



# RENWICK QUARTERLY

Dec., 1989, Jan., Feb., 1990

Published by the James Renwick Alliance, an independent, national non-profit organization.

## **"Masterworks of Louis Comfort Tiffany" Draws Record Crowds to Renwick Gallery**

More than one hundred thousand Renwick Gallery visitors have seen the unprecedented collection of glass windows, lamps, vases and other treasures in the exhibition "Masterworks of Louis Comfort Tiffany." As the brilliantly lighted stained and painted Favrile glass windows have expanded viewers' imaginations, the attending crowds seem almost to have contracted gallery spaces.

In fact, viewing space in some of the Renwick's galleries has actually been decreased to accommodate the special needs of Tiffany's wall pieces. Smithsonian exhibition designer Val Lewton reports that partition walls were constructed about two feet in front of existing Renwick walls. Openings were then cut into these temporary walls, each precisely measured to fit a particular Tiffany window. Permanent walls in the background were painted white and were hung with fluorescent lights to resemble daylight seen through the colored glass.

Further efforts to exhibit windows in their best light went into a small gallery behind the Palm Court, where a false ceiling housed an artificial sky light, hovering over the "Wisteria" panels. A small fountain and ceramic tile floor were installed in the manner of Louis Comfort Tiffany's home, bringing the outside within, and contrasting to the darker, more intimate Palm Court setting for other works.



The 65 major examples of Tiffany's unique art combine to make "Masterworks of Louis Comfort Tiffany" the most important assemblage of the artist's work since his spectacular rise to prominence at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Among the objects, most of which have never been on public view or published before, are windows, lamps, glassware, jewelry, bronzes, enamels, ceramics, mosaics, wooden objects and paintings.

Tiffany's eighty-five years encompassed several careers, always leading him toward his unswerving "quest for beauty." He worked successfully in the fields of painting, interior decoration, the entire range of decorative arts, photography, architecture, landscaping and horticulture. Above all, he was a decorative artist of unparalleled ability, vision and accomplishment, whose achievements in glass art will likely remain unsurpassed.

The exhibition was organized by the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution for showing at its Renwick Gallery. Serving as guest consultant has been Alastair Duncan, the author of many books on Louis Comfort Tiffany, art glass and related subjects, and a consultant to Christie's for Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Art.

The exhibition will continue through March 4, 1990.

Several hundred guests enjoyed the opening reception of "Masterworks of Louis Comfort Tiffany," on September 28, 1989.

**"George Ohr: Modern Potter (1857-1918)"  
Will Open February 9, 1990**

*"I am making pots for art's sake, God's sake, the future generations...and...my own satisfaction."*



George Ohr,  
1857-1918.

This kind of Twentieth Century attitude toward creativity did not endear George Ohr to many of his Nineteenth Century colleagues and critiques. Known during his working days as the Mad Potter of Biloxi, the eccentric Ohr is considered by today's authorities one of the most interesting American potters who worked at the turn of the century.

A retrospective of more than 90 of George Ohr's glazed and bisque vessels will be featured at the Renwick Gallery February 9 through June 3, 1990.

A century ago, Ohr's work was barely known outside the region of his native Biloxi, Mississippi. Although it was shown at some of the major national exhibitions such as the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904, and occasionally cited by some commentators of the day, it was completely overshadowed by the achievements of the major American art potteries such as Rookwood of Cincinnati and Grueby of Boston, and even by many of the lesser



*"Teapot,"* by George Ohr, ca. 1890-1900, 6 3/8" x 8 1/2" x 5 7/8".  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Shack.

Northeast and Ohio potteries which flourished at the turn of the century.

In late-Twentieth Century perspective, Ohr is looked upon as a master. His twisted and crumpled forms, his boldness of color, the directness of his manipulating his medium, his distinctive blend of humor and art — all create a language which is far more comprehensive and appreciated today than when the potter worked. In an era of gestural art, Ohr's ceramics have a compelling modernity. It is not surprising that much of the enthusiasm for Ohr's work comes not only from collectors of American crafts, but also from artists and collectors of modern art as well.

