, the Alliance helps support the nation's showcase of contemporary American craft, the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. The opinions expressed therein are not those of the James Renwick Alliance, its board of directors or the Smithsonian American Art Museum Renwick Gallery and its staff. *The Quarterly* is published for members of the James Renwick Alliance and is not for sale.

Disclaimer: The editor assumes full responsibility for all errors in proof-reading and editing of all articles in *The Quarterly*. Errors are not the fault of the James Renwick Alliance, its officers or members nor the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

**JAMES RENWICK  
ALLIANCE OFFICERS****PRESIDENT**

Clemmer Montague

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Gary Stevens

**TREASURER**

J.G. Harrington

**SECRETARY**

Julianna Mahley

**JAMES RENWICK  
ALLIANCE STAFF**

Selena Anguiano

Executive Administrator

301 907-3888

Taylor Williams, Assistant

## From the president...

Much of this issue of the *Quarterly* concerns the upcoming Spring Craft Weekend (SCW), so I would like to call particular attention to the volunteer effort by James Renwick Alliance members who make events such as SCW possible.

One of the primary goals of SCW is to raise money to support Renwick Gallery and JRA programs. Spearheading this fund raising effort is the indomitable Shirley Jacobs, Patrons Chair. By mid-February, she, working singlehandedly, had commitments from 80 Weekend Patrons for a total of over \$102,000. Shirley is a truly remarkable volunteer worker. She has an amazing rolodex, and she calls each person individually to invite each and every one to join our efforts. And she is still at it!

The overall planning for SCW is the responsibility of SCW Chair Reba Immergut. As she has done several times before, Reba has organized an outstanding team of volunteers to direct the programs which are part of SCW. Caucus Day Chairs Barbara Berlin and Sandy Mitchell have lined up exciting private collections and a lunch with an international flair. Auction chair, Judy Weisman and her committee made up of Elizabeth Ryland Mears, Julianna Mahley, Marc Grainer, Jan Maddox, Mallory Lawson and Marsha Gold, are bringing an array of exciting objects and adventures to the silent and live auctions.

Gala chair Bonnie Schwartz is not telling the wonderful surprises she is planning for Saturday night, but you can be assured that you will be pleased beyond belief. Paul Parkman, Shirley Jacobs and Barbara Berlin will make Founding Director Emeritus Lloyd Herman of the Renwick Gallery feel at home again, and Rebecca Stevens will make the presentation of the One-of-a-Kind award to Bernard and Sherley Koteen. Marilyn Barrett and Paul Parkman are making the celebration brunch for the Masters of the Medium at the Top of the Hay penthouse terrace at the Hay-Adams Hotel a top event.

Hospitality chair Gwen Paulson will be assisting the incoming Masters of the Medium in settling into the JRA scene. And you already admire the five-card invitation, created by Mallory Lawson and assisted by Elmerina Parkman, which will be out a long time before the *Quarterly* is. Then Gary Stevens, the able and well qualified vice president acting as audience development chair, sent out vibes all over the east coast to get people to come to the gala, brunch, Caucus Day and the panel discussion.

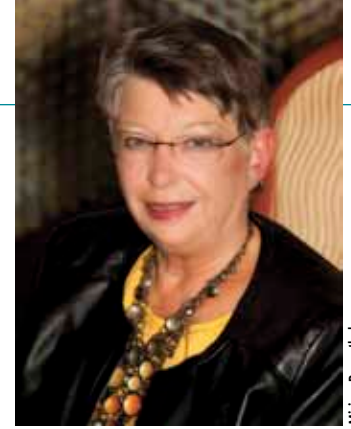
I must say thanks to my husband David for working with the American Art and Renwick Gallery staffs in setting up the panel discussion on Saturday and his co-worker Pati Young who is arranging a lunch for all the dignitaries in the Kogod Courtyard.

Of course, when all is over, there is our reliable and dependable Pat Arnold and her sidekick Ann Byron taking care of checking out people with their purchases after the auctions.

We could not finish without saying thanks for the help of JRA Executive Administrator Selena Anguiano and the newly-hired Taylor Williams who is a whiz at computer operations; or without saying thanks to the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Renwick Gallery staffs for their generous help. And to Miriam Rosenthal, photographer, who, for the last five years, has provided JRA with a pictorial history of SCW, now all stored on a CD.

So thank you all for your devoted attention to all these unusual and varied details. I hope to see the rest of you at the SCW happenings.

Clemmer Montague, President



Miriam Rosenthal

**JRA BOARD MEETINGS**

Tuesday, April 12 @ 7:30 p.m.

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

Saturday, June 18 (time TBA)

## LOYD HERMAN CURATOR OF CRAFT

It looks as if the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick will have a second curator, thanks to the inspiration and generosity of its founding director Lloyd Herman.

Mr. Herman was involved with the Gallery from the beginning: a six-page memo he wrote in 1968 suggesting a use for the Renwick building that the Smithsonian had recently received was the germ of the idea for a museum of craft and design. The idea was enthusiastically adopted, and the director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum appointed Mr. Herman its administrator.

At that time the only other museum focusing on American craft was the Museum of Contemporary Craft in New York (now the Museum of Arts and Design). So the Washington museum was something of a pioneer. During his 15 years at the Renwick, Mr. Herman "single handedly invented and molded the Gallery"<sup>1</sup> through his choice of exhibitions and the contacts he established with artists, museum directors and curators, and gallery owners.

After leaving the Renwick in 1986, these contacts and his expertise in the field of American craft led to his being invited to lecture, to join boards of arts organizations, and to be involved in the creation of museums. The way Lloyd Herman puts it, his time at the Renwick "shaped the rest of my life."<sup>2</sup>

After hearing an inspirational talk on how to "fund your dream," Mr. Herman approached Elizabeth Broun, Director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, about his dream: creating an endowment to fund a permanent curator of American Craft. This meshed perfectly with the Smithsonian policy of encouraging endowed curatorships, and so a plan was born. Mr. Herman promised \$800,000 and challenged other donors to contribute \$1.2 million.

The total of \$2 million then would fund the position of the Lloyd Herman Curator of Craft. The creation of this position will ensure that a commitment to scholarship and publishing in the field of craft will continue into the future. This scholarship, entailing study of the Renwick's collection as well as of the developing field of craft, is important, Mr. Herman believes, since the history of craft is somewhat different from that of other art forms. And it certainly fits well within the Smithsonian's mission for "the increase and diffusion of knowledge."

