



THE QUARTERLY fall 09

THE JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE

The Renwick Gallery's new curator
Nicholas Bell

CELEBRATING THE CREATIVE VISION OF ARTISTS WORKING IN GLASS, WOOD, METAL, FIBER AND CLAY

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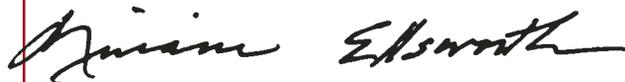
April 23, 24, 25, 2010

From the president...

Next April, the James Renwick Alliance will honor three craft educators as Distinguished Educators. The wealth of material received by the Distinguished Educators nomination committee spoke strongly about the influence and impact a gifted teacher can have.

In addition to being innovative, motivating teachers, each of the three honorees—Randy Johnston, Mark Sfirri, and Yoshiko Wada—is recognized as a scholar and respected as an artist. An interesting, but not entirely apparent fact is that each of the honorees represents one of the major routes through which artists learn their craft. Johnston is with a university program, Sfirri with a community college, and Wada engages students through workshops.

The diverse ways in which we encounter great teachers and learn is well expressed by these three. It will be a treat to hear them talk at the Spring Craft Weekend Saturday morning symposium, appropriately titled *How Craft Makes its Way into the World* and on Sunday morning at the brunch. These are the dates to be saved: April 23–25, 2010 (see Spring Craft Weekend, page 4).



Miriam Ellsworth

**ON THE COVER**

Nicholas Bell was named curator of contemporary craft and decorative arts at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in June 2009. Cover photo by Miriam Rosenthal.

JRA BOARD MEETING DATES, 7:30PM

January 11	J.G. Harrington, host
February 8	Arnold and Barbara Berlin, host
March 8	Jack and Marilyn Barrett, host
May 24	
June 14	



Miriam Rosenthal

Nicholas Bell and his wife Allison attended the Patrons Evening during Spring Craft Weekend in April.

NICHOLAS BELL IS THE RENWICK CURATOR

Nicholas Bell was named curator of contemporary craft and decorative arts at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in June 2009. Bell had been a curatorial associate at the museum's Renwick Gallery since June 2008. His research interests include American craft, decorative arts in America from the 18th through the 21st centuries, folk and outsider art, and theories of material culture.

Bell is the coordinating curator for the exhibition *Staged Stories: Renwick Craft Invitational 2009*. He also worked on the recent exhibitions *Lino Tagliapietra in Retrospect: A Modern Renaissance in Glass* (2008) and *The Art and Craft of Greene & Greene* (2009). Bell is curator for the upcoming exhibitions *A Revolution in Wood: The Bresler Collection* (2010) and *Renwick Craft Invitational 2011*.

Bell earned a bachelor's degree from Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia (2005), and a master's degree from the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture at the University of Delaware (2008). He has written for *Winterthur Portfolio* and *American Furniture*.

His wife is Allison E. Bell, assistant Director of Marketing, Office of Undergraduate Admissions, University of Maryland College Park.

ABOUT THE RENWICK GALLERY OF THE SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM



The Smithsonian American Art Museum celebrates the vision and creativity of Americans with approximately 41,500 works of art in all media spanning more than three centuries. The museum's branch for craft and decorative arts, the Renwick Gallery, located on Pennsylvania Avenue

at 17th Street N.W. Washington, D.C., is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except Dec. 25. Admission is free.

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

Constant Contact Makes Emails Easier for JRA Staff

Constant Contact is a subscription service which allows JRA to create and send emails, fundraising appeals, membership renewals and event updates.

This service which began this fall permits a "branding" style of e-mail, recognizable by the template format. Such events as artists programs and exhibitions, JRA events, Facebook postings, programs and promotions from constituents of favorite programs may be created and sent out to members as needed. The e-mail products look professional and are designed to pull the reader into the body of the document. The JRA template offers complete flexibility. With a click, one can add logos, teasers, articles, links, promotions and more. The email template has suggestions on creating powerful, effective content,—making email marketing easy.

An online survey allows JRA to take the pulse of member satisfaction or get feedback on programs and events.

Event marketing allows one to set up, promote, manage and track successful meetings, conferences, and fundraisers, for all participants.

Quarterly Available Online and Printed

Beginning with this issue, the *Quarterly* is being distributed two ways: on the James Renwick Alliance web site www.jra.org and a hard copy printed version. The decision to resume a printed version is in response to numerous requests for a printed copy and for those who choose not to use a computer.

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A GOAL IS SET FOR

Spring Craft Weekend



Photos by Miriam Rosenthal

Spring Craft Weekend is the major fund-raising event for the James Renwick Alliance. Each year the amount earned from weekend patron support, ticket sales, and the results of the silent and live auctions is used to fund the JRA donation to the Smithsonian American Art Museum and operate the JRA. The JRA donation to American Art funds exhibitions and programs at the Renwick Gallery, acquires objects for its permanent collection, and supports scholarship on craft through the James Renwick Fellows program. For Spring Craft Weekend, April 23–25, a goal has been set of raising \$125,000.

“The goal can easily be met with the participation of all JRA members, and all are encouraged to attend as many events as possible,” said JRA President Miriam Ellsworth. “There will be something for everyone at a reasonable price one can afford.” Invitations will be mailed to members in early March with details on Weekend events.

The Second Annual CraftWeekDC will occur in April as well; it runs April 19–25. Organized by the JRA in partnership with the Smithsonian Women’s Committee and artists and art organizations in the Washington metropolitan region, the week will include gallery openings, exhibitions, open studios and demonstrations by artists, and the Smithsonian Craft Show. The annual Saturday morning symposium, sponsored by the American Art Museum and the Renwick Alliance will feature special guests Mark Sfirri, Randy Johnston and Yoshiko Wada, who will receive the JRA’s Distinguished Educator award. The panel topic is *How Craft Makes its Way into the World*. Stay tuned over the coming months for news on events and participating artists. Some events are open to the public and offer fun, excitement and interest for those new to studio crafts as well as experienced collectors.

Weekend Highlights include:

Smithsonian Craft Show: Wednesday, April 21 Preview Opening. Show: April 22–25 *4 days
(See www.smithsoniancraftshow.org for hours.)

Friday, April 23

CRAFT LEADERS CAUCUS DAY

Open only to Craft Leaders Caucus members and Weekend Patrons.

Plans are for a celebration of Irish Craft in preparation for the Caucus study tour to Ireland, May 5–13. The day will consist of visits to local collections and a lunch. Caucus Day committee members David and Clemmer Montague, and Barbara Berlin, Caucus chair, said to look for a fabulous day.

Friday evening, April 23

WEEKEND PATRONS EVENING

Open only to Weekend Patrons.

A festive dinner with a circus theme will celebrate the future of craft. The evening will include a silent auction and a dessert reception with local artists (*the dessert reception only is open to all JRA members and public ticket holders.*) Tim Tate and Novie Trump are working on this evening’s events.

Saturday morning, April 24

DISTINGUISHED EDUCATORS SYMPOSIUM

Open to the public. Free.

Robert Devers is organizing the symposium, featuring the James Renwick Alliance 2010 Distinguished Educators: Randy Johnston (ceramics), Mark Sfirri (turned wood), and Yoshiko Wada (fiber). The panel discussion on *How Craft Makes its Way into the World* explores the role of educational models in bringing craft to the marketplace without losing the inspiration and integrity of the hand-made.

Saturday evening, April 24

GALA CELEBRATION

Open to all JRA members and public ticket holders.

Bonnie Schwartz always creates a magical evening, and the gala is no exception. The evening will begin with cocktails and a live auction and end with dinner at a select group of private homes with wonderful collections throughout the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

Sunday morning, April 25

DISTINGUISHED EDUCATORS BRUNCH AND ONE-OF-A-KIND AWARD

Open to all JRA members.

The Sunday Morning Brunch will honor the James Renwick Alliance 2010 Distinguished Educators with presentations on their work and the presenting of the award. Marilyn Barrett, Paul Parkman and Judy Davis are organizing the event.

Details of events are still being finalized. Check the website www.jra.org for the latest information. The Winter *Quarterly* will have a full account of the weekend events.



Distinguished Craft Educators Turn Wood, Pot or Make Textiles

Artists in ceramics, wood and fiber works were selected for the Distinguished Craft Educator award to be presented at Spring Craft Weekend April 23–25. A brunch on Sunday honors the awardees. Each is distinguished in their fields, and each teaches either in a formal classroom or in workshops, lectures and publications.



Mark K. Sfirri

Mark K. Sfirri, a well-known turned wood artist, is a professor at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA, and coordinator of the Fine Woodworking Program. He received his BFA and MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. Mr. Sfirri is highly regarded for his innovative teaching methods and through his long-term teaching career, has reached many students at many stages of their lives. A cross-section of collectors, current and past students, and peers wrote passionately about Mr. Sfirri's ability to motivate, help, counsel, inspire, and encourage his students. Recognized as a talented maker, Mr. Sfirri has mastered the art of "off-center" turning and has shared his design approach and his methods with many around the U.S. and around the world. His approach has played an important role in public recognition of the evolution of studio wood turning into a contemporary art form. Mr. Sfirri's work is in many private and public collections, including the Renwick Gallery.

Randy J. Johnston

Randy J. Johnston, who was endorsed by former students as well as being a master in the field, is a well known ceramist and has taught ceramics for over 37 years. He is recognized internationally as an artist who has pursued functional expression and brought a fresh aesthetic vision to contemporary form and for his many contributions to the development of wood kiln technology in the United

States. Mr. Johnston has been at the University of Wisconsin for 16 years and in the time he has been there "he has changed the ceramics area from a tight academic program into one that gives students a broad education and encourages innovation and experimentation." He studied Shimaoka Tatsuzo in Japan and with Warren MacKenzie, who wrote, "When students get through (his) program, they are fully equipped to be a practicing potter and establish their own studio." Mr. Johnston has work in numerous international public and private collections.



Yoshiko I. Wada

Yoshiko I. Wada—artist, curator, textile historian—is one of the most important teachers in the American fiber art field, although not on the faculty of an academic institution. She has been an independent scholar and teacher for almost four decades. Ms. Wada is single-handedly responsible for introducing the art of Japanese shibori to the U.S. Many well-known fiber artists have studied with her, such as Ana Lisa Hedstrom and Lia Cook. Ms. Wada was especially influential in the art-to-wear movement. Her early workshops, lectures, and important books (*Shibori: the Inventive Art of Japanese Shaped Resist Dyeing* and *Memory on Cloth: Shibori Now*) brought this age-old technique (tie-dye) from the psychedelic 60s into the contemporary craft art vocabulary. Noted textile designer Jack Lenor Larsen credits Wada with teaching him much of what he knows about Japanese textiles, a subject she has taught to three generations of American fiber art students who have incorporated Japanese textiles techniques into their art making. She established the World Shibori Network which sponsors workshops and conferences world-wide, connecting historical



technique and contemporary art practice. And most recently she established the Slow Fiber Studio which promotes sustainable textile practices and a "thoughtful approach to 'the making of things'", according to the studio web site. Her many awards include two Japan Foundation Fellowships, a Renwick Fellowship at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the gratitude of hundreds of fiber artists who have studied with her.

KAREN LAMONTE ADDRESSES RECLINING DRESS IMPRESSION WITH DRAPERY

Karen LaMonte will address her glass sculpture *Reclining Dress Impression with Drapery* which was purchased for the Renwick Gallery with funds donated by James Renwick Alliance and John and Colleen Kotelly. The lecture will take place on Friday, Feb. 26, at 5:30 p.m. at the McEvoy Auditorium, Smithsonian American Art Museum. The decision for the Renwick Alliance to provide funds to the Renwick Gallery to acquire *Reclining Dress Impression with Drapery*, the major glass sculpture, was made by the acquisitions committee in September.

A 1999 Fulbright scholarship allowed LaMonte to create large scale glass cast pieces with Zdenek Lhotsk at the renowned Studio Pelechov, north of Prague. During the past decade, Karen LaMonte (b. 1967) has used this experience to develop a remarkable series of life-size cast glass dresses to transform her work. She pursued her interest in works so technically complex that they can only be crafted at Lhotsk's studio, one of the world's largest and most advanced centers for glass casting.

Reclining Dress Impression with Drapery has roots in the feminist art of the 1960s and 1970s with its critique of fashion, though the focus on gender in this work is almost playful. The frilly straps and a firm hip exaggerate the femininity of a woman conspicuously ab-



Clemmer Montague

ABOVE: Karen LaMonte was captured in the Renwick Gallery Palm Court with *Reclining Dress Impression with Drapery*, cast glass sculpture, a gift of the James Renwick Alliance and Colleen and John Kotelly. The sculpture will be on view until January.

sent. It is easy to imagine that LaMonte has created a response to the industrial forms crafted by this country's other great cast glass artist, Howard Ben Tré.

Reclining Dress Impression with Drapery, with its bold drapery and delicate treatment of the female figure, shows the technical virtuosity and sensitivity to material expected in contemporary craft, augmented by LaMonte's natural ease with history. No other work demonstrates with such clarity LaMonte's grasp of classical style and composition.

Reclining Dress Impression with Drapery is on display until January in the first-floor galleries at the Renwick Gallery.

SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM ANNOUNCES FOUR ARTISTS SELECTED FOR ITS RENWICK CRAFT INVITATIONAL 2011

A panel of three distinguished experts in American crafts and decorative arts has selected ceramic artist **Cliff Lee**, furniture maker **Matthias Pliessnig**, glass artist **Judith Schaechter** and silversmith **Ubaldo Vitali** for the Renwick Craft Invitational 2011. Each artist is a master of his or her selected medium and creates artworks that combine historical techniques with contemporary forms.

The artists were chosen by Nicholas Bell, curator at the museum's Renwick Gallery; Ulysses Dietz, senior curator of decorative arts at the Newark Museum in New Jersey; and Andrew Wagner, editor-in-chief of *ReadyMade* magazine.

"The four extraordinary artists who will be featured in the 2011 Renwick Craft Invitational create works of superior craftsmanship that address the classic craft notion of function without sacrificing a contemporary aesthetic," said Bell.

Lee (b. 1951), a neurosurgeon by training who works in Stevens, Pa., creates elegant porcelain vessels with the exactitude of a doctor,



Cliff Lee gourd

often using his knowledge of chemistry to recreate medieval Chinese glazes long thought lost to history.

Pliessnig (b. 1978), a furniture maker in Philadelphia, uses boat-building techniques in new ways to create graceful forms with curved wood strips that may have up to 5,000 points of contact without the aid of hardware.

Schaechter (b. 1961), a glass artist based in Philadelphia, brings a wealth of knowledge about traditional stained-glass practice to her moody windows.

Vitali (b. 1944), a fourth-generation silversmith and master conservator of historic silver in Maplewood, N.J., uses classical techniques he learned in Rome to create luminous works for popes, kings and presidents.

Bell is the curator for the exhibition. A catalog will accompany the exhibition with contributions by Bell, Dietz and Wagner. The Renwick Craft Invitational 2011 will be the spring exhibition at the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

The Renwick Craft Invitational 2011 is made possible through The Ryna and Melvin Cohen Family Foundation Endowment.

The biennial exhibition series at the Renwick Gallery was established in 2000 to honor the creativity and talent of craft artists working today. The first in the series, *Five Women in Craft*, featured Myra Mimplitsch Gray, Mary Jackson, Janel Jacobson, Sondra Sherman and Consuelo Jiménez Underwood.

Subsequent exhibitions were *Four Discoveries in Craft* in 2002, which showcased the work of James Koehler, Gyöngy Laky, Kristina Logan and Kim Rawdin; *From the Ground Up* in 2007, which featured the work of Paula Bartron, Jocelyn Châteauevert, Beth Lipman and Beth Cavener Stichter; and *Staged Stories* in 2009, which includes Christyl Boger, Mark Newport, Mary Van Cline and SunKoo Yuh.



Matthias Pliessnig furniture

Save the Dates!

(JRA events in red)

January 2010

11 JRA Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., J.G. Harrington (office)

17 Collectors Journey for Caucus members, Norman and Sandy Mitchell

23 Workshop: Glass artists Marc Petrovic and Kari Russell-Pool

23 Potluck TBA

24 Distinguished Artists Lecture, Renwick Gallery Grand Salon, 3p.m.

February

6 Recital: Winter Glow, Renwick Gallery, 3p.m.

8 JRA Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Arnold and Barbara Berlin

25–28 American Craft Council Baltimore Craft Show *** New 4 day show

26 Karen LaMonte Lecture, Smithsonian American Art Museum McEvoy Auditorium, Lower Level, 5:30pm

27 ARTrageous, Smithsonian American Art Museum Kogod Courtyard, 8–11:30 p.m.

March

5–Jan. 30 *The Art of Gaman: Arts and Crafts from the Japanese American Internment Camps, 1942–1946* opening at the Renwick.

8 JRA Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Jack and Marilyn Barrett

April

21–25 Craft Week DC

21 Preview for Smithsonian Craft Show

22–25 Smithsonian Craft Show

23–25 James Renwick Alliance Spring Craft Weekend

23 morning—Caucus Day

23 evening—Patrons Evening

24 morning—Symposium

24 evening—Gala/auctions

25 morning—Distinguished Educator Award Brunch

May

5–13 Craft Leaders Caucus Study Tour to Ireland

13–16 JRA Study Tour to British Collect Craft Show

24 JRA Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m

June

14 JRA Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m

FOUNDERS CIRCLE HONORS GRAINERS

The Mint Museum of Craft+Design, Charlotte, N.C., Founders' Circle was honored to present Diane and Marc Grainer the 2009 McColl Award at the Ninth Annual, Mint Condition Gala, *Clear Vision*, in October. The Grainers are founding members of the Mint Museum of Craft+Design and of its national support affiliate, the Founders' Circle

Diane and Marc have been consistently engaged with the thoughtful growth and collecting philosophy of MMC+D since 1998. Marc served on the Board of the Founders' Circle for its first six years, and both Diane and Marc actively continue to support MMC+D, attend its events and donate to and guide its collections. They have been instrumental in involving the Founders' Circle and MMC+D with other crafts groups through their leadership in such organizations as the James Renwick Alliance, the American Craft Council, the Furniture Society, the Textile Museum and the Museum of Arts and Design.

They have been collectors of fine craft for more than 25 years. Their collecting interests include all craft media with special emphasis on contemporary British material. They will be generously lending a portion of their extensive British ceramics collection to MMC+D as the opening exhibition, *Contemporary British Studio Ceramics*, in the new center city facility in 2010.

Diane is a past president of the James Renwick Alliance and both continue to be involved in its activities. Marc is a past president of the board of trustees of American Craft Council.

RENWICK GALLERY HAPPENINGS

Distinguished Artists Lecture Sunday, January 24, 3 p.m.

Husband-and-wife team Marc Petrovic and Kari Russell-Pool work both as independent and collaborative glass artists. Sharing a studio near their home in Connecticut, Petrovic specializes in hot glass sculpture and mixed media, while Russell-Pool is a flame worker. Join them as they discuss the challenges of working in glass, their artistic partnership, and their life together.

Grand Salon—Renwick Gallery



Glass artists Marc Petrovic and Kari Russell-Pool

Program made possible by the James Renwick Alliance. They will conduct a workshop on Saturday, January 23, followed by a potluck dinner at a JRA member's home.

Recital: Winter Glow Saturday, February 6, 3 p.m.

Romance is in the air when Duo Amaral, a dynamic pair of classical guitarists, perform Baroque repertoire chosen for you and your Valentine. Mia Pomerantz-Amaral and Jorge Amaral will highlight the intimate sound of the guitar with music including George Frideric Handel's *Chaconne*, Jaquin Rodrigo's *Tonadilla*, and sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti.

Grand Salon—Renwick Gallery

Artist Talk: Karen LaMonte Friday, February 26, 5:30 p.m.

Internationally recognized glass artist Karen LaMonte, whose work *Reclining Dress Impression with Drapery* was recently acquired by the museum, has developed a unique process in creating her hauntingly sensual glass garments. Join her as she discusses her work, her experiments with material and process, and artistic influences.

McEvoy Auditorium, Lower Level

Scavenger Hunt, Anyone?

Stop by the first-floor information desk at the Renwick Gallery and pick up a scavenger hunt guide. Kids and adults can explore the Renwick Gallery in a new and interesting way.

First-floor Lobby—Renwick Gallery

What are the JRA Fellows Doing Now?

Compiled by Elmerina and Paul Parkman

This is the first in a series of three articles about past James Renwick Alliance Fellows. Twenty-eight Fellows have been in residence at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Renwick Gallery through 2009, since the Fellowship was initiated in 1988, and they were asked for a brief update about their work and research since their Fellowship ended. Twelve Fellows responded and their articles will continue in the next two issues of the *Quarterly*.

Yoshiko I. Wada, whose research topic, “The Development of Shibori/Tie-Dye/Shaped Resist Dyeing in the United States Since the 1960s,” was a Fellow in 1991–92. During Spring Craft Weekend in 2010, she will be honored and will receive the Distinguished Educators Award (see related article in the *Quarterly* on page 5).

Vicki Halper

senior fellow, *Voices in Studio Crafts*
September to December, 2005

“The anthology *Choosing Craft: The Artist’s Viewpoint*, which I edited with Diane Douglas, was recently published by the University of North Carolina Press. A James Renwick Senior Fellowship enabled me to spend three months researching texts at the Archives of American Art in Washington D.C. The scope of materials represented in the book was greatly expanded by my access to artists’ per-



Vicki Halper

sonal files that are held by the Archives. As a result, the published volume includes letters, grant proposals, photographs, and lecture notes, for example, in addition to oral histories and previously published materials. I will be presenting *Choosing Craft* at the College Art Association conference in February.

Contrasts: A Glass Primer, an exhibition targeting first-time museum goers that I curated for the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, closed in October. I hope the lively catalog lives on. I am currently working outside the crafts field, co-editing a volume of the selected letters of the painter Morris Graves (1910–2001), with publication planned by the University of Washington Press.”

Marie Frank

postdoctoral, *Denman Ross and American Formalist Aesthetics in the early 20th Century*
September to December, 2006

“I received a fellowship in the fall of 2006. I used it to conduct research on my book project, *Denman Ross and American Design Theory*. My experience at the Smithsonian was fabulous—the staff were so helpful and the resources so rich. I used some of the material for articles—one published in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (June 2008) and one in *American Art* (Fall 2008). I am currently revising the book and manuscript and it will be published by University of New England Press in 2010. Without the fellowship program I could never have accomplished all of this. Thank you!”



Oscar Fitzgerald

Oscar Fitzgerald

postdoctoral, *In Their Own Words: the History of Studio Furniture Makers: 1925 to the Present*
April to September, 2004

“My Fellowship project was to identify the 100 or so best known studio furniture makers and interview them to compile a statistical analysis of their background and training, shop practices, cultural influences and aesthetic approaches. The study was presented at the annual conference of the Furniture Society in 2005 and published in their journal that year. During the time I was working at the Renwick, the museum mounted an exhibit of their permanent studio furniture collection.

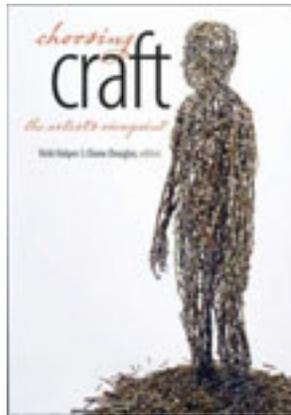
I proposed to write the catalogue for all 84 pieces of studio furniture in their collection, resulting in the comprehensive catalogue that was published in 2008. Fox Chapel, the publisher, was so pleased with the project that they asked me to write another book called *New Masters of the Wooden Box* that will accompany an exhibit of 30 boxes (think Faberge eggs in wood) which opened in September at the Messler Gallery of the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship, Rockport, Maine. During this time I continue to teach all the furniture history classes in the Smithsonian/Corcoran Masters Program in the History of the Decorative Arts.”

PUBLICATIONS BY FORMER JAMES RENWICK FELLOWS IN AMERICAN CRAFT

The Smithsonian American Art Museum's Fellowship Program Coordinator Amelia Goerlitz announced two publications by former Renwick fellows. *Choosing Craft: The Artist's Viewpoint* (University of North Carolina Press, 2009) is a collection of artists' writings co-edited by Vicki Halper who conducted much of her research during a 2005 Renwick fellowship.

Elissa Auther, 2002 Renwick Fellow and now assistant professor of contemporary art at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, will publish her book *String, Felt, Thread: The Hierarchy of Art and Craft in American Art* with the University of Minnesota Press this winter. Auther examines American fiber art and the impact of its elevation on the conceptual boundaries distinguishing "art" from "craft" in the post war era. The James Renwick Alliance funds the Renwick fellows.

Goerlitz's letter to then JRA President Anne Mehringer reads, "We could not be more proud of our Renwick fellows, whose scholarship is expanding the traditional boundaries of American art. We thank you for your continued support and will continue to keep the JRA apprised of the fellows' activities."



Book cover for Vicki Halper's book

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM ATTRACTS SCHOLARS

The Smithsonian American Art Museum invites applications for research fellowships in art and visual culture of the United States. Fellowships are residential and support full-time independent and dissertation research; a variety of research fellowships are offered. Fellowships are available for pre- and postdoctoral candidates and for senior fellows. January 15 is the application deadline for fellowships to begin on or after June 1, 2010. Complete information is available at americanart.si.edu/research/opportunity/fellows/.

Each scholar is provided a carrel in the Fellowship Office across the street from the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM). Available research resources there include an 180,000-volume library that specializes in American art, history, and biography; the Archives of American Art; and a variety of image collections and research databases.

During their stay at SAAM, scholars will be part of one of the nation's oldest and most distinguished fellowship programs in American Art and will have the opportunity to attend a wide variety of lectures, symposiums, and professional workshops. Short research trips are also possible.

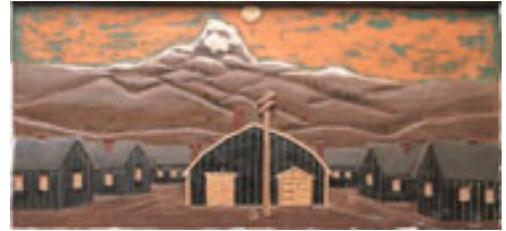
LEFT: Fellow Oscar Fitzgerald's book *Studio Furniture* resulted from his fellowship research.



THE ART OF GAMAN: ARTS AND CRAFTS FROM THE JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERNMENT CAMPS, 1942–1946

MARCH 5, 2010 – JANUARY 30, 2011

The Art of Gaman will showcase arts and crafts made by Japanese Americans in U.S. internment camps during World War



II. While incarcerated, the internees tried to gaman, a Japanese word that means to bear the seemingly unbearable with dignity and patience. Housed in tar-paper covered barracks furnished with nothing more than metal cots, the internees used scraps and found materials to create furniture, toys and games, musical instruments, pendants and pins, purses, and ornamental displays. These objects became essential both for simple creature comforts and emotional survival. This exhibition presents an opportunity to educate a new generation of Americans about the internment experience and will provide a historical context through archival photographs and artifacts. The exhibition, organized by San Francisco-based author and guest curator Delphine Hirasuna, with the cooperation of the Japanese American Citizens League, will feature more than 100 objects, many of which are on loan from former internees or their families. The exhibition is based on Hirasuna's 2005 book *The Art of Gaman*.

ABOVE: Artist Unidentified (Interned at Heart Mountain, Wyoming), *Camp Scene*, wood, paint, Collection of the Japanese American Museum of San Jose. Reprinted with permission from *The Art of Gaman: Arts and Crafts from the Japanese American Internment Camps 1942–1946* © 2005 by Delphine Hirasuna (Ten Speed). Photo by Terry Heffernan.

A REVOLUTION IN WOOD: THE BRESLER COLLECTION

SEPTEMBER 24, 2010 – JANUARY 30, 2011

A Revolution in Wood celebrates the extraordinary recent gift of turned wood objects from collectors Fleur and Charles Bresler. The Bresler collection has a noticeably distinct aesthetic that emphasizes sculptural qualities and decorative motifs integrated into the whole form. The craftsmanship is exquisite and finely detailed. Wood turning has gained recognition as an art form since World War II.

The exhibition will highlight contemporary wood turning's growing sophistication, and will feature sixty-six objects from the 1980s and 1990s, including a number of artworks that will be on public display for the first time. Nicholas Bell, curator at the Renwick Gallery, is organizing the exhibition that includes a catalog of the show with an appendix of all turned wood in the Renwick collection.

ABOVE: Frank E. Cummings III, *On the Edge Naturally*, 1990, lathe turned, carved, and inlaid Mexican kingwood burl, 18k gold, and Mother-of-pearl, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Fleur and Charles Bresler



Caucus Members

Benefactor and Craft Leaders Caucus

Ronald and Anne Abramson	Reba and Dr. Mark Immergut
John and Sharon Amdall	Shirley Jacobs
Lisa and Dr. Dudley Anderson	Sharon Karmazin and David Greene
Stanley and Evelyn Asrael	Bill and Sue Kolodner
Marilyn and Dr. John Barrett	Sherley and Bernard Koteen
Char Beales	Myra and Dr. Stephen Kurzbard
Carolyn L.D. Benesh	Bruce and Leslie Lane
Arnold and Barbara Berlin	Barbara Laughlin
Dr. Jeffrey Bernstein and Dr. Judith Chernoff	Mallory Lawson
Joan Borinstein	Chae Young Ma
Charles and Fleur Bresler	Anne Mehringer and Terry Beaty
Marge Brown and Phil Kalodner	Laurel and Dr. Robert Mendelsohn
Simeon Bruner	Dr. John Meyerhoff and Lenel Srochi-Meyerhoff
Robert and Sharon Buchanan	Judith Davis and Michael Mickaliger
Kevin and Kathleen Buchi	Robert Minkoff and Shelley Kushner
Leonard and Fran Burka	Sandy and Dr. Norman Mitchell
Russell and Marian Burke	Clemmer and David Montague
Sorrell Caplan	Gwen and Dr. Jerome Paulson
Melvin and Ryna Cohen	Julia Perlman
Camille and Alex Cook	Chris Rifkin
Jeffrey P. Cunard	Michael and Karen Rotenberg
Bev Denbo	Aletta Schaap
Miriam and Leon Ellsworth	Nancy and Dr. William Schneider
Brenda Erickson	Bonnie and Gilbert Schwartz
Carl and Jan Fisher	Irene and Robert Sinclair
Anne and Burt Fishman	Ann L. Smith
Genevieve A. Gee	Jacqueline D. Urow
Marilyn and Louis Glickfield	Elyse Vinitzky
Marc and Diane Grainer	Barbara Waldman and Dennis Winger
Brenda and Sanford Guritzky	Ronald and Anita Wornick
J.G. Harrington and Jere Gibber	
Tina Heller and Pati Young	
Lloyd Herman	
Gisela and Benjamin Huberman	
Judy and Robert Huret	

New Members

June 10, 2009 through October 8, 2009

GUILD

Adrienne Alaimo
New York, New York

Sean Hennessey
Washington, DC

Nancy Low
Bethesda, MD

Betsy Mead
Bethesda, MD

Thom Norris and Eric Markow
Falls Church, VA

Nancy Weisser
Kensington, MD

DUAL DONOR

Sally B. Kaplan
Washington, DC

GIFT

Charlie Barmonde
New Bedford, MA

Kate Blacklock
Providence, RI

Carole Bolsey
Kingston, MA

Jonathan Bonner
Providence, RI

Nicole Chesney
Pawtucket, RI

Jayne and Robert Dane
Nantucket, MA

Randall Darwall
Harwich, MA

Eck Follen
Fall River, MA

Chris Gustin
South Dartmouth, MA

James Hall
Providence, RI

Rania Hassan
Washington, DC

David and Susan Hostetler
Nantucket, MA

Michael Kane
Nantucket, MA

Jim Lawton
New Bedford, MA

Seunghea Lee
Central Falls, RI

Robbie and Judy Mann
Providence, RI

Alphonse Mattia
Westport, MA

Brian Murphy
Harwich, MA

Allison Newsome
Warren, RI

Seth Rainville
New Bedford, MA

David and Ellen Ross
Nantucket, MA

Nancy Train Smith
South Dartmouth, MA

Rosanne Somerson
Fall River, MA

Jay Stanger
South Easton, MA

Charles Swanson
Fall River, MA

Michael Vienneau
Nantucket, MA

Jim Watkins
Pawtucket, RI

Stephen Whittlesey
West Barnstable, MA

Toots Zynsky
Pawtucket, RI

CAUCUS COLLECTOR'S JOURNEY SET FOR JAN. 17

The third Craft Leaders Caucus Collector's Journey program will be held at the beautiful Potomac home of Norman and Sandy Mitchell on Sunday, Jan. 17. This is an opportunity for the owners to tell their story of how and why their collection evolved and for participants to have an opportunity to ask in depth questions about whatever they want to know regarding the collection.

Norman is a past president of the Alliance and presently serves as chair of the Planning and Nominating committee. Sandy has been a board member in the past and is remembered as an enthusiastic and creative director of craft study tours for both the Caucus and the general membership. They have been hosts for many JRA events at their home. When visiting a member's home, it's rare to come away with more than a cursory understanding of the collection, and the Collector's Journey programs have proven to be a wonderful venue.

—MALLORY LAWSON

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

New member, psychoanalyst and artist Mila Kagan and her husband were featured in a nice full page article in the summer 2009 issue of *Spaces* which focused on art. Fiber artist Rania Hassan was featured in the *Washington Post* article in September that featured the Crafty Bastards show in Adams Morgan. James Renwick Alliance members find themselves in the news often. To highlight what has been printed since the last issue of the *Quarterly*, please send an e-mail (or call) Clemmer Montague at c.l.montague@verizon.net or Johanna Thompson at jwth36@verizon.net.

OBITS

The James Renwick Alliance has lost three good friends in the past few weeks: artist Ruth Duckworth; Bess Littleton, mother of Gallery owner Maurine Littleton; and Wendell Cox, husband of JRA former board member and artist Solveig Cox.

COLLECTORS' FOCUS

Jere Gibber & J.G. Harrington

Blue glass (and some other stuff)

The focus of Jere and J.G.'s collection is contemporary art glass, often (but not always) blue. They find color, texture, and form particularly attractive, and the work tends to be abstract or vaguely landscape oriented. Although they are pretty quick decision makers, they often view a piece a several times before purchasing it, even if it means circling back to a dealer's booth four or five times in a couple of hours. Sometimes they've liked an artist's work for years before finally purchasing a piece. In addition to the main collection, there are plenty of mini-collections: white mid-20th-century ceramics, raku, ironstone china, hooked rugs, fountain pens and political buttons. It never really ends with collectors!

The JRA Connection

Jere and J.G. have been involved in the JRA for more than 20 years—Jere was a member before they met and J.G. joined her at JRA events soon after. They've both been on the board, with Jere serving as Treasurer starting in the late 1990s and J.G. following in her footsteps in 2007. Jere has stayed involved and has served as co-chair for Caucus Day and on the committee for JRA Day.

Background

With a mother who's an avid collector (fans; artwork, especially prints; contemporary studio pottery), Jere was encouraged to collect glass paperweights from an early age, and her mother built up Jere's collection by giving her paperweights as presents. Several hundred paperweights later, it continues to be an ongoing fascination! As an art history major, her favorite areas are decorative arts, especially glass and ceramics, and architecture. Her favorite museums include the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum, and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs.

J.G. is a lawyer with no particular background in art or collecting. But he's a quick learner, and Jere says he would have made a great art history major. They gravitated towards studio art glass once they began frequenting SOFA Chicago and New York, glass galleries, and Glass Weekend at Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center and Wheaton's Museum of American Glass. Meeting the artists who make the work and listening to them talk about their motivation makes each piece more special. Occasionally they've hosted artists' talks at their home.

Travels

Their travels often come about through meetings and trips organized by collectors' groups: the James Renwick Alliance, the National American Glass Club, and the Paperweight Collectors Association. Jere began attending JRA lectures and trips in mid-1980, after

she'd moved to the Washington area. They both find that the JRA is full of knowledgeable, enthusiastic members who are interested in connecting with the arts and who share a passion for learning about craft and collecting. They've taken several JRA trips, notably to Hawaii and Denmark, and find the ability to visit a community in depth from the craft perspective, see things one wouldn't otherwise have access to and become friends with other enthusiasts is wonderful. The food tends to be amazing, too.

Home

Their home is located in Hollin Hills, a modernist neighborhood of about 450 houses located just south of Alexandria. With much of the house consisting of windows, wall space is limited, but light is plentiful and living in the equivalent of a tree house in a forest is a daily visual pleasure. When they renovated their home recently, one major goal was to house and light their collection, much of which had been stacking up in packing boxes. They say it helps to have very firm ideas in mind of what one wants the end result of a renovation to be. They learned quickly that designing a building project is definitely a team effort, but it was particularly important to find a good architect, contractor, built-ins manufacturer, and lighting designer. They feel the project was a great success and are thrilled with the results! As a final thought, Jere says that, "Collecting has added tremendously to our lives—through friendships made, travels, education, and the objects themselves, which we are fortunate to be able to live with on a daily basis."



The addition to the house made a room for the Thurman Statom breakfast table and a display of Jere's mid-20th century ceramics. Photo by J.G. Harrington.

Gallery Caucus Members

June 10, 2009 through October 8, 2009

ARTISTS CIRCLE FINE ART

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13501 Travilah Rd
North Potomac, MD 20878-3846
301 947-7400
www.artcfa.com

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www.bullseyegallery.com

DEL MANO GALLERY

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Los Angeles, CA 90049
1-800-del-Mano
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FERRIN GALLERY

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St. Louis MO 63103
314 862-2333
www.rduanereedgallery.com

SCOTT JACOBSON GALLERY

Scott Jacobson
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New York, NY 10022
212 872-1616
www.LKModern.com

MICHAEL MONROE RETIRES

The Board of Trustees of Bellevue Arts Museum announced that Michael Monroe, director of Curatorial Affairs, will retire in February 2010. Upon his retirement, Monroe will become director emeritus in honor of his outstanding achievements at the Museum.

He became director in 2004, when the Bellevue Arts Museum decided to return to its roots and become the showcase for contemporary studio craft in the Northwest. The museum has presented almost 50 world-class exhibitions celebrating both international and local artists, as well as over 450 free or low-cost educational programs attracting over 250,000 visitors.

THE INFORMED EYE TOUR TO LOCAL VENUES

The Informed Eye: Exploring Craft and Design in the Washington, D.C., Area was the topic of an effort to look at local venues featuring craft in the area surrounding the Washington Convention Center on Saturday, Nov. 7. The James Renwick Alliance helped to coordinate an afternoon of craft and design with artist and collector-led tours of the Washington Craft Show that explored the criteria used to view glass, ceramics, fiber, metal/jewelry and wood.

Participants met at Caos on F Gallery at noon to view work at the artist-owned and operated gallery which exhibits furniture, ceramics, painting and other media. They received a quick three-point "This-is-what-to-look-for," talk about each medium. Participants then walked to the convention center to visit the Washington Craft Show as part of a medium-specific group. Each group visited the booths of up to three artists who work in that medium and who talked about their work.

The afternoon ended with a private reception at Bell Architects, which houses a collection of studio furniture and ceramics. The James Renwick Alliance would like to thank Matthew Falls and Michael Berman for all their help in organizing this event.



The work of JRA artist member Tamara Laird was on display at the National Botanical Garden this summer. The plantings were mature in late September and highlighted the ceramic figures.

Photos by Clemmer Montague



The work of four artists is on display at the Renwick Gallery: *Staged Stories: Renwick Craft Invitational 2009*, until January 3. They took part in a symposium in September at the American Art Museum's McEvoy Auditorium: Mark Newport, fiber; Christyl Boger, ceramics; Mary Van Cline, glass; and SunKoo Yuh, ceramics.

AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL ANNOUNCES RELOCATION TO MINNEAPOLIS

The American Craft Council, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to championing contemporary American craft, announced plans to relocate from New York City to Minneapolis, Minn., in early November 2010. The Council plans to open its new office in July 2010 and is currently in negotiations for a space.

Several James Renwick Alliance members attended the recent conference *Creating A New Craft Culture* in mid-October in Minneapolis where alternative distribution systems for craft was the topic of discussion.

LET'S TALK ABOUT ART

Artists Circle

A FULL-SERVICE ART ADVISORY FIRM

In completing a living or working space, artwork is often the last item on the checklist, but it has the potential to be one of the most dynamic visual elements in your new space. Don't let those walls intimidate you! Selecting art can be a fun and rewarding process if you enlist the assistance of appropriate resources.

Artists Circle Fine Art is an art advisory firm which has mastered the ability to strike a balance between a client's space and artwork. Founder Sharon Buchanan started the company out of her Potomac, Md., home almost 37 years ago. What was then a way to take care of her children during the day and maintain a flexible working career has transformed into an extremely successful, full-service art firm that now operates in a renovated 1890s timber-frame barn that never fails to make visitors' eyes open wide at what they see inside.

Five years ago, the company traded hands to Sharon's partner, Jack Devine, who facilitated Artists Circle's move into the new office and gallery space. Ask any of Artists Circle's past clients and they will be sure to tell you of Jack's atypical art consultant personality. Jack's primary goal is to find art right for the client, the space, and the budget. He strives to ensure the process is as stress free and as much fun as possible by finding practical solutions. This year, one of Jack's most enjoyable projects was with The Council on Foreign Relations which compiled a diverse collection of edition prints and unique works over the course of several months. "Our projects with Artists Circle were carried out with an immense amount of flexibility, sensitivity to the Council's particular needs, and positive energy, making our interactions with Jack not only extremely productive, but fun," says Kay King, Vice President of CFR's Washington office.

Assessment of a client's space, discussions about budget, and development of parameters in terms of style will get a client 90% of the way to having art selected with the same attention as is put into the design of their space. The last 10% does, however, make all the difference and is the point at which a consultant should flex the art muscles. Resources are the key. A good art advisor is an amalgam of all the options brought to the table and, beyond showing pleasant alternatives, should expose one to work that excites. Artists Circle's



Photo courtesy of Artists Circle Fine Art

ABOVE: Artists Circle Fine Art staff is headed by (left) Jack Devine, Vera Khovanskaya, Christina Galagarza, Sharon Buchanan, Skip Plati, Katie Coursey and Clifford Wheeler.

office and gallery is not only home to the staff, but to thousands of pieces of artwork and a vast library of portfolios. Jack strives to form relationships with artists whose work is unique and interesting. Artists' submission packets are received and reviewed weekly; research is conducted for clients with specific art requests; artists are contacted for updates on new exhibits and bodies of work. The inventory of original paintings, edition prints, photographs and sculptures is kept as fresh as possible.

For those who desire to see the Artists Circle space and resources for themselves, the firm hosts exhibitions frequently. Recent shows include the found and recycled material sculptures by New Mexico artist John Garrett and the electrified plant photographs by Californian Robert Buelteman.

Several events are planned over the duration of each show to accommodate schedules. The 2009 fall show wrapped up recently with a reception and beer tasting, allowing visitors to relax and enjoy the art in an inviting setting.

To receive the "Newsletter" for announcements about future shows, please send an email to news@artcfa.com with the subject line "Newsletter." More information can be seen on the Artists Circle website www.artcfa.com or their Blog, <http://artcfa.wordpress.com>.

Artists Circle would like to thank the James Renwick Alliance for the opportunity to be included in this issue.

The JRA @ SOFA Chicago

The James Renwick Alliance was well represented at SOFA Chicago 2008 at the traditional Saturday morning brunch and in the Resources area. The theme was membership: to encourage new members, to recognize Gallery Caucus members and their artists, and to show appreciation for their support.

The group was served a traditional hot breakfast on the terrace outside the entrance to the SOFA exhibition hall, and was given a short synopsis of what is happening within the James Renwick Alliance, and what is happening and will happen at the Renwick Gallery.

Miriam Ellsworth, president, talked about the importance of membership and how her initiatives fit into the program. Barbara Berlin talked about Caucus events and membership; Robert Minkoff made a pitch for gallery caucus members and subsequently was responsible for signing up several galleries. David Montague emphasized membership benefits by talking about reciprocal membership initiatives with other craft support groups; Des Doyle, Irish Craft Council, gave his spiel on the Caucus Study tour to Ireland.

The highlight was a talk about what's happening at the Renwick Gallery by Chief Robyn Kennedy who introduced Curator Nicholas Bell. Nicholas described an inventory he did on objects in the Renwick collection which were gifts of the James Ren-

wick Alliance; then he introduced Ross Randall, Smithsonian American Art Museum development officer, who introduced his mission of funding the Lloyd Herman endowment for a second curatorial position at the Renwick.

Over 100 members, gallery caucus members, artists, guests and friends attended the brunch on Saturday. Other special guests invited included directors of craft museums, executive directors and/or presidents of craft support groups and representatives of several international craft groups.

William Zimmer of William Zimmer Gallery brought a who's who of American studio furniture makers: all 22 of the artists represented in his gallery came to breakfast, a benefit for a new gallery caucus membership.

David and Clemmer Montague were responsible for organizing the JRA presence at SOFA. Johanna Thompson, board member, handled the Resources Area, signing up more than 40 for a six-month gift membership and making the SOFA audience aware of the JRA presence. Since these were networking opportunities, photos tell the story even better.

LEFT: Sylvia Rosenthal, wood artist from Ashville, N.C., and gallery caucus members Ruth and Rick Snyderman.

RIGHT (top to bottom):

The gang: Michael Janis, Mark Petrovic, Tim Tate, Robyn Kennedy, Chris Gustin and Nicholas Bell.

Toots Zynzky and Johanna Thompson.

Diane and Marc Grainer, Jay Stanger.

Marsha Gold, Barbara and Arnold Berlin, Scott Jacobson and Mel Eagle.

BELOW: Furniture makers from William Zimmer Gallery.



Photos by Clemmer Montague



CAUCUS STUDY TOUR TO Ireland IS REMARKABLE

The Craft Leaders Caucus May 5–13 study tour to Ireland will include time in Dublin, Belfast, Offaly, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Galway and Connemara: a true survey of the craft art of this remarkable country. Since it would be impossible to visit the studios and galleries in all of Ireland, the council has arranged for artists to present their works in groups, mini craft shows plus lectures, in three places: Dublin, Kilkenny and Galway.

Sights will be visits to historic venues in Dublin such as the Book of Kells at Trinity College, the National Gallery and contemporary craft galleries. Special interest is the National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks, a former hospital for soldiers, which is now a craft museum.

The Irish Craft Council and the Northern Ireland Craft Council have worked together for many years; therefore the Belfast portion will highlight the best work in that part of the island.

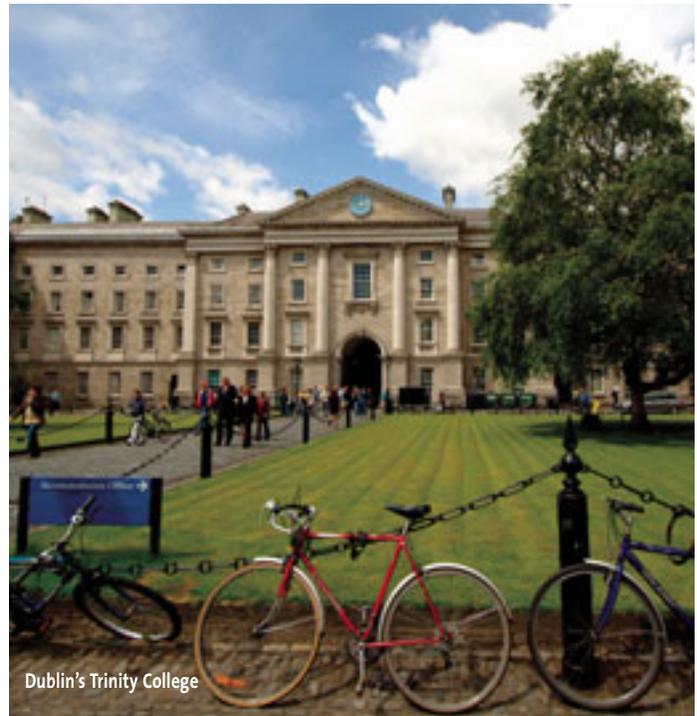
Then onto the “midlands” with a drive to Tullamore, County Offaly, to visit silversmith Kevin O’Dwyer, known as a “wild goose.” A wild goose is someone with Irish heritage who left Ireland for other countries during difficult economic times and who have roots in both countries. Kevin will introduce the group to his own work in silver and also to the celebrated Lough Boora Sculpture Parklands where visitors can wander amongst the bog lands of Ireland and interact with large site-specific sculptures. An expert on the old production of peat, he will introduce the concept of peat manufacture, what happened to the land and what is happening now.

Kilkenny, the headquarters of the Craft Council, is also home of the Council’s museum, headed by Curator Ann Malhooney. Kilkenny is full of craftsmen of the highest quality and again another group of artists from the southernwestern coast to Kilnarney will present their work in a group session.

Travel west to Galway City will be through some of the most spectacular countryside in the world, the “Burren,” a natural landscape of broken rocks, a striking karstic landscape on the south side of Galway Bay. From a landscape perspective, the Burren is remarkable for the



Sara Flynn: porcelain vase



Dublin's Trinity College

quantity, preservation, and variety of archaeological sites and features from all periods that it contains. If we are lucky, we will see the small Conemarra ponies, known for their sure-footedness on this rocky landscape.

Art-wise, we will meet Liam Flynn, County Limerick based wood turner, who will present his latest work and talk about his influences and techniques used to create his beautiful vessels from Irish woods. Del Mano Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, Patina Gallery, Santa Fe, NM, Rakova Brecker Gallery, and Davina Beach, FL represent Liam in the United States. Also meet Galway based jeweller Berina Kelly who will introduce her work in precious metals.

The last day will be spent in Connemara artists’ studios, again traveling through another of the most beautiful landscapes in Ireland to meet three artists who live in this fantastic place. Joe Hogan, basket maker, grows and harvests the willow used in his instantly recognizable baskets on the edges of Lough na Fooye in Co. Galway. A visit to Joe’s home and studio is special. Also time is planned with Laura Mays and Rebecca Yaffe who create beautiful furniture and small objects at their studios, located close to the Atlantic coast.

Liam Flynn, turned wood bowl



Michael McCrory, silver salt and pepper mills



CAUCUS STUDY TOUR TO

Rhode Island, Southern Massachusetts, Nantucket

Story and photos by Robert Sinclair



On an evening in late September, some 20 craft lovers gathered at the Providence home of ceramist Kate Blacklock—the first stop on a whirlwind tour of studios, galleries, and academic institutions in Rhode Island and southern Massachusetts, including Nantucket Island. Kate was instrumental in organizing the first part of the trip, according to trip leader Nancy Schneider, and she accompanied the group on its stops in Rhode Island.

Before serving a delicious welcoming dinner, Kate discussed the examples of her work on view in her studio. Perhaps her signature body of work is her altered “portrait” busts—ceramic heads whose shapes are manipulated and whose surfaces are covered with images, often including one or more represen-

ABOVE: The gang is all here: Front, Brenda Erickson, Mallory Lawson, Sorrell Caplan, Irene Sinclair, Bev Denbo, Tina Heller. Back, Marc Grainer, Sharon Karmazin, Leonard and Frances Burka, Bill Schneider, Jayne Dane, the evening’s caterer, Phil Kalodner, David Greene, Nancy Schneider, Marge Kalodner, Pati Young and Diane Grainer. Photograph by Robert Sinclair.

tations of heads or faces. Recently, however, she has begun a new body of work: constructing complex assemblages of natural and man-made objects and producing images of them with sophisticated electronic scanners. Kate’s ceramic sculptures make reference to the long tradition of three-dimensional portraiture; her scanned images call to mind the genre still-lives of a couple of centuries ago.

On the trip’s first full day, the group made eight—count ‘em, eight—stops. If there was a connecting thread, it was the pervasive influence of the Rhode Island School of Design. With RISD providing the artistic

stimulus and dozens of former textile factories providing the studio space, the artistic community is extraordinary in its size and quality. The group visited the following:

Ceramist Allison Newsome, who builds large figurative pieces, very often with themes derived from life on Narragansett Bay. Allison made it clear that the waters of Rhode Island (whose nickname is the Ocean State) play a major role in both her art and her life.

The home of Judy and Robbie Mann, whose collection focuses on glass and prints. For one member of the group, the collection’s outstanding feature was its integration



ABOVE: Jay Stanger, furniture maker, shows Tina Heller how he makes his work.

into the home's overall décor: you were aware of the world-class art around you, but it was never in your face.

A tour of the RISD Museum of Art, led by Assistant Director James Hall. It immediately became clear that this is a working museum: the art is organized to strike sparks in the students. The Caucus group arrived just as the finishing touches were being put on "Inner City," a huge exhibit of works by clay sculptor Arnie Zimmerman. The exhibit evokes the feel of a big, diverse city and the human activity it contains. Portuguese architect Tiago Montepegado designed the architectural framework for the exhibit, including a raised platform for viewing the work in its entirety.

The studio of Jim Watkins, whose work the group had seen earlier at the Mann's. Jim and his wife produce a colorful line of production glassware; at the studio the emphasis was on his cast glass pieces, made using the lost-wax technique.

The impossible-to-categorize work of Jonathan Bonner. Jonathan makes hypnotic, abstract pen-and-ink drawings; he designs geometric outdoor installations; and he claims to have invented a new form of poetry, which he calls pooms. Each poom consists of a sin-



ABOVE: Randy Darwall who lives on Cape Cod shows his wonderful jackets to Irene Sinclair. Randy exhibits at major craft fairs and members know and own his work.

RIGHT: Ceramic artist Arnold Zimmerman of New York City met with the Caucus members on the eve of the opening of his solo exhibition at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum.



LEFT: Jonathan Bonner's pen-and-ink poom drawings consist of a one-syllable word, as in this poom, "lull."



ABOVE: Nancy and Chris Gustin were hosts at a kiln opening for Caucus members Nancy and Bill Schneider and Mallory Lawson.

gle one-syllable word, and Jonathan dresses them up in various ways. His presentation of the poom "lull" is shown above right.

The studio of Nicole Chesney, who has worked with glass, oil paint, and aluminum to produce large, ethereal works. The pieces in her studio were mostly oil on aluminum. Nicole looks to French philosopher Gaston Bachelard for inspiration. She pays respect to his concepts of dream and reverie in paraphrasing him to say that it is the artist's job "to convey a sense of wonder."

The studio of the iconic glass artist Toots Zynsky. The visit gave the group a higher sense of the unique methods she developed to produce her signature work.

Finally, the studio of fiber artists Chunghie Lee and her daughter, Jiyoung Chung. Also present was jewelry artist Seunghea Lee. Chunghie was out of town, but the two younger artists offered an impressive array of traditional Korean fiber work and exquisite gold jewelry.



ABOVE: ARTrageous 2009.

ABOVE RIGHT: Karen LaMonte, *Reclining Dress Impression with Drapery*, 2009, glass, ©Karen LaMonte. Gift of the James Renwick Alliance and Colleen and John Kotelly. Photo by Martin Polak.



SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM TO HOLD ANNUAL BENEFIT, ARTRAGEOUS!

The Smithsonian American Art Museum's annual benefit, ARTrageous!, will be held Saturday, February 27 from 8–11:30 p.m. in the museum's stunning Kogod Courtyard, and will feature live music and dancing, a catered buffet and a late-night deejay. This year's gala, occurring on the heels of Fashion Week in NYC, will be fashion-centric and will feature the museum's new piece, *Reclining Dress Impression with Drapery* by artist Karen LaMonte. The museum is encouraging attendees to get in the couture spirit by ARTces-sorizing with fabulous hats, handbags, ascots and footwear.

An exclusive pre-reception dinner, held at 7 p.m. and limited to the first 100 people to purchase tickets at the ARTthusiastic level and above, will feature a cocktail-hour conversation between artist LaMonte and curator Nicholas Bell, as well as a seated dinner in the museum's elegant Luce Foundation Center for American Art. Tickets at all levels can be purchased at <http://americanart.si.edu/support/benefit>

28TH ANNUAL SMITHSONIAN CRAFT SHOW

Telling America's Story through the Art of Craft, *April 22–25*

Preview Night Benefit, Wednesday, April 21

Exemplifying innovation, creativity and technical merit, the 2010 Smithsonian Craft Show will feature 120 superb craft artists from across the country. Forty-six of these are first-time exhibitors in the Smithsonian Craft Show. Each of the exhibitors reflects the story of contemporary American craft in one of 12 categories: basketry, ceramics, decorative fiber, furniture, glass, jewelry, leather, metal, mixed media, paper, wearable art and wood.

This year's jurors were Stoney Lamar, wood artist, Diana N'Diaye, Smithsonian Folklife curator and David Brooks, owner, Appalachian Spring. They drew from a pool of over 1,300 applicants.

The 2010 Smithsonian Craft Show will open on Wednesday, April 21 with the wonderful Preview Night Benefit. From 6:30–9:30 p.m. guests will enjoy a cocktail buffet, first choice shopping, and music. Individual tickets are \$190.

The Committee is pleased that JRA President Miriam Ellsworth and Smithsonian Women's Committee President Anne Keiser are working with Cornelia Carey, Executive Director of Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) to recognize CERF's 25th anniversary at the 2010 Smithsonian Craft Show. The show takes place at the National Building Museum, 401 F Street NW, Washington D.C. (Judiciary Square—Red line Metro.) More information will be on the website www.SmithsonianCraftShow.org.



ABOVE: Honorary Chair, Carolyn Benesh, co-editor and co-publisher, *Ornament* magazine, right, presents the award for "Best in Show" to Starr Hagenbring, left, at the Smithsonian Women's Committee Craft2Wear exhibition. Also pictured is Elaine Cole, who with husband Ken, donated the award.

CRAFT2WEAR SHOWS 35 ARTISTS

Halloween weekend brought 35 artists of jewelry and wearable art to the National Building Museum for the Smithsonian Women's Committee's Craft2Wear Show. All the artists had been previously juried into the Smithsonian Craft Show, and Honorary Chair of the Advance Chance party, Carolyn Benesh, Co-editor and Co-publisher, *Ornament* magazine greeted the more than 350 guests at the opening.

Additional highlights were the two lunches featuring Janet Draper, Chief Horticulturalist at the Smithsonian, on Saturday and author Judith Viorst on Sunday. Guests enjoyed lunch, lecture and time for buying at Craft2Wear.

At the show, the bustling crowds relished the artists' hand-crafted work in jewelry, scarves, accessories, hats, bags and women's, men's and children's clothing. It was a lovely exhibition of artistry and style.

Both shows are produced by the Smithsonian Women's Committee, which through its grant process supports education, outreach and research at the Smithsonian Institution.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL

JRA Day

MEMBER EXHIBITION
AND SALE

LEFT: The people that kept JRA Day running: Sarah Frey, Jere Gibber, Mallory Lawson, and J. G. Harrington.
ABOVE: Chris Shea showing off his handsome candle holder.
BELOW: Rania Hassan, winner of a JRA award at Artomatic, with some of her work.

The second annual JRA Day Member Exhibition and Sale was held once again at the Woman's Club of Chevy Chase on the last Saturday of November with a steady attendance of craft lovers and JRA supporters. Forty member artists exhibited, the show was lengthened to six hours, and JRA Bay (for secondary market items ala ebay) was added this year.

Many thanks to the hard working committee who made it all possible: Barbara Berlin, Miriam and Leon Ellsworth, Brenda Erickson, Sarah Frey, Jere Gibber, Marsha Gold, J.G. Harrington, Tina Heller, Margaret Hennessey, Jan Maddox, Irene and Bob Sinclair, Johanna Thompson, Judy Weisman and Pati Young. Many people worked a double shift, many stayed late to pack up, and all were dedicated to the success of the day.

Jere Gibber did a fabulous job composing the artists' contracts and handouts; J.G. Harrington did his amazing web sites, both for JRA Day and JRA Bay; Jan Maddox and Judy Weisman had the difficult job of installing 51 disparate JRA Bay objects on the stage in a two hour miraculous turn around time and made it look terrific; Sarah Frey worked above and beyond the call of duty to make

sure the details, financials and publicity were taken care of; and the JRA Village came thru to make it all run smoothly and make sure everyone had fun in the process.

Twenty-three members donated forty-eight various items to JRA Bay to insure its success including Marilyn Barrett, Fran Burka, Miriam Ellsworth, Brenda Erickson, Marsha Gold, Toni Gordon, Mark Grainer, Shirley Jacobs, Deena Kaplan, Micky Kurtzbard, Sharon Karmazin, Mallory Lawson, Leslie Lane, Julianna Mahley, Laurel Mendleson, Norman Mitchell, Robert Minkoff, Clemmer Montague, Paul Parkman, Bonnie Schwartz, Irene Sinclair, Johanna Thompson and Judy Weisman. There was a nice mixture of craft media, sizes and price points. Some of the Dan Dailey lithographs and Renwick books added some interest to the selection. All but

a handful of items sold, which collectively raised approximately \$3,000 extra for the total profit this year.

The attendance figures were lower this year, probably owing to the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, and the sales figures were not as high, probably due to the challenging economy. We did, however, take in new guild and regular members who enjoyed the new discount on their purchases. It was still profitable for the Alliance and will be held next year on November 13, 2010 at the same location. Mark your calendars, put aside those JRA Bay items, and join in the fun. This is an enjoyable event to gather the artists and members together, raise awareness of the JRA and craft to the public and make some money for the Alliance.

Now...nap time!—MALLORY LAWSON



Photos by Paul Parkman



join the **JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE**

Yes, I want to join the James Renwick Alliance at the level of:

- Donor (\$100 single, \$150 dual)
- Guild (\$60) for artists
- ART (\$80) for contributors under the age of 40
- Sponsor (\$250)
- Sustainer (\$500)
- Craft Leader Caucus (\$1,000 single, \$1,500 dual)
- Gallery Caucus Member (\$1,000)
- Benefactor (\$2,500)
- Grand Salon Patron (\$5,000)
- Renwick Society (\$10,000 and up)

My membership is new a renewal

Name (s) _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

e-mail _____

I have friends who would be interested in learning about the Alliance. Please call me for names and addresses.

I wish to make a contribution to the James Renwick Alliance in the amount of \$ _____.

My check to the **James Renwick Alliance** is enclosed. Please charge my VISA MasterCard Discover

Card number _____

Expiration date _____

Signature _____

If you would like to make your contribution in the form of securities, please call our office for instructions.

Please return this completed form to:

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

QUESTIONS?

Contact the JRA office phone 301 907-3888 fax 301 907-3855 admin@jra.org

CONTRIBUTOR BENEFITS

Donor (\$100 single, \$150 dual)

- Contribute to the JRA mission promoting American craft, and support the Renwick Gallery.
- Invitations to Renwick Gallery openings and exhibition tours.
- Learn about contemporary studio craft through the *JRA Quarterly*, monthly e-newsletter and JRA-sponsored workshops and lectures.
- Join fellow craft advocates on visits to studios, galleries, private collections, special exhibitions and behind-the-scenes tours of museums.
- Receive 20% discount on Renwick Gallery museum shop purchases.

Guild (\$60) for artists

- Same benefits as donor (individual) plus...
- Reduced fee for JRA-sponsored workshops.
- Opportunity to meet and communicate with fellow artists and collectors.

ART (Alliance for Renwick Tomorrow) (\$80) for contributors under the age of 40

- Same benefits as donor (individual) plus...
- Private dinner for two with a JRA collector with focus on developing collecting skills (members under the age of 40).

Sponsor (\$250)

- Same benefits as donor (individual/dual) plus...
- Receive a craft-related book or Renwick Gallery exhibition catalog.

Sustainer (\$500)

- Same benefits as Sponsor plus...
- Opportunity to give one annual gift membership at donor (individual) level (a \$100 value).

Craft Leader Caucus (\$1,000 single, \$1,500 dual)

- Same benefits as Sustainer plus...
- Name/s listed on plaque in Renwick Gallery lobby.
- Invitation to participate in special Craft Leaders Caucus domestic and international trips.
- Vote on acquisitions for Renwick Gallery funded by the JRA.
- Invitation to special Craft Leaders Caucus programs.

Gallery Caucus Member (\$1,000)

- Recognition for support of JRA mission in the *JRA Quarterly* and monthly craft event e-newsletter.
- Receive invitations for two to Renwick Gallery openings and exhibition tours.
- Receive invitations for two to special Craft Leaders Caucus programs.
- Publicity for the gallery on JRA website with link to the gallery website and more.

Benefactor (\$2,500)

- Same benefits as Craft Leader Caucus (dual) plus...
- Private tour for four at craft collector's home.

Grand Salon Patron and Renwick Society

- Levels begin at \$5,000. Please call the JRA Office at (301) 907-3888 for information on membership and benefits.