This retrospective was organized by the American



Craft Museum, and was funded in part by The National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Dillenberg.

*"Vase with Handles,"*  
by George Ohr, ca.  
1895-1900, 10 1/2" x  
5 1/2" x 4 1/4".  
Collection of Barbara  
and Jack Hartog.

**Baltimore Craft Study Tour  
Planned for Friday, March 2, 1990**

by Lenel Strochi-Meyerhoff

The Renwick Alliance will sponsor a full day's immersion into crafts in Baltimore, on Friday, March 2, 1990, featuring a visit to Wintermarket, the American Craft Council Fair at the Baltimore Convention Center.

Highlights of the tour will include:

- A visit to the ACC Craft Fair, where participants will view the work of hundreds of craft artists in diverse media from throughout the United States.

- A delicious and relaxing high tea at Brighton's, located in the luxurious Harbor Court Hotel.
- A tour of the new National Museum of Ceramic Art. The museum was established to promote an interest in modern ceramics on a national level, and to be a focal point for exhibitions of contemporary artists as well as past masters from a variety of cultures and periods of history.
- A visit to Art and Architectural Design, an architectural firm and showroom for art furniture. The firm is housed, along with the personal residence of owner Steven Glassman, in a former parish house, a loftlike space complete with soaring ceilings and abundant square footage. The space abounds with one-of-a-kind furniture, art and Mr. Glassman's collection of more than 300 pieces of Rookwood, Roseville, Van Breugal, Hull and McCoy pottery, from the late 1800's to early Twentieth Century. Our host, Mr. Glassman, says, "To me, architecture is simply a place for people. Beautiful and rare objects within exciting spaces come to life only because of people existing within them."
- An evening at Maryland Art Place (MAP), a non-profit center established to increase the visibility of Maryland artists, afford exhibition opportunities for work of high quality which might not be seen by the general public, and to stimulate the creativity of Maryland's artistic community. On view will be the exhibit "Expanding Crafts," which will feature artists from the mid-Atlantic region working in clay, glass, metal, fiber and wood. Each section was curated by an artist who works in that medium. Curators include: Henry Barron, wood; John Fix, metal; Lois Hennessey, clay; Jann Rosen-Queralt, fiber; and Mary Schaffer, glass.

While at the Maryland Art Place, tour participants will dine amidst the exhibition objects.

A bus will leave Washington at 9:30 AM. Continental breakfast will be served en route to Baltimore. The bus will leave the MAP at about 9:30 PM, for the return trip to Washington.

All-inclusive cost of the trip (transportation, admission fees and three meals) is \$85 for Alliance members, \$100 for non-members. Space for this trip is limited. To reserve your place, please complete the registration form and return it, with your check, to the address listed below. For further information, contact Shelley Gollust at (301) 229-0928.

To reserve your place on this study tour, complete the form below and return with your check, payable to the James Renwick Alliance.

### Reservation Form

James Renwick Alliance Craft Study Tour  
Baltimore - March 2, 1990

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ places for me on the Baltimore tour. I enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_ to cover the cost (\$85 for Alliance members, \$100 for non-members).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form to: James Renwick Alliance  
Baltimore Craft Study Tour  
6801 Winterberry Lane  
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

### Renwick Gallery Museum Shop Exhibition November 10, 1989 through March 4, 1990 "Glass: Reflections Today"

Brilliant, brittle, fragile, fluid in form — glass has been a rare commodity and highly prized throughout its 4,000 year history. In antiquity, glass was more rare than gold, and as precious as the finest jewels.

Today artists continue to select glass as their medium of expression. This Renwick Gallery Museum Shop exhibition will present a wide variety of functional pieces of glass by artists Craig Zweifel, Tommie Rush, Jesse Gregg, Roger M. Rowland and Steven Maslach. Included are Christmas tree ornaments, perfume bottles, goblets, vases, bowls, and stained glass boxes as well as glass marbles.

### Applications for James Renwick Research Fellowships Due January 15, 1990

Proposals from candidates interested in Research Fellowships within the James Renwick Fellowship Program are due January 15, 1990, for appointments beginning on or after June 1, 1990. Applications are sought from scholars knowledgeable in the history of Twentieth Century American art, craft or design, particularly post-1930 craft developments. Research Fellows work within the Smithsonian museums and other local resource facilities for a period of three to twelve months, at

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stipends ranging from \$12,500 to \$20,000.

For more information on the James Renwick Fellowship Program, which is co-sponsored by the James Renwick Alliance, please contact the Office of Fellowships and Grants, Smithsonian Institution, Suite 7300, L'Enfant Plaza, Washington, DC 20560. Or call (202) 287-3271.

### **"New American Furniture" Coming April 20**

Glancing over their shoulders at historic furniture designs, twenty-five contemporary American furniture makers have designed and executed new works which will be featured in the exhibition "New American Furniture," scheduled for the Renwick Gallery April 20 through September 3, 1990.

Each of the artists was invited to design and build a piece of furniture using, as inspiration, a specific work from the renowned historical furniture collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



*"Cabinet,"* by John Cederquist, 1989, Baltic birch plywood, mahogany veneer, purpleheart veneer, sitka spruce veneer, koa veneer, pigmented epoxy, aniline dye, 78 5/8" high. Photo courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Works for the show were built specifically to showcase modern approaches to furniture design, the Twentieth Century's brand of craftsmanship and, most importantly, the current understanding of, and reverence for, historical fine furniture. The new works are not replicas of historic pieces, but rather, interpretations of the same themes in late Twentieth Century style.

Further details regarding "New American Furniture" will be in the next issue of the Quarterly.

### **Crafts in the Hills of North Carolina**

by Ellen Berlow

"Welcome to the Blue Ridge Mountains. You must either be leaf lookers or glass lookers." That was our greeting to the North Carolina hill country in October — an area noted for its dazzling display of autumn foliage and its historic heritage of fine crafts and creative craftspeople.

From across the country, thirty members and friends of the Renwick Alliance gathered in Asheville for a whirlwind three-day study tour of the unique Penland School of Crafts. We visited, talked with (and bought from) Penland artists and area craftspeople acclaimed for their museum-quality works in ceramics, fiber, metal and glass.

A drive through Asheville's magnificent Biltmore Estate and up winding mountain roads brought us to Penland, one of America's oldest craft schools that offers professionals and students an array of study programs in fibers, clay, glass, metals, print arts, paper, photography and woodworking.

Nestled among 450 acres in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Penland was founded 60 years ago to revive the dying art of hand weaving in one of Appalachia's most economically depressed areas. Over the years, the school's craft program has expanded from a traditional folk arts school to a national arts center at the cutting edge of the American crafts movement. Penland has also served as a creative arts magnet for over 100 craftspeople who live and work in the nearby mountain area.

Highlights of our tour included a demonstration of glassmaking and vitreograph printmaking (intaglio prints made from glass plates) by the internationally-known glass artist Harvey Littleton; visits to the Penland studios of ceramic artists Jane Peiser and Cynthia Bringle; a breathtaking tour of the mountaintop home of fiber artist Louise Todd-Cope to view textiles and clothes from around the world; a studio tour of the exquisite glass works of Yaffa Sikorsky and Jeff Todd; and a video presentation of high-tech metal works and furnishings by artist Marvin Jensen.

A real find was glass artist Sally Rogers, a Penland artist-in-residence whose multi-hued kaleidoscopic glass works were snapped up by appreciative Renwick Alliance members. (I even succumbed to a swirling rose-colored glass sculpture by Rogers).



Harvey Littleton demonstrates glass blowing in his studio for participants in the Craft Study Tour to North Carolina. Photo by Ellen Berlow.

A farewell brunch at Asheville's historic Grove Park Inn ended a spectacular fall crafts weekend. Congratulations to Alliance board members B.J. Adams and Andrea Uravitch for inaugurating the first Renwick Alliance overnight tour. We're ready to pack our bags again.

### Spring Forum and Craft Weekend Scheduled for April 21-22, 1990

by Andrea Uravitch

The James Renwick Alliance will sponsor its annual two-day craft weekend, on April 21-22, 1990, in conjunction with The Washington Craft Show. This exciting program will begin with the opening of the exhibition, "New American Furniture" on Friday, April 20, at the Renwick Gallery.

The Forum, on Saturday morning, will focus on future directions of crafts. Lecturers will include Edward S. Cooke, Jr., curator of "New American Furniture," which originated at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Mr. Cooke will speculate on directions furniture makers may take in the 1990's, and explain the impetus behind these paths. Other speakers will include nationally-known artists and teachers: William Daley, ceramicist; Sharon Church, jeweler; William Carlson, glass sculptor; and Nance O'Banion, surface design artist. The lecturers will discuss their own work as well as that of emerging artists who will be on the leading edge of design and craftsmanship in the upcoming decade.

In addition to the Forum, there will be a chance to visit The Washington Craft Show and meet with craftsmen in a private setting. Saturday will be topped off with a gala dinner at the Renwick Gallery.

Sunday will include tours of two craft collections and a guided tour of the Ed Rossbach retrospective show at the Textile Museum. Rebecca Stevens,

Curator for this important exhibition, will be our guide.

Culinary surprises will be included. This should be an energizing weekend full of verbal and visual stimuli. Mark your calendar now. Registration information will be in the next issue of the Renwick Quarterly.

### Recent Contributors to the James Renwick Alliance

The Alliance welcomes the gifts of the following contributing members, received between July 15 and October 15, 1989:

#### Sponsors:

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Irene & Barry Fisher

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Gail Sermersheim  
Lanse Stover



### News from the Alliance

by Jerome Paulson

The James Renwick Alliance has a group of dedicated and hard-working board members who develop fantastic programs for our contributors and the community at large.

The weekend of October 7-8, was the first overnight craft study tour sponsored by the Alliance. Organized by Andrea Uravitch and B.J. Adams, the trip to the Penland, North Carolina area was a wonderful success. The tour participants learned a great deal, met interesting craftspeople, purchased new objects for their personal collections and...had a good time!

Lilian Burwell was elected to the Renwick board

(continued next page)

this past spring and has assumed the responsibility for arranging lectures sponsored by the Alliance. In her short term, she has organized two excellent programs to complement the Slave Quilts exhibit at the Renwick. The first program is a series of quilting demonstrations by members of the Daughters of Dorcas, a District of Columbia-based quilting group. These women are giving a series of well-attended demonstrations. The Alliance is grateful to the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities which provided a grant to our organization to support these programs.

The second program occurred on November 5. Women from throughout the region, who quilt using traditional methods, were brought together under the direction of Joyce Scott, a contemporary multimedia artist. The ensemble provided a day-long, hands-on workshop on quilting to all interested participants.

The programs of the James Renwick Alliance depend on the efforts of dedicated volunteers like the people I have just mentioned. With additional help from our members, the Alliance could do even more than it does now. I would invite anyone who is interested in working on Alliance activities to call and volunteer. We can promise you an interesting and rewarding adventure.

The Renwick Gallery and the James Renwick Alliance are facing an exhilarating challenge over the next several years. The Gallery is the country's collection of craft objects and it is in the process of expanding that collection. As you know, the Gallery has received a grant of \$750,000 from the Smithsonian Institution. Half of that grant, \$325,000, must be matched by outside sources if it is to be spent. In total, this would make \$1,075,000 available for the purchase of American craft objects. The Gallery can build the foundation for an exciting, educational collection of American crafts with this money. The Alliance is the primary source of these matching funds and we have three years in which to raise them.

The bulk of the Alliance's funds over the years have gone to assist the Gallery in purchasing objects for the permanent collection. But raising slightly over \$100,000 a year for acquisitions for the next three years represents a new era in Alliance efforts. It will require a new level of contributions on the part of Alliance members. In addition, the Alliance's newly-created Development Committee under the able leadership of Ellen Berlow, is creating

new fund-raising approaches for the Alliance.

You will see more effort to involve corporations in the support of the Renwick Alliance. You will see the development of new fund-raising projects such as a benefit. We need the support of all of our members — through increased donations, through referrals of new members to the Alliance and through volunteer work on one of the Alliance committees.

We will move forward. We will meet this challenge. Be there!

## Renwick Gallery Public Programs December 1989, January & February 1990

### December 2:

Louis Comfort Tiffany Symposium, in the Grand Salon of the Renwick Gallery. From 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Free, although tickets are required. Seating will be limited. For further information, please call 357-2531.

**10:00 AM-** Opening Remarks by Elizabeth Broun, Director of the National Museum of American Art. Introductory comments by Jeremy Adamson, Curator, Renwick Gallery.

**10:15 AM-** "Louis C. Tiffany as Decorator and Architect," by Robert Koch, Professor Emeritus, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Connecticut. This lecture will focus on Tiffany's lesser known role as an architect and interior decorator between 1879 and 1893. Examination

of Tiffany's decors will begin with the interior devised for the Veterans' Room of the 7th Regiment Armory in Manhattan and include domestic commissions of the 1880's and early 90's. Special attention will be given to the chapel interior in the neo-Byzantine style Tiffany created for display at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.



"Peacock" Window (detail), Tiffany Studios, ca. 1912, leaded glass, 11 1/2" x 29 3/8". Lent by David Bellis.

This landmark ecclesiastical interior was the first to bring him international acclaim as a decorative artist. The lecture will conclude with an analysis of Laurelton Hall, the extraordinary Long Island summer home Tiffany designed, constructed and decorated in the years 1902-04.

**11:15 AM-** "Tiffany's Early Favre Glass," by Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, Associate Curator, Department of American Decorative Arts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City. Introduced to the public in 1894, Tiffany's Favre blown glass vases were described as "unique" and "entirely novel." Indeed, much of the glass produced at Tiffany's glass studios in the decade after 1894 was markedly different in appearance from the glass produced concurrently in America and Europe. The lecture will focus on Tiffany's early experimental blown glass, an aspect of his oeuvre that has been largely overshadowed by his leaded glass lamps and windows. It will place Tiffany's Favre glass within its historical and stylistic context and develop a basic chronology.

**12:15 PM - 1:15 PM -** Luncheon Break.

**1:15 PM-** "The Tiffany-Bing Connection: The Franco-American Stained Glass Windows," by Gabriel P. Weisberg, Professor and Chairman, Department of Art History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota. In 1894, Tiffany and the French art dealer Siegfried Bing collaborated on the production of a series of stained glass windows that were innovative in both technique and theme. Bing solicited designs from young designers in France — many from among the *Nabis* group of painters — and Tiffany created the windows in New York. Shipped to Paris, the windows were first exhibited at the 1895 Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts and subsequently, in December 1895, at Bing's inaugural *Salon de L'Art Nouveau*. The windows caused a sensation on both sides of the Atlantic, contributing to the Franco-American connection in the Art Nouveau period and helping to assure Tiffany's international fame as a stained glass artist.

**2:15 PM-** "Furnishing Public Spaces in the Tiffany Era," by Neil Harris, Professor, Department of History, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. During the 1880's and '90's, new types of public spaces appeared on the American scene. Some were new because of the functions they served or their scale of construction. Others, because of their purposeful, coordinated programs of design. And still others because of the presence of newly trained professionals and aggressive manufacturers. This paper will examine the various procedures used to shape and adorn these interior spaces, indicating the changing range of possibilities. It will set Tiffany's major contributions into perspective, suggesting their limits as well as their originality.

**3:15 PM-** Panel Discussion, moderated by Alastair Duncan, guest consultant for "Masterworks of Louis Comfort Tiffany."

**5:00 PM-** Symposium concludes.

**December 7:**

Creative Screen: Film winners of the annual Nissan FOCUS (Films of College and University Students) Awards will be shown, illustrating a wide variety of film techniques in their work. Free. At 11:00 AM, 12:15 PM and 1:30 PM.

**December 9 & 10-and 16 & 17**

Craft Demonstrations: Members of the Daughters of Dorcas — local chapter of the National Quilting Association — will show and discuss stained glass applique and cathedral window style quilting. These demonstrations, and those on the following weekend, are made possible by the Smithsonian's Educational Outreach Program, the James Renwick Alliance and the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Free. From 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

**December 14:**

Creative Screen: Repeat of December 7. Free. At 11:00 AM, 12:15 PM and 1:30 PM.

**January 21:**

Gallery Talk: Jeremy Adamson, Renwick Curator, will discuss the exhibition "Masterworks of Louis Comfort Tiffany." Free. At 3:00 PM.

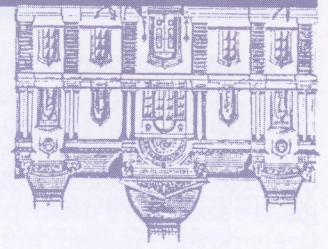
**January 28:**

Illustrated Lecture: Richard Guy Wilson, Professor, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, will discuss what many consider to be Louis Comfort Tiffany's masterpiece — Laurelton Hall, a unique and original architectural creation. This summer residence was located on Oyster Bay, Long Island. Free. At 3:00 PM.



This appliqued quilt by an unidentified slave, was made about 1850. It is cotton with homespun backing, 41" x 59".

Inquiries about the James Renwick Alliance should be sent to:  
James Renwick Alliance  
6801 Winterberry Lane, Bethesda, Maryland 20817

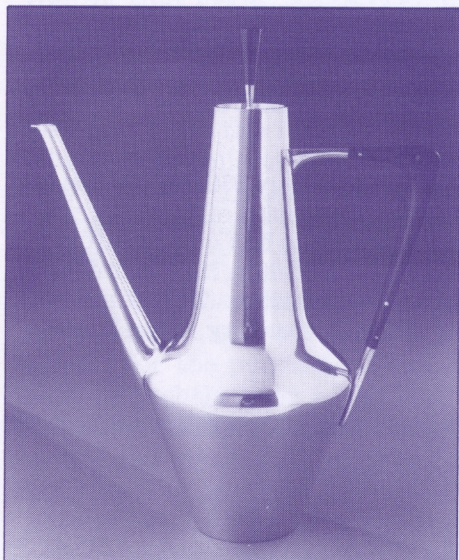


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James Renwick Alliance  
6801 Winterberry Lane  
Bethesda, MD 20817

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The Renwick Gallery recently acquired six examples of John Prip's metalsmithing from important phases of his career — from



the fluid refinement of his Scandinavian-inspired, commercial hollow-ware of the 1950's, to the stringent geometry of the pewter boxes of the mid-1980's. Their presence in the collection enhances the limited number of objects in metal and display the talents of one of America's outstanding contemporary metalsmiths. Prip has been credited with leading the renaissance in contemporary American metalsmithing.

The Coffee Pot, shown at left, exemplifies the artist's classic Scandinavian training. It was crafted in 1957-58, of sterling silver with an ebony handle, and stands 15" in height.

The Box, shown at right, exemplifies the artist's innovative designs. It was crafted in 1971-72, of gold with a rhodium finish.