As the last year of the drive approaches, the news is very good. The fund is near the end of the \$1.2 million goal. Lloyd Herman's reputation in the field has prompted many to join the effort, and an interesting aspect of the contributions is the broad range of participation. Individual gifts have been received from across the country.

Having a second curator at the Renwick with a somewhat differ-

## MELVIN S. COHEN

Craft supporter and James Renwick Alliance Craft Leaders Caucus member Melvin S. Cohen of Chevy Chase, died on Wednesday, January 19. He was beloved husband of Ryna Glick Cohen; devoted father of Neil (Marcella) Cohen, Diane (Howard) Zack, and Mark (Theresa) Cohen; brother of Norman (Nina) Cohen; grandfather of Thea, Keith, Marty, Nathan, Alana, Peter, George and Julia.

James Renwick Alliance members may make memorial contributions in the name of Melvin S. Cohen to The Jewish Foundation for Group Homes, 1500 E. Jefferson St., Rockville, MD 20852 or to JSSA, 6123 Montrose Road, Rockville, MD 20852.

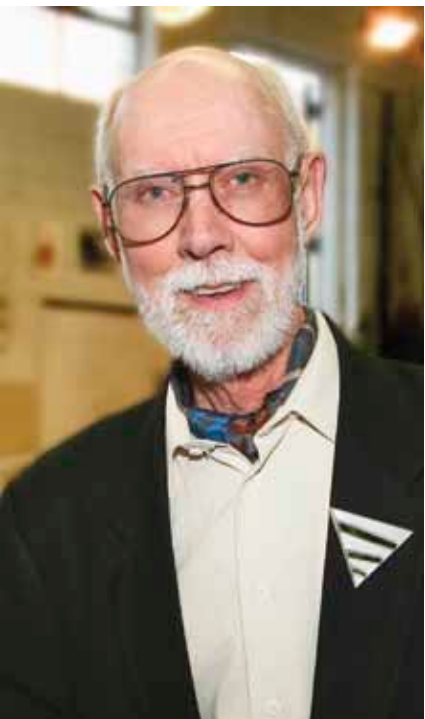
The Ryna and Melvin Cohen Family Foundation Endowment provides generous support for the upcoming exhibition at the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery *History in the Making: Renwick Craft Invitational 2011*. The Cohen Family's generosity in creating this endowment makes possible this biennial series highlighting outstanding craft artists who are deserving of wider national recognition.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum announced in 2005 the \$1.2 million gift from the Ryna and Melvin Cohen Family Foundation to establish the Ryna and Melvin Cohen Family Foundation Endowment. This endowment supports biennial exhibition services showcasing contemporary craft artists, called the Renwick Craft Invitational and related programs at the museum's Renwick Gallery.

Mel and Ryna were consistent supporters of the James Renwick Alliance and took part in many programs over the years.



Miriam Rosenthal



Miriam Rosenthal

ent focus will be of substantial assistance to Nicholas R. Bell who has been the sole curator since mid-2009. There are simply too many books to write, too many exhibits to plan, and too many good ideas to follow up on for one person to manage. So the successful conclusion of creating and filling this new position is something to look forward to. Many express deep gratitude to Lloyd Herman. All will benefit from the fruition of his dream.

—Johanna Thompson

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Paul and Elmerina Parkman, January 6, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Lloyd Herman, January 28, 2011.



### ON THE COVER

Jenna Goldberg's *Asterisk Cabinet*, closed, is one of the exciting items in the live auction on Saturday, March 26, during the many events of Spring Craft Weekend March 23–27. Photo courtesy of the artist.

## ARTFUL PLEASURES AND LANDMARK TREASURES...

# Spring Craft Weekend

Spring Craft Weekend, presented by the James Renwick Alliance, means something important to everyone, and the committee has planned events to meet everyone's needs.

The weekend produces the funds which the James Renwick Alliance uses to operate and to meet its fiduciary responsibilities to the Smithsonian American Art Museum, under the guidelines of the Memorandum of Agreement.

Two special events for JRA members are taking place *prior* to the opening of SCW on Friday. One is a reception at the Italian Embassy and the second is the opening reception of the *Renwick Craft Invitational 2011* to which JRA members are invited (see sidebar below for details).

## JRA SPECIAL EVENTS LEADING UP TO SPRING CRAFT WEEKEND

### Wednesday, March 23

*Program and Reception, Embassy of Italy—6 p.m.*

James Renwick Alliance members are invited to a special program and reception on Wednesday, March 23, at 6 p.m. at the Embassy of Italy. The program, *A Conversation with Contemporary Italian Masters: Glass Master Lino Tagliapietra and Master Silversmith Ubaldo Vitali*, under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Italy Giorgio Napolitano, celebrates the 150th anniversary of Italy as a republic—Italy@150. By invitation to JRA members.

### Thursday, March 24

*Opening Reception, Renwick Gallery—6:30 p.m.*

Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery, *History in the Making: Renwick Craft Invitational 2011* features work of master silversmith Ubaldo Vitali, ceramist Cliff Lee, glass master Judith Schaechter and furniture maker Matthias Pliessnig. All JRA members are invited.

### Friday, March 25 (through July 31)

*Public Opening, Renwick Gallery*

Official public opening of the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery: *History in the Making: Renwick Craft Invitational 2011* features work of master silversmith Ubaldo Vitali, ceramist Cliff Lee, glass master Judith Schaechter and furniture maker Matthias Pliessnig. Free. Open to the public.



Gerraldo Bennucci pin # 20, signed, numbered, dated

SCW events begin on Friday, March 25 with Caucus Day. Note that three JRA-sponsored events will be open to non-members. The Saturday symposium is free, and there are admission fees to the Benefit Gala on Saturday and the Awards Brunch on Sunday. For that matter, anyone can still join the Craft Leaders Caucus or become a Craft Weekend Patron.

For further information, visit the James Renwick Alliance website ([www.jra.org](http://www.jra.org)), send an e-mail to [admin@jra.org](mailto:admin@jra.org), or call 301-907-3888. Here is how the week is shaping up:

BELOW, Sonya Clark, *Now and Then*, fiber



LEFT, Matthew Szosz, *Untitled (Inflatable) #29*, cast glassRIGHT, Tommy Simpson, *Arrow*, dog bench

## Friday, March 25

### CRAFT LEADERS CAUCUS DAY 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Visits to two private residences in Washington, D.C., and lunch at the Mexican Cultural Institute. Speaker is William G. Allman, Curator of the White House and Curator of *Something of Splendor: Decorative Arts from the White House*, the upcoming exhibition at the Renwick Gallery from October 1 to July 31, 2012. Caucus and Patrons only. \$125 for Caucus members. Weekend Patrons free. \$25 tax deductible.

## Saturday, March 26

### SYMPOSIUM 10:30 a.m. – 12 noon

Smithsonian American Art Museum's McEvoy Auditorium. Curator Nicholas R. Bell leads a panel discussion "Everything Old is New Again" with *Renwick Craft Invitational 2011* artists Ubaldo Vitali, Cliff Lee, Judith Schaechter and Matthias Pliessnig. Hear how these four artists mine and transcend tradition in silver, porcelain, glass and wood to create highly original works of consummate craftsmanship. Free. Open to the public.

### GALA RECEPTION, AUCTIONS, AWARDS 6:00 p.m.

Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery, James Renwick Alliance Spring Craft Weekend gala and auctions, featuring the work

of glass master Lino Tagliapietra, ceramist Jun Kaneko, fiber artist Jon Eric Riis, jeweler Linda MacNeil and furniture maker Garry Knox Bennett for auction, among 20 others. One-of-a-Kind Award presented to **Bernard and Sherley Koteen** (at left). Dessert tribute to **Lloyd Herman**, Founding Director

Emeritus of the Renwick Gallery. Open to all ticket holders. Tickets for sale at \$295. Weekend patrons free. \$95 tax deductible.

## Sunday, April 25

### AWARDS BRUNCH 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Hay-Adams Hotel for the James Renwick Alliance Spring Craft Weekend awards brunch, honoring glass master Lino Tagliapietra, ceramist Jun Kaneko, fiber artist Jon Eric Riis, jeweler Linda MacNeil and furniture maker Garry Knox Bennett. Tickets for sale to James Renwick Alliance members and non-members only at \$95. Weekend patrons free. \$35 tax deductible.

## Weekend Patrons

as of February 18, 2011

### DEDICATED TO ART SOCIETY

Bernard and Sherley Koteen

### GRAND SALON

Benjamin and Giselle Huberman  
Deena and Jerry Kaplan  
Anne Mehlinger and Terry Beaty

### PALM COURT

Ronald and Anne Abramson  
Fleur Bresler  
Frances and Leonard Burka  
Marian and Russell Burke  
Ryna Cohen  
Miriam and Leon Ellsworth  
Lois and Richard England  
Harold and Arlene Finger  
Jere Gibber and J.G. Harrington  
Shirley Jacobs  
Robert P. and Arlene R. Kogod  
Bonnie and Gilbert Schwartz

### OCTAGON ROOM

Marilyn and Jack Barrett  
Barbara and Arnold Berlin  
Jeffrey Bernstein and Judith Chernoff  
Sharon and Robert Buchanan  
Brenda Erickson and Dick Fryklund  
Diane and Marc Grainer  
Reba and Mark Immergut  
Colleen and John Kotely  
Myra and Stephen Kurzbard  
Robert Minkoff and Shelley Kushner  
Sandy and Norman Mitchell  
David and Clemmer Montague  
Paul and Elmerina Parkman  
Jerome and Gwen Paulson  
Chris Rifkin  
Michael and Karen Rotenberg  
Susan and Fred Sanders  
Gary and Rebecca A.T. Stevens  
Jackie Urow  
Pati Young and Tina Heller

### INDIVIDUAL PATRONS

Carolyn Alper  
Anonymous  
Mallory Lawson  
Barbara Laughlin  
Julianna Mahley  
Vivian L. Pollock  
Eleanor T. Rosenfeld  
Judy Weisman

LEFT, Sylvie Rosenthal, *A Deep Well*, mixed media

## STILL WORKING!

All auction items shown on these two pages will be in the silent auction. One silent auction item in the process of being made and not pictured in this issue of the *Quarterly* is a teapot by Sylvie Rosenthal. See more silent auction items on pages 10–11 and 14.

BUY IT NOW BEFORE IT SELLS OUT...

# DINNER

## AT THE HOME OF NORMAN & SUZANNE COHN



PHILADELPHIA, PA

**Norman and Suzanne Cohn** invite 46 lucky people to a memorable and exquisite dinner at their home in **Philadelphia** on Saturday, April 30 as one of the live auction items of the upcoming Spring Craft Weekend.

A fabulous Ginny Ruffner chandelier introduces participants to the Cohn's craft-filled penthouse apartment on the 45th floor. The multi-course dinner, accompanied by wines, will be presented by their personal chef, Cyrus Khambatta, Indian-born, Swiss and British trained, a graduate of the American Culinary Institute and a Ritz Carlton executive chef alumnus.

The Cohn's vast collection of "table art" is legendary—settings which the 46 people who attend this once-in-a-lifetime event will be using. Over the last four decades the Cohns have collected and commissioned countless items which represent their pas-

sion for both traveling and supporting artists.

This is an overnight study tour. The Saturday and Sunday itinerary includes visits to other collections, galleries and museums during the weekend which are in the planning stages and will be announced. Transportation to and from Philadelphia is the responsibility of each participant (no bus service will be provided). Overnight accommodations are also *not* included in the cost of the evening. A block of rooms will be held at several hotels in different price ranges, but it is the responsibility of each traveler to make arrangements directly with their hotel of choice.



## THESE EVENTS AND ADVENTURES AWAIT YOUR BIDS!

EDITOR'S NOTE: We are presenting condensed versions of each **Event** and **Adventure** as a teaser in the space we have. The JRA website [www.jra.org](http://www.jra.org) will have a detailed description of each item online by March 1.



### SIGN UP FOR COHNS, PHILADELPHIA TOUR

The Cohn Dinner and Study Tour to Philadelphia costs \$500 per person and includes the dinner and visits to a number of private collections and galleries. The \$500 is nonrefundable once the application for full payment has been processed.

**To register.** Please contact the James Renwick Alliance office at 301-907-3888 or email [admin@jra.org](mailto:admin@jra.org) to sign up.



### New York Trip and Dinner at Restaurant Telepan

A weekend in New York City visiting galleries, Museum of Art and Design with a tour by its director, private collectors' homes and artists' studios is offered as an item for the silent auction. JRA member Marc Grainer is coordinating the itinerary with Scott Jacobson of Scott Jacobson Gallery.

In addition, Telepan Restaurant, 72 West 69th Street, New York, is offering dinner for eight as part of the weekend trip. Chef Bill Telepan's eponymous restaurant opened on the Upper West Side of New York in December of 2005. Jimmy Nicholas, a friend of the JRA, is donating this extraordinary evening in honor of Kiwon Wang. See [www.telepan-ny.com](http://www.telepan-ny.com).



### Dinner for Six at Restaurant Eve in Old Town

Everyone will have the opportunity to bid on the suave service and pedigreed ingredients at The Chef's Tasting Room at Restaurant Eve, 110 Pitt Street, Alexandria, in an historic warehouse building. Carl and Jan Fisher, JRA Caucus members of Tacoma, WA, donated the nine course tasting menu for six guests. The donation does not include wine and gratuities.

The 34 seat destination Tasting Room is a culinary showcase of "Modern American Cooking with Classical French Influences," featuring a nine course prix fixe tasting menu which highlights the freshest of seasonal ingredients and local Virginia produce.



### Privately Catered Dinner in Your Home

Make your bid for Occasions Caterers' offer for a chef to create and prepare a custom, three course seated dinner with hors d'oeuvres for 10 guests in your home at an agreeable time for both parties within a year.

As a small, exclusive catering firm, Occasions orchestrates elegant parties for leading arts and cultural institutions as well as Washington's most prominent hosts. They have catered gala dinners for JRA members for a number of years—in hotels, artists' studios, banquet halls and, this year, in the Renwick Gallery. Occasions Caterers is donating the evening dinner at a value of \$1,200.

### Two-day Beach Trip—Just for the Ladies!

We are including as a silent auction item a fun two-day trip to Annapolis and Rehoboth in the middle of August for 10 lucky participants to see the beach collections of Bruce and Leslie Lane, Marc and Diane Grainer, William and Nancy Schneider and Deena and Jerry Kaplan.

We will stay at Chez Kaplan (Deena Kaplan) in Rehoboth, hang out at the beach and feast on seafood until someone sprouts fins. We are pre-registering this, so call me for more information. Mallory Lawson, *SCW Events and Adventures Chair*, 202-337-2805 or [MalloryLawsonASID@msn.com](mailto:MalloryLawsonASID@msn.com)



Photos by David French

SPRING CRAFT WEEKEND...

# LIVE

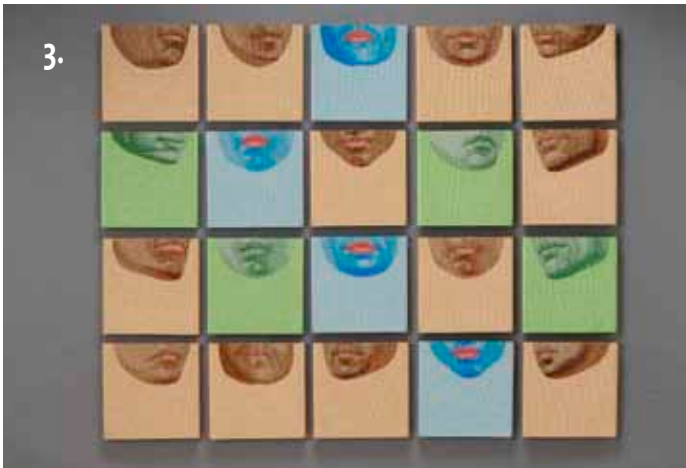


1.

## AUCTION



2.



3.



4.

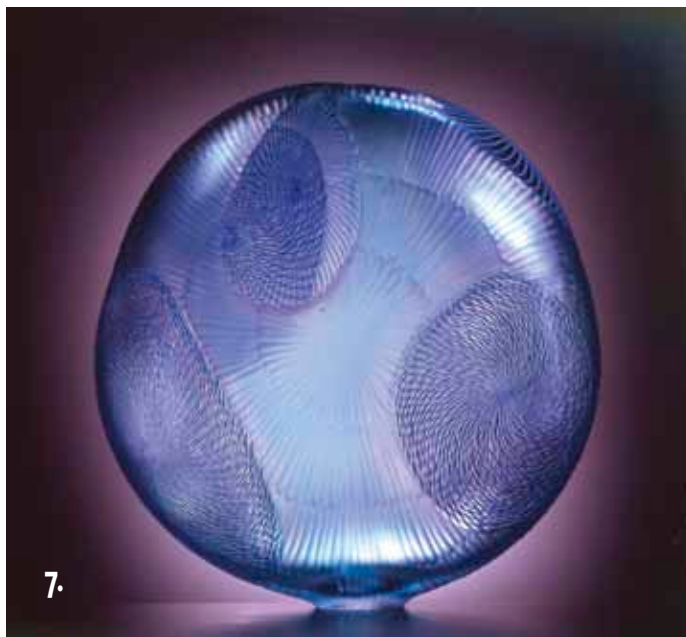


5.



6.

1. Jun Kaneko, *untitled Dango*, ceramic
2. John Cederquist, *George's Beat Down from his Treachery of an Economy* series, mixed woods
3. Jon Eris Riis, *Dialogue*, fiber
4. Beth Lipman, *untitled 2011*, glass
5. Jenna Goldberg, *Asterisk Cabinet*, furniture
6. Ed Bing Lee, *Mocha Swirl*, fiber
7. Lino Tagliapietra, *Medusa*, glass
8. Linda MacNeil, *Egyptian Reed*, floral necklace
9. Norman and Suzanne Cohn Dinner (see pages 6-7 for details)
10. Tom Eckert, *Gossamer Levitation*, carved wood
11. Garry Knox Bennett, *Washboard Chair #1*, furniture



7.



8.



9.



10.



11.

# SPRING CRAFT WEEKEND... SILENT AUCTION



1.



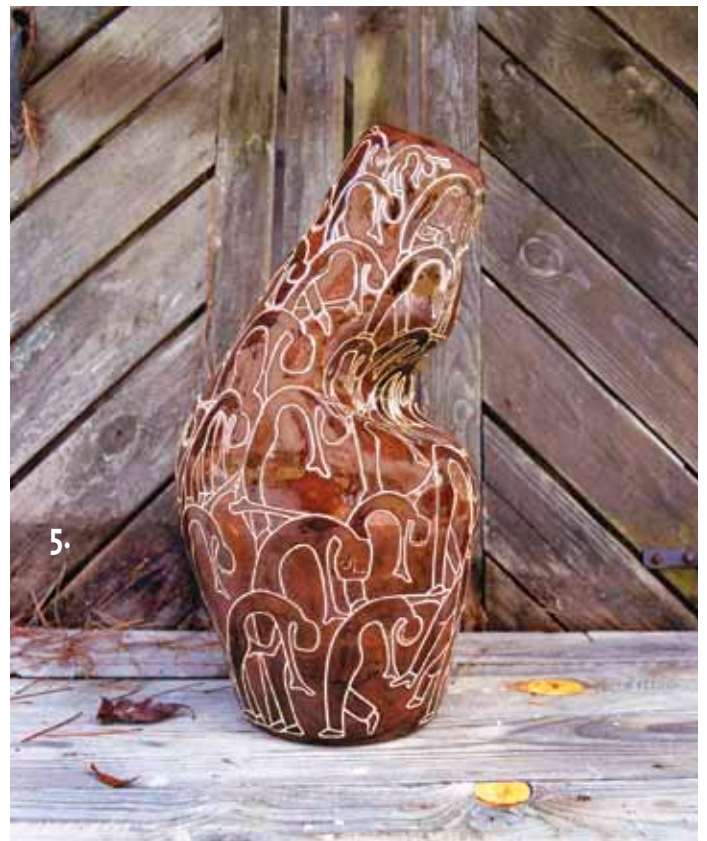
2.



3.



4.



5.

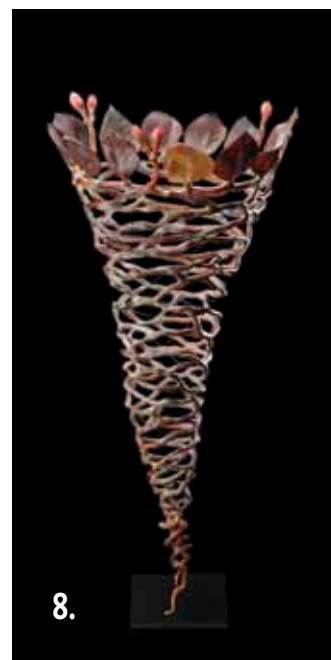


6.

1. Andrea Janosik, *Cone brooch*, jewelry
2. Bongsang Cho, *Night Blossom* brooch
3. Elizabeth Ryland Mears, *Teacup Conversation*, glass
4. Irina Zaytceva, *After the Tempest*, porcelain teapot
5. Rosa & Winston Eugene, *Bending Over Backwards*, ceramic
6. Linda MacNeil, *Essential Flower*, brooch
7. Lindsay Ketterer Gates, newspaper teapot
8. Kathleen Elliott, *Cyclone with Buds*, glass
9. Jeong Ju Lee, *Flower Shoulder Pin*, brooch
10. Steven Montgomery, *V-99 Teapot*, ceramic
11. Gerraldo Bennucci, *necklace # 14*, signed, numbered, dated
12. Lanny Bergner, *Stainless Steel Teapot for a Stained World*, woven metal
13. Shana Kroiz, bracelet, *Sensuous Form*, bracelet
14. Bongsang Cho, *Firing Flower #2*, brooch



7.



8.



11.



12.



9.



13.



10.



14.

# First Distinguished Artist Series with Wood Turner Mark Sfirri: a Great Success

By Barbara Wolanin

Most people couldn't resist smiling when they saw **Mark Sfirri's** "Rejects from the Bat Factory" in *A Revolution in Wood: The Bresler Collection*. Similarly, the multi-axis wood turner and furniture maker easily engaged his audiences with his experienced and relaxed presentation style and contagious sense of humor during the critique/discussion



format workshop and his more formal Sunday illustrated talk at the Renwick Gallery on January 22 and 23.

As a student, Sfirri was inspired with the creative possibilities of wood turning by Wooden Works, the inaugural exhibition at the Renwick Gallery in 1972. After receiving his BFA and MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design, he has been coordinator and professor in the fine woodworking programs at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA, since 1981. The impact of his teaching at the college and in hundreds of workshops and dozens of articles led to his being selected as one of the JRA 2010 Distinguished Educators. His work is in 17 major museums as well as in most major private wood art collections and

has been included in 270 exhibitions and in over 200 publications, including more than 30 books.

Sfirri skillfully led the Saturday critique/discussion attended by 28 collectors and turners who brought wood objects which drew informative feedback from others in the room as well as from Sfirri himself. Each person seemed pleased to have gained valuable feedback and insight about the design qualities of his or her piece. The critique got a uniformly favorable response. One person noted "Excellent experience...good peer constructive criticism."

The final treat was the chance to see the full Bresler collection and to hear Fleur Bresler speak so knowledgably about each piece and each artist she pointed out. Most in the group had not had the opportunity before, and it was an almost mind-blowing experience for them to see so many amazing works of art made from wood at one time.

The Sunday lecture to an audience of 135 gave Sfirri the opportunity to show the full range of his creativity, from skilled drawings, to furniture, to the many forms that his turnings have taken. He expressed his disinterest in turning round and symmetrical vessels. His multi-axis technique has allowed him to create twisted baseball bats, strange spoons, jointed and twisted table legs, and standing figural sculptures. He talked about liking to start with the form of something functional, like a rolling pin, as his "blank canvas," to see how he can change it into a graphic pun of something such as "Homeland Security."



**ABOVE,** Critique leader Mark Sfirri examines a chair for its turned wood element during the Design Critique. **LEFT,** Visiting wood art collector Fleur Bresler was part of the program. She is with Mark Sfirri and Earl Powell of Winchester, MA. Photos by Miriam Rosenthal

Creating his often humorous but complicated forms on as many as 14 axes takes serious mathematical planning and skill. He enjoys collaborating with other artists who work in different media and styles, including furniture maker and JRA 2011 Master of the Medium of Wood, Gary Knox Bennett, and seeing the new ideas and combinations

of forms and materials which result. Mark Sfirri's goal is to stay creative and to keep making things out of wood that keep him and everyone who sees them thinking as well as smiling.

The Distinguished Artist Series has been supported this year by a matching grant from the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, an agency supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

# Distinguished Artist Series Programs are Near Capacity

The extraordinary work of the following three artists who will be leading discussions, workshops, demonstrations and conversations will be featured in the *History in the Making: the Renwick Invitational 2011* from March 25–July 31 2011 at the Smithsonian American Art Museums' Renwick Gallery. So far, registration for each of these Saturday programs is near capacity, so those who are interested should get applications in as soon as possible. A waitlist has been set up for those who register once the space is filled.

The first of the three is the silversmith **Ubaldo Vitali** of Maplewood, NJ, on April 16 and 17. Blacksmith Chris Shea is the organizer.

In conjunction with the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery and the James Renwick Alliance, Ubaldo will come to Washington in April for a pair of very special events. On Saturday, April 16, he will bring his vast experience, knowledge and passion to an intimate salon discussion among fellow metalsmiths, conservators, silver collectors and enthusiasts. In Ubaldo's words, it will be, "A colloquium among friends and group therapy session," exploring the unique roles that handmade objects play in the lives of those who create them and who choose to live with them. In addition, Ubaldo will present a lecture on Sunday, April 17 at 1:30 p.m. in the Grand Salon at the Renwick Gallery.

During Spring Craft Weekend, Ubaldo will be speaking at the Embassy of Italy on Wednesday, March 23, at 6 p.m. along with Lino Tagliapietra in a program entitled *A Conversation with Contemporary Italian Masters: Glass Master Lino Tagliapietra and Master Silversmith Ubaldo Vitali*. The evening event is offered under the auspices of the President of the

Republic of Italy Giorgio Napolitano, in honor of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Italy as a republic—Italy@150. JRA members will be in attendance (see sidebar, page 4)

The second Invitational artist to present is **Judith Schaechter** of Philadelphia on May 21 and 22. Ceramist Novie Trump is the organizer.

On Saturday May 21, 2011 Judith Schaechter will teach a creativity workshop designed to help artists explore ways to break through "artists block" and expand their creative practice. Participants will engage in group discussions as well as individual exercises. Location is the Washington Glass School, Mt. Rainier, MD. On Sunday, May 22, Judith Schaechter will present a lecture in the Grand Salon at the Renwick Gallery at 2 p.m.

The last of the Invitational artists to present, ceramist **Cliff Lee**, will be paired with his jeweler wife Holly on June 18 and 19. David Montague is the organizer.

Cliff Lee, nationally known for his works in porcelain, along with his wife **Holly Lee**, jeweler, will talk about their lives as artists and as husband and wife and as a family. Because Cliff and Holly are so well known in the Washington, D.C., area and their works are in so many collections here,



Doug Lee

ABOVE, Holly and Cliff Lee at home in Stevens, PA.

people will enjoy the opportunity to interact with this extraordinary couple and to learn more about their life together working in the field of craft at a conversation with the two artists on Saturday, June 18, at a facility near Flux Studios, Mt. Rainier, MD.

A lunch will follow the conversation as board members and their spouses/partners of the James Renwick Alliance convene

for the final meeting of the calendar year. For that reason, rather than proposing a standard workshop, a program built around the theme *Our Life Together in Craft: A Conversation with Cliff and Holly Lee* will have particular appeal. Cliff and Holly will make an introduction, followed by a lengthy Q&A session in the Grand Salon at the Renwick Gallery on Sunday, June 19, at 2 p.m.

Funded in part by the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities, an agency supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information on any of these programs please e-mail [admin@jra.org](mailto:admin@jra.org)

## RENWICK GALLERY WINS FEDERAL FUNDS

From the *Washington Post* by Jacqueline Trescott

The Renwick Gallery is among 61 recipients of federal funds to repair and restore their landmark buildings. The annual "Save America's Treasures" grants were announced on February 1 at a ceremony at the historic President Lincoln's Cottage in Washington, D.C. A coalition of organizations, led by the National Park Service, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and the private National Trust for Historic Preservation presented \$14.3 million to the groups.



The Renwick Gallery—the imposing building opposite the White House—won \$335,000 for overall repairs. Completed in 1874, the museum of American crafts has not been restored since it opened in 1972 as part of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

## CRAFT LEADERS CAUCUS MEMBERS

as of February 18, 2011

Peter and Nedra Agnew\*\*  
 Carolyn S. Alper  
 John and Sharon Amdall  
 Marilyn and John Barrett  
 Char Beales  
 Arnold and Barbara Berlin  
 Jeffrey Bernstein and Judith Chernoff  
 Joan Borinstein  
 Fleur Bresler  
 Samuel and Gail Broder  
 Simeon Bruner  
 Robert and Sharon Buchanan  
 Kevin and Kathleen Buchi  
 Leonard and Fran Burka  
 Russell and Marian Burke  
 Sorrell Caplan  
 Ryna Cohen  
 Camille and Alex Cook  
 Jeffery P. Cunard  
 Bev Denbo  
 Carol Green\*\*  
 Gretchen Keyworth  
 Miriam and Leon Ellsworth  
 Brenda Erickson  
 Burt and Anne Fishman  
 Oscar P. Fitzgerald  
 Genevieve A. Gee  
 Marilyn and Louis Glickfield  
 Marsha Gold and Jerry Ostrove\*\*  
 Marc and Diane Grainer  
 J.G. Harrington and Jere Gibber  
 Tina Fried Heller and Pati Young  
 Lloyd Herman  
 Giselle and Benjamin Huberman  
 Reba and Mark Immergut

Shirley Jacobs  
 Jerome and Deena Kaplan  
 Sharon Karmazin and David Greene  
 William and Sue Kolodner  
 Sherley and Bernard Koteen  
 Myra and Stephen Kurzbard  
 Barbara Laughlin  
 Mallory Lawson and Judith Weisman  
 Anne Mehringer and Terry Beaty  
 Laurel and Robert Mendelsohn  
 John Meyerhoff and Lenel Srochi-Meyerhoff  
 Judith Davis and Michael Micheliger  
 Robert Minkoff and Shelley Kushner  
 Ingrid B. Meyer and Clara Lent  
 Sandy and Norman Mitchell  
 Clemmer and David Montague  
 Gwen and Jerome Paulson  
 Julia Perlman  
 Rebecca Ravenal  
 Chris Rifkin  
 Michel and Karen Rotenberg  
 Aletta Schaap  
 Nancy and William Schneider  
 Bonnie and Gilbert Schwartz  
 Ruth and Hugh Sickel  
 Diane and Igal Silber  
 Irene and Robert Sinclair  
 Jeffrey Spahn\*  
 Jacqueline D. Urow  
 Kathryn Van Wuk  
 Barbara Waldman and Dennis Winger

\*new caucus

\*\*upgrade

## NEW MEMBERS as of February 18, 2011

### DONOR

Barbara Disckind, Silver Spring, MD  
 Elizabeth Doyle, Bethesda, MD  
 Sandy Rossi, Washington, DC  
 Barbara Shali, Silver Spring, MD  
 Charlene Spollen, Washington, DC

### GUILD

Tracie Griffith, Reston, VA  
 Anne Lindenfeld, Washington, DC  
 Anita LoMonico, Silver Spring, MD  
 Stephen Marcus, Bethesda, MD  
 Michael Angelo Menconi, Plainfield, IL

Norma Morrison, Santa Cruz, CA  
 Earl Powell, Winchester, MA  
 Richard Webster, Rockville, MD  
 Deborah Winn, Silver Spring, MD

### SPONSOR

Kim Saul, Glendale, MA  
 Paul Wolfand, Bethesda, MD

### SUSTAINER

Jay Barrett, Las Vegas, NV

### INDIVIDUAL CAUCUS

Jeffrey Spahn, San Francisco, CA

## GALLERY CAUCUS MEMBERS as of February 18, 2011

### ARTISTS CIRCLE FINE ART

Jack Devine  
 13501 Travilah Road  
 North Potomac, MD 20878  
 301 947-7400  
[www.artcfa.com](http://www.artcfa.com)

### DEL MANO GALLERY

Jan Peters and Ray Leier  
 11918 San Vincente Boulevard  
 Los Angeles, CA 90049  
 1-800-del-Mano  
[www.delmano.com](http://www.delmano.com)

### LACOSTE GALLERY

Lucy Lacoste  
 25 Main Street  
 Concord, MA 01742  
 978 369-0278  
[www.lacostegallery.com](http://www.lacostegallery.com)

### JEFFREY SPAHN GALLERY

Jeffrey Spahn  
 225 Hartford Street, #2  
 San Francisco, CA 94114  
 415 519-2857  
[www.jeffreyspahn.com](http://www.jeffreyspahn.com)

### SNYDERMAN-WORKS GALLERY

Rick and Ruth Snyderman  
 303 Cherry Street  
 Philadelphia, PA 19106-1803  
 215 238-9576  
[www.snyderman-works.com](http://www.snyderman-works.com)



April Surgent, *Drifter in the Dark*, glass, will be in the Spring Craft Weekend silent auction. Since she was making the piece especially for JRA—only finished on Thursday, February 17—the photo was taken this week and did not arrive in time for the silent auction page. See pages 4–5 and 10–11 for more silent auction items. Photo courtesy of April Surgent

## GREAT COLLECTIONS IN CHARLOTTE, N.C.

The rumor that the James Renwick Alliance hit a record high for the number of private homes visited in three days on the recent trip to Charlotte, NC, is true.

Counting the reception and dinner at the home of JRA caucus member Barbara Laughlin, the number is eight. Each venue had varied collections, some centered around North Carolina or Penland School of Craft themes, others on ceramics or glass and some on all art media. The tour began on Thursday afternoon, February 3 and ended Sunday afternoon, February 6.

Thus the study tour to Charlotte, N.C., was highly successful, if one counts the number of world class collections in private homes visited, the exciting day spent at Seagrove Center for pottery, the visit to the stupendous Mint Museum of Craft+Design, the welcome from the Founders' Circle members, and the special emphasis placed on great food and friendship, in spite of the two days of heavy rain.

What everyone enjoyed was the friendliness and openness of the hosts and the rare opportunity to gather in small groups to discuss a number of topics, mostly related to craft at Barbara Laughlin's. Other places visited on Friday were the homes of Larry Brady, who concentrates on objects of artists associated with Penland School of Craft, and Lorne and Gary Lassiter and Thom and Susie Ruth Young who have eclectic collections.

Three visits were planned for Sunday, and Ted and Suzie Gross who joined the group on the trip to Seagrove offered a visit to their home. Shelton and Carol Gorelick designed their house for their eclectic collection of ceramics, glass and fiber. Bill Gorelick's office showed off the collection of glass, and the home of Sonia and Isaac Luski was filled with glass of artists they have collected over the years. The Luskis collect in depth the work of artists they love, and it was not unusual to find rows of work of the makers they love.

Mint Museum of Craft+Design director Annie Carlano steered the group to the introduction to the Marc and Diane Grainer collection of British Ceramics, and Marc finished the tour with a walk through of the exhibition. Annie walked the group through the newly installed permanent collection, arranged by medium and highlighting the museum's TenTen, a program to commission works by 10 contemporary artists. MMC+D moved in the fall from its original location to a new area which houses three museums and a theater, increasing its space fourfold.



The trip to Seagrove on Saturday, North Carolina's pottery center, was the only day not devoted to visiting private collectors, but to buying opportunities as the group traveled around the area to studios of potters: potters recently settling into the area,



**ABOVE**, Dinner and conversation were on the agenda at the home of Barbara Laughlin (center). Those who traveled to Charlotte were (l to r) Clara and Ben Hollander, Dick Fryklund, Brenda Erickson, Aletta Schaap, Marc Grainer, Barbara, Jeffrey Spahn, Amy Clelan, Diane Grainer, Pati Young, Marsha Gold, Johanna Thompson, Sharron Parker, David Montague (organizer), J.G. Harrington and Jere Gibber. **LEFT**, Larry Brady shows off his collection, comprised of paintings, sculpture, glass, photographs, all based on the theme of Penland School of Craft. **BELOW**, The study tour to Charlotte attracted JRA members from Raleigh, NC, Sharron Parker, and Litz, PA, Amy Clelan, who are in the home of the Mint Founders' Circle executive director and member, Lorne and Gary Lassiter. Photos by Clemmer Montague

others were potting families dating back to the 18th century with English backgrounds, and those who have continued the traditions of the Moravian families for several generations. Of course, the highlight was the visit to the studio and gallery of Ben Owen who was throwing candlesticks when the group arrived.

Lorne Lassiter, executive director of the Founders' Circle, was instrumental in setting up the itinerary, and the James Renwick Alliance responded by giving out lots of gift memberships.

## 28 CAUCUS MEMBERS TO VENICE IN OCTOBER

The Craft Leaders Caucus Study Tour to Venice is well on its way, filled to capacity, and trip participants are making their hotel and airline reservations. Anne Mehringer and Terry Beaty are the tour leaders, and **Leslie Genninger**, an American glass artist with her own studio in Venice and her husband, architect **Michaele Benzoni**, are the tour organizers. Leslie and Michaele have organized and led a number of tours of Venice. They are looking forward to sharing their city with members of the Craft Leaders Caucus. Leslie will arrange access to private collections and special meals for the group.

The tour program begins on Sunday, October 16, and ends on Saturday, October 22. Sunday, October 23, is a departure and travel day. Participants should arrive as early as Saturday, October 15, to begin the tour early on Sunday.

The seven day trip will include two days on Murano exploring the glass studios, two days at the Biennale, and one day in the Veneto exploring Andrea Palladio's lasting contributions to architecture in general and to Washington, DC in particular. The remainder of the trip will be spent exploring Venice. A more detailed itinerary will be available once the planning has been complete.

One must be a current Caucus level member to qualify for the tour, and several members have upgraded to be eligible. For information, please contact the JRA office at 301-907-3888 or email at [admin@jra.org](mailto:admin@jra.org).

**RIGHT**, Leslie Genninger who makes these fabulous necklaces and her husband architect Michaele Benzoni are arranging the itinerary for the Craft Leaders Caucus study tour to Venice.



# Save the Dates!

(JRA events in red)

## March

23 General membership reception at the Embassy of Italy.

24 *History in the Making: Renwick Craft Invitational 2011* opening reception. JRA members invited.

25 *Renwick Craft Invitational 2011* opens to the public, March 25–July 31.

25–27 James Renwick Alliance Spring Craft Weekend.

25 Caucus Day.

26 Panel Discussion “Everything Old is New Again” with Nicholas Bell and the Renwick Craft Invitational artists, Smithsonian American Art Museum’s McEvoy Auditorium, 10:30 a.m.–12 noon.

26 Saturday evening in the Renwick Gallery Grand Salon, Benefit Gala, Live and Silent Auctions, One-of-a-Kind Award Presentation to Sherley and Bernard Koteen, Dessert Tribute to Lloyd Herman.

27 Masters of the Medium Awards Brunch, Hay-Adams Hotel, Jun Kaneko, ceramics; Jon Eric Riis, fiber/tapestry; Lino Tagliapietra, glass; Linda MacNeil, metal/jewelry; Garry Knox Bennett, wood/furniture.

## April

12 JRA board meeting.

14–17 SOFA New York.

14–17 Smithsonian Craft Show.

16 Distinguished Artist Lecture Series. *Master Class in Silversmithing: Ubaldo Vitali*, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Potluck, Lawrence Miller & Co., 121 S. Royal Street, Alexandria.

17 Distinguished Artist Lecture Series. Ubaldo Vitali, Renwick Gallery Grand Salon, 1:30 p.m.

30 Dinner at Cohn’s Home, Philadelphia.

## May

1 Study Tour to Philadelphia ends.

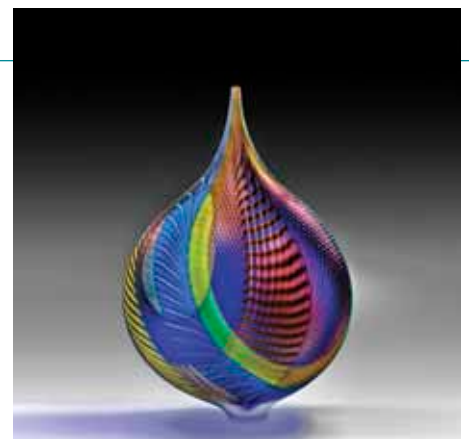
10 JRA board meeting.

21 Distinguished Artist Lecture Series. *Stained Glass Demonstration: Judith Schaechter*, Washington Glass School.

22 Distinguished Artist Lecture Series. Judith Schaechter, Renwick Gallery Grand Salon, 2 p.m.

## June

10–12 Glass Weekend: Wheaton Village, Millville, NJ. Nicholas R. Bell will be on the Curators’ Panel.



Lino Tagliapietra’s, *Mandara*, 2005, glass, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase made possible by the American Art Forum, became part of the Renwick Gallery’s permanent collection last fall. Honored as a James Renwick Alliance Master of the Medium of Glass at Spring Craft Weekend, Lino will have a piece in the live auction.

18 JRA board final meeting, 2011.

18 Distinguished Artist Lecture Series. *Conversation: Working Together in Two Media: Ceramist Cliff Lee and Jeweler Holly Lee*, Novie Trump, Flux Studios.

19 Distinguished Artist Lecture Series. Cliff and Holly Lee, Renwick Gallery Grand Salon, 2 p.m.

## July

Craft Leaders Caucus summer social to Baltimore, TBA.

## September

13 JRA board meeting.

30 *Something of Splendor: Decorative Arts from the White House* opening reception. JRA members invited.

## October

1 *Something of Splendor: Decorative Arts from the White House* opens to the public.

JRA Annual membership meeting, TBA.

16–23 Craft Leaders Caucus Study Tour to Venice, Italy.

## November

3 Opening Night Preview, SOFA Chicago 2011.

4–6 SOFA Chicago.

5 JRA Brunch, 9:30–11 a.m.

12 JRA Day.



Gwen Paulson, chair of the Craft Leaders Caucus Evening of Learning program on Sunday afternoon, February 13, introduces hosts Jeff Bernstein and Judy Chernoff, left on the bench. Jeff and Judy have concentrated on wood art for a few years. Judy discussed their collecting history, philosophy and current practices including display, while Jeff educated the group on styles, techniques, types of wood and pieces in their collection. Photo by Clemmer Montague