

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

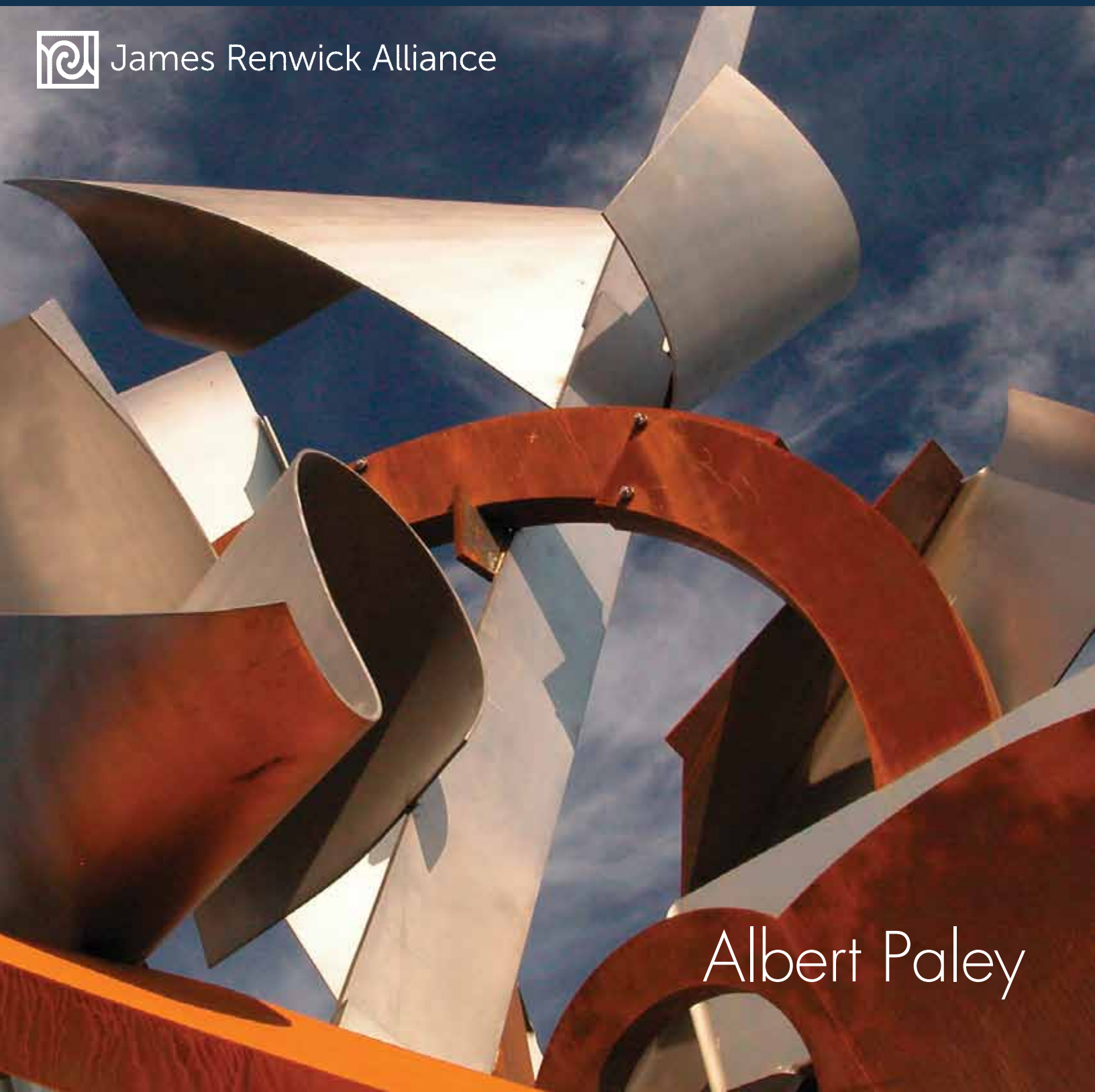
QUARTERLY

JRA

FALL 2015



James Renwick Alliance



Albert Paley

THE JRA QUARTERLY

EDITOR Johanna Thompson

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR Miriam Rosenthal

COPY EDITORS Marilyn Hardis,
Elmerina Parkman & Cicie Sattarnilasskorn

GRAPHIC DESIGNER CSA Studio

COVER CONSULTANT Rhoda Baer

PHOTOGRAPHERS Clemmer Montague,
Miriam Rosenthal & Mikki Van Wyk

JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE

4405 East West Highway, Suite 510

Bethesda, MD 20814

Phone: 301.907.3888 Fax: 301.907.3855

Admin@jra.org/www.jra.org

The JRA Quarterly is published three times a year by the James Renwick Alliance, an independent national non-profit organization, created to recognize the achievements of America's craft artists and to foster scholarship, education and public appreciation of craft art. Founded in 1982, the Alliance supports the nation's showcase of contemporary American craft, the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Any opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the JRA, its Board of Directors or the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery and its staff.

The JRA Quarterly is published for members of the James Renwick Alliance and is not for sale.

Although efforts have been made to eliminate errors of fact, spelling and grammar, the editor apologizes in advance for any such errors that may remain.

JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE OFFICERS

PRESIDENT Giselle Huberman

VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAMS Pat Arnold

VICE PRESIDENT, DEVELOPMENT Brigitte Savage

TREASURER Brenda Erickson

SECRETARY Julianna Mahley

JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE STAFF

DIRECTOR Cicie Sattarnilasskorn

PROGRAM MANAGER Catarina Castruccio-Prince

Cover Photo: Sentinel, by Albert Paley
Weathering Steel, Stainless Steel, Bronze
36,000 pounds
73' high, 36' diameter
Photo by Bruce Miller

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



I hope you all have had a wonderful summer, full of learning and adventures. Welcome home!

A new fiscal year is upon us with promises of excitement and learning. Our many programs, devised by the indefatigable and creative Pat Arnold, will certainly fulfill our expectations.

We are also looking forward to the reopening of the Renwick Gallery in November. We have missed it! And, thanks to all of you we will finally be able to witness firsthand the impact of

your philanthropy: a gallery named for the James Renwick Alliance. We should feel proud with our efforts to help restore our revered museum. Thank you all who have generously supported this worthwhile process.

We are making a difference: the Alliance has given to the Renwick over \$3 million for acquisitions, education, exhibitions, and the funding for over 30 fellows. Our support of artists and of craft in general is creating a legacy that unites us in a meaningful purpose.

So, as is becoming my custom, but it bears repeating, I thank you for your altruism, your devotion to craft, to the Renwick Gallery, and most particularly to our JRA. I hope you will participate in the many interesting activities the JRA is planning for the coming year. You will learn, enjoy, make new friendships and cement the old ones. I promise!!!

And please don't forget the needy.



Giselle Huberman
JRA President

Giselle's necklace by Reiko Ishiyama



CONTENTS

RECENT EVENTS

- 3 Rethinking Craft: Glenn Adamson Expands the Definition of Craft
- 4 Handi-hour
- 5 Craft in Upstate New York

DISTINGUISHED ARTISTS SERIES

- 6 Beth Cavener
- 7 John Grade

INTERESTING PEOPLE

- 8 Expanding Horizons with Robert Minkoff
- 8 R. Ruth Dibble
- 9 Steve Durow
- 10 Shin-ichi and Kimiake Higuchi
- 11 Akio Takamori

REOPENING OF THE RENWICK MUSEUM

- 12 Donors to Renovation
- 13 Fall Publishing Preview: New Books in November
- 14 WONDER Exhibit

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 15 Craft2Wear
- 15 Chrysalis Award Competition
- 16 JRA Day
- 17 Spring Craft Weekend Preview
- 18 Save the Dates



Glass and metal piece in production in Albert Paley's studio.

FROM THE EDITOR



Recently I've been asked what the theme for the fall issue of the JRA Quarterly would be. As articles and photos were assembled for the issue, it became clear: the theme is CELEBRATION.

First and foremost we will soon be celebrating the reopening of the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery. We will be reminded of how special that Museum is when we view the opening exhibit which consists of work by nine young artists who are each creating a work to celebrate the Gallery building. (See article on page 14).

And we celebrate the wonderful people (see list on page 12) who contributed to the Renwick Renovation Fund. Since jointly those people contributed \$500,000, a gallery in the Renwick will be named for the James Renwick Alliance.

We also celebrate the opportunity the JRA gives us to become acquainted with outstanding craft artists. As an example of this, those on the JRA trip to upstate New York spent time with Wendell Castle, the 1999 Master of the Medium in wood; Wayne Higby, 2005 Master of the Medium in ceramics and 2002 Distinguished Educator; and Albert Paley, 1997 Master of the Medium in metal, plus many other artists. (See photo essay on page 5). And the Distinguished Artists Series brings us in contact with known and admired artists all year long. (See articles on pages 6 and 7).

Join the celebration: become a JRA member! ■

REMEMBERING JUNE SCHWARCZ

BELOVED ARTIST HAD TIES TO JRA



June Schwarcz, who died on August 2, 2015, studied industrial design at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and then worked in New York as a packaging designer.

In 1953 she was introduced to enameling and was immediately drawn to the medium's brilliant color and rich, expressive potential. For more than 60 years, she created inventive forms which set new standards for the field while she served as mentor to generations of young and emerging artists.

In 2009, she was selected by members of the James Renwick Alliance (JRA) as the Master of the Medium of metal, and came to Washington to receive the award. And many of her pieces are in the homes of JRA members. Examples of her work are in the collections of numerous institutions including the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery. June's Vessel #2117, a gift of the JRA to the Smithsonian American Art Museum, is currently on display in the Museum's Luce Center. ■

BECOMING A MEMBER

- DONOR** \$100 single | \$150 dual*
- ART** (Alliance for Renwick Tomorrow) \$60 single
- SPONSOR** \$300 single | \$500 dual*
- GALLERY** \$500 (for galleries and art organizations)
- CRAFT LEADERS CAUCUS** \$800 single | \$1500 dual*
- BENEFACTOR** \$2500

*dual—two members at the same address

New Renewal

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss Other _____

Name _____

Email _____

Are you an Artist? Yes No

If yes, website address: www. _____

Second member (dual member at the same address)

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss Other _____

Name _____

Email _____

Are you an Artist? Yes No

If yes, website address: www. _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Country _____ Phone _____

Communications Preference: Email Mail Phone

METHOD OF PAYMENT

\$ _____ Check payable to James Renwick Alliance

\$ _____ Charge:

Visa MasterCard AMEX Discover

Account No. _____ Exp. _____

Signature (required) _____

Mail to: James Renwick Alliance

4405 East-West Highway Suite 510, Bethesda, MD 20814

Or join or renew online at: **JRA.org**

rethinking

GLENN ADAMSON EXPANDS THE DEFINITION OF

craft

Clemmer Montague

JRA Board member Kathryn (Mikki) Van Wyk hosted this year's Caucus summer social on Sunday, June 28 to hear Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) Director Glenn Adamson talk about craft museums. Thirty-five Caucus members were present along with blacksmith Chris Shea who presented Adamson with a bottle opener made in his forge.

Adamson has been the Nanette L. Laitman Director of MAD in New York since October 2013. Prior to this directorship, he was head of the research department at London's Victoria & Albert Museum and a curator at the Milwaukee Art Museum. He earned a BA in art history at Cornell University in 1994 and a doctorate in art history from Yale in 2001. He has written several books including *The Invention of Craft* (2013), in addition to numerous articles and essays.

Craft Leaders Caucus members listened intently as Adamson expressed his opinion on what a museum devoted to craft is in the 21st century. The talk, titled "Rethinking Craft: Championing Today's Makers," addressed the role of both museums which are designated for ceramics, fiber, glass, metal and wood as well as those which show craft either as a permanent collection or in special exhibitions. The world of craft should be considered in its full context, he believes, from the traditional media to the skill of the maker in all aspects of contemporary art. This vision is exemplified in two current MAD shows: Richard Estes: Painting New York City, and Ralph Pucci: The Art of the Mannequin. Both of these exhibits show work which requires superb craftsmanship skills. Along with showcasing skill, a museum has the opportunity to enhance the public's perception of craft in its exhibition philosophy.

This talk was one of three programs offered to JRA Caucus members each year. ■



Speaker Glenn Adamson is pleased to receive a bottle opener made by JRA member Chris Shea. Photo by Miriam Rosenthal.

HANDI DANDBI

JRA AND THE SMITHSONIAN
AMERICAN ART MUSEUM
CO-SPONSOR
HANDI-HOUR EVENT



Photos by Miriam Rosenthal.

Catarina Castruccio-Prince

The JRA members are always looking for opportunities to share our love for craft art and to introduce new audiences to the JRA. One way we do that is by partnering with local organizations to offer enjoyable and educational craft-related programming.

On Thursday, July 23 the JRA teamed with the Smithsonian American Art Museum to co-sponsor Handi-hour, one of D.C.'s premiere crafting events. There are typically over 200 attendees at a given Handi-hour event. People lined up in droves at SAAM's Luce Foundation Center for the opportunity to try their hand at painting ceramic mugs. Previous crafts have included embroidery on paper, duct tape wallets, t-shirt necklaces, and tile coasters.

Director Cicie Sattarnilasskorn and Program Manager Catarina Castruccio-Prince, along with JRA volunteers Lynn Bechthold, Irene Sinclair, and Chris Shea interacted with attendees and introduced them to the JRA. Chris Shea, a JRA board member, not only designs and crafts beautiful architectural metalwork, but he can also pour a mighty fine draft beer! Lynn Bechthold, a local glass artist and JRA member, helped distribute the mugs to the

eager "crafticipants." She had a wonderful time and remarked that there was a "ton of talent" there. As we walked the tables we saw some creative mugs, including a serpent, a bear, a sea turtle and a parrot fish, as well as lovely prints and geometric designs worthy of a display at Anthropologie. Teatism, a local tea shop, provided five delicious loose-leaf tea varieties. Attendees could try the different flavors and even mix their own blends to enjoy at home in their new mugs.

Though the event ended at 8:00 p.m., there were plenty of attendees still feeling the craft muse. We are pleased with the interest shown in the JRA, including our two newest members who joined that evening! Finally, a big thank you to Irene Sinclair, who visited each table in the hall talking with attendees and leaving them with a flyer and JRA pen.

The next Handi-hour is scheduled for Friday, November 13. The program will be moving back to the Renwick Gallery just in time for the opening festivities. Look for an announcement in JRA's weekly e-Newsletter as the date approaches. Tickets available at american-art.si.edu/handihour. We hope to see you there! ■

CRAFT in Upstate New York



Photo by Clemmer Montague.

Much of Wendell Castle's (pictured at left) current work is monumental in scale, meant for lobbies and other large spaces. A visit to his studio allowed us to see wood planks being glued together in preparation for being carved by a programmed robot.

Metal sculptor Albert Paley keeps several metal workers busy executing his meticulously planned pieces. Though many of his beautiful pieces go to museums, are incorporated into architecture or are sold to appreciators, some large pieces remain in his "yard."



Photo by Miriam Rosenthal.

Pat Arnold, co-leader of the trip, was interested to note that though all three artists are well advanced in their careers, they are still innovating. Wendell Castle is now using scale models in various materials to create guides for the robots doing the carving. Following a residency at Corning, Albert Paley is now incorporating glass with some of his metal sculptures. And Wayne Higby (pictured at left) has recently completed an enormous ceramic installation at Alfred University's Performing Arts Center, having collaborated with the architect to design the building. In the photo he is explaining how the work was created as the setting sun adds color to the all white work.

Photo by Miriam Rosenthal.



Photo by Mikki Van Wyk.

A highlight of the day spent at the Corning Museum of Glass was the opportunity to see the new wing, opened in March. It is a stunning space for the display of light-loving glass art. Four architects were considered as designers of the space: three of them talked about the building they proposed while Thomas Phifer discussed ways of capturing and handling light in the space. He was the one chosen for the job. ■



BETH CAVENER



Beth Cavener showing the armature she constructs to support clay sculpture. Photos by Miriam Rosenthal.

Cavener's sculptural work is a unique hybrid of human emotions intertwined with delicate and fierce sculptural animal forms. Her clay portraits became all the more stunning as participants were treated to the step-by-step process by which they were born. One piece, inspired by the classic tale of *Red Riding Hood* offered a non-traditional view of this iconic fairy tale; Cavener revealed she was always more intrigued by the wolf than the notion of girls' identification with Red Riding Hood.

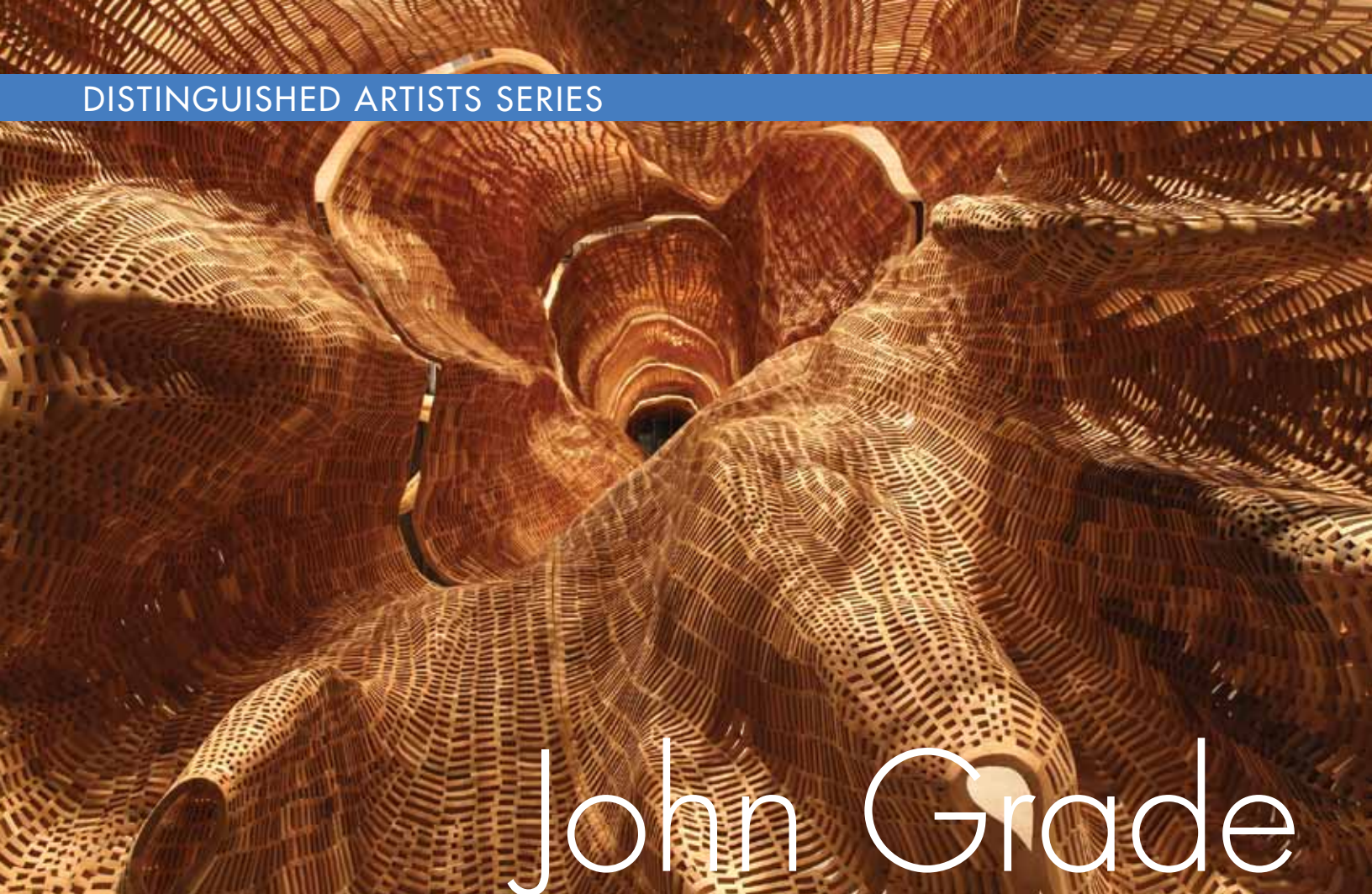
The audience was taken on a whirlwind tour of years of her work, including the birth of the wolf figure over many months, the armature under more than 600 pounds of clay, the painstaking months-long hollowing out process, disassembling, firing and re-assembling. The processes resulted in a stunningly powerful wolf embodying human emotions with elaborate layers of ferocity and vulnerability and weighed a delicate 30 pounds.

Beth traced her artistic roots, from her upbringing by her artist mother and microbiologist father to her first exhibitions at the Garth Clark Gallery and recent shows with Claire Oliver Gallery. Current work showcases the collaboration with her Italian-born artist husband, Alessandro Gallo, who designs and paints intricate, tattoo-like drawings on her ceramic pieces. She contrasted the American tattoo's emphasis on "where one has been" with Gallo's roadmap of where "they were both going" featured on her recent piece, a 21-foot long ceramic anaconda snake and human-scale hare dangling from a rope suspended from the ceiling.

Cavener's creative attention to emotional and physical details, superb craftsmanship, and psychological insight were paired with her ability to articulate her process. She amazed audiences all weekend long. For those who missed it, her website, www.followtheblackrabbit.com provides a taste of what JRA attendees witnessed. Between creations, she is always "distilling, fermenting, and editing" her ideas. Her passionate presentation and visually stunning images will undoubtedly lead to much fermenting in the minds of those who were fortunate to encounter Cavener in action, her process and her work. ■

Diane J. Charnov

Ceramic artist Beth Cavener amazed audiences during the final presentation of the 2014-2015 JRA Distinguished Artists Series (DAS) held at Montgomery College, Smithsonian American Art Museum's auditorium, and potluck dinner, in June. She movingly articulated the creative genesis and technical challenges of her large-scale animal forms before enthusiastic crowds of artists, students, JRA members and the artistically curious who were treated to time-lapse videos taken in her studio.



John Grade

Rebecca Ravenal

1 Middle Fork-Interior View. John Grade and hundreds of helpers.

The 2015-16 season of our Distinguished Artists Series (DAS) gets off to a “WONDER-ful” start with a workshop and lecture by John Grade on February 27 and 28, 2016. Grade uses an array of materials to create large-scale work. His sculpture, which will be highlighted in “WONDER,” the grand reopening show at the Smithsonian American Art’s Renwick Gallery, is made from thousands of pieces of reclaimed wood, stacked and shaped meticulously to echo an old growth hemlock tree.

John Grade is not a typical artist, making precious objects to be possessed and to endure in a museum or private collection. Instead, he is engaged in the different task of purposefully designing pieces to degrade and eventually disappear altogether.

Grade (pronounced “Grah-dee”) has produced numerous works which have been subjected to the elements — immersed in the ocean, buried in the desert, exposed on a mountaintop — allowing nature to be a full collaborator in his artwork. Sometimes Grade retrieves the works years later and carts them back to civilization to see the effects of their long exile. Sometimes, the pieces are left to quietly disintegrate or are violently broken up by stormy seas.

That chaos is all part of the process for Grade. He revels in the uncertainty, the anarchy of what might happen after his work leaves

human control. His early work was made for gallery display, but he soon realized he needed more. “I simply had too much control. Something had to give.”

Now, his art is all about variables. Working with other team members and large groups of volunteers, employing unusual materials, encountering changeable weather and remote natural sites, Grade remains flexible and open. “I always want things to go wrong. I just want something to happen that I don’t expect.”

Drawing on influences from extensive travel and a particular fondness for funerary art, Grade conceives of large scale projects, and then spends months or years designing the work and doing scientific research on appropriate materials for their creation and eventual decay in the wild. He must take into account not only the aesthetics of the pieces, but the engineering of building them, the dismantling of them, transporting them and the final environmental impact of their demise. Numerous accolades, awards and exhibits attest to the success of this process and his unique vision.

Please visit the JRA website for more information about registering for the workshop (fee) and attending the lecture (free and open to the public). Note that dates for remaining DAS workshops and lectures for this season are pending, and will be announced as soon as possible. ■



Expanding Horizons with ROBERT MINKOFF

Diane Charnov

Robert Minkoff (far right) with students at Corning Museum of Glass. Photo by Andrew Page.

In July, Robert Minkoff, JRA Board Member and Managing Trustee of the Robert M. Minkoff Foundation partnered with The Corning Museum of Glass to offer a seven-day program for talented high school student glass artists from underserved communities. The innovative and intensive experience, *Expanding Horizons*, gave these students and their mentors in glass art programs across the United States the opportunity to come to a world-class facility for exposure to the wider world of glass art. Amy Schwartz, Director of The Corning Studio, commented, “We all believe in the power of glass to reach, connect, and help motivate. This collaboration between the Museum and Minkoff Foundation is really doing that well.”

Throughout the week, students and their mentors spent hours improving their glassblowing skills in The Studio, learning from expert instructors as well as sharing their own skills. The six students met with leading museum artists, curators, collectors, retail buyers, and scholars. Participants received specialized tours of Corning’s collections, the new Amphitheater and the Rakow Research Library. Noted artists Laura Donefer and William Gudenrath provided demonstrations that advanced the students’ technical and artistic knowledge, and gave the group from Watts (CA), Chicago (IL), Newark (NJ) and Benton Harbor (MI) abundant opportunities to collaborate.

The *Expanding Horizons* program featured presentations by Corning’s staff on important topics from “Wholesale 101,” “Web and Social Media,” and “Photographing Your Work on A Shoestring.” Andrew Page, director of the Minkoff Foundation and the editor-in-chief of *GLASS: The UrbanGlass Art Quarterly*, discussed the importance of a media strategy and using a press release to publicize one’s work in a professional manner.

Robert Minkoff addressed the relationship between artists and collectors. He advised student-artists on creating “avenues of opportunity” including showing at local fairs and national venues. He urged students to convey the inspiration behind their work, which allows the public to “...get into the artist’s head...and can lead to a relationship with collectors that lasts a lifetime.”

When the group thanked Robert for the unique opportunity the program had provided, he responded, “I don’t do it for the thanks, I do it for the benefit of the participants of the program.” All who were involved in this innovative experience could attest that they had truly benefitted from it. ■

R. RUTH DIBBLE



R. Ruth Dibble has been awarded the James Renwick Fellowship in American Craft for 2015-2016. Her research topic is *Strike Home to the Minds of Men: Crafting Domesticity in the Civil War Era*. She will be in residence at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Renwick Gallery from September 1, 2015 until August 31, 2016.

Ruth is a PhD candidate at Yale University. Her dissertation argues that Americans on both sides of the Civil War reckoned with the transformative trauma of the conflict through the objects they made, commissioned, and displayed. She explores how objects created away from the battlefield – quilts, swords, shellwork, jew-

elry, and clothing – embody the experience of war in modes that emphasize material over illusion, touch and association over vision and information. She analyzes four kinds of primary sources: objects crafted during the war; the sites where they were made and used; maps, photographs, and town records that document the lives of their makers; and the art and literature that circulated around these objects during the Civil War. Her research seeks to uncover the circumstances in which these crafts were made and used, and contextualize these specific histories within nineteenth-century discourses surrounding domesticity and the industrial modernity of the war. In so doing, her dissertation offers a new reading of the relationship between craft and the Civil War, and draws attention to objects that have previously been relegated to the sidelines of art historical inquiries into the conflict. ■



Salisbury University GLASS PROGRAM

Steve Durow

Bridge sculpture with Steve's and his son's hand impressions.

Editor's Note: *Two years ago, JRA member Steven Durow became Assistant Professor and Head of the Glass Program at Salisbury University, the only university glass program in this area. We thought you'd like to hear from him.*

I came to Salisbury University (SU) two years ago to head the only university glass program in the state of Maryland and the entire DC region. After teaching full-time for six years at Tulane University in New Orleans, LA, I developed a vision for the Salisbury program - a broad and inclusive approach to glass working.

My passion is for using glass as a material for artistic expression. Taking the position at Salisbury University offered an opportunity to develop a program in which students can explore the whole range of glass-working possibilities. I plan to build a world-class glass program that fosters a creative risk-taking environment where glass is a vehicle to express ideas and where students have the freedom to push the boundaries of this versatile material.

While my work is primarily large scale, cast glass, public sculpture, as an educator I am more interested in giving students the best possible atmosphere for finding their artistic voice than in promoting any particular technique. My goal is to challenge my students to start with their ideas and expand their creative practice. My role as educator is to provide guidance and facilities for the realization of that vision.

The Salisbury University glass studio has undergone a major renovation. Working with students, I designed and built a 500-pound casting furnace, "glory hole," and two new annealing ovens for kiln-casting, hot casting, and large blown works. These renova-

tions have enabled us to expand the variety of processes we can teach. There are now more people who would like to take glass courses than we can accommodate, so these additions will go a long way towards bringing glass working to more students.

This fall we welcome our first year-long Artist in Residence, Jon Reese from Rochester Institute of Technology to campus. The Artist in Residence Program will help expand the offerings at SU, while also giving the artist an opportunity to create a body of work to further his or her artistic career. I am proud of being able to offer such an opportunity, and I know how much our students will benefit from working with talented artists.

To foster interaction between the SU Glass Program and the greater Salisbury community, last year I worked with several of our students on a large-scale glass and steel sculpture for Rivers Edge Apartments, a new artist residence.

The 15-foot-tall sculpture was inspired by the Bay Bridge which I crossed with my young son as we began the Salisbury chapter of our lives. Bridges represent transitions. Crossing the expanse of the Chesapeake, I glanced over to my son, and realized that we were driving into the unknown, and while that can be exciting, it can also carry a measure of fear. However, I came with a mission, and I knew the work I was about to begin was important and worth the risk.

I have been welcomed by the people at Salisbury University and the DC arts community, including many members of the JRA. I am proud of the progress we have made and excited about the future; I am thankful for the support and kindness I have received since my arrival. ■

Shin-ichi & Kimiake HIGUCHI

Patricia Arnold



Mantis by Shin-ichi Higuchi. Photo by Shin-ichi Higuchi.

Roses by Kimiake Higuchi.
Photo by Shin-ichi Higuchi.



On March 11, 2011 Kimiake and Shin-ichi Higuchi's world turned upside-down. Their serene studio and gardens on the northern end of Nikko National Park were rocked by the Great East Japanese Earthquake. They were unscathed, but their home, studio and much of twenty-four years of work were nearly destroyed.

The Higuchis are world-renowned glass artists who have spent decades exploring the ancient glass casting technique of *pâte de verre*,* one of the earliest techniques for making glass.

Born and raised in Japan, the Higuchis did not meet until their artistic paths took them to Europe. Kimiake, an award winning potter in Japan, came to Italy to study music and painting. Shin-ichi's studies of architecture and design led him to work with famed designer Ettore Sottsass in Italy.

Together they discovered *pâte de verre*. They were intrigued by the painterly quality and mystery of *pâte de verre* which fit perfectly with their artistic sensibilities and love of nature. The rich colors, fluid forms and translucent glow of *pâte de verre* made it irresistible, and in 1987 they set out to unlock the secrets of the phantom technique. By 2011 they had created an extensive and exquisite body of work.

Both Shin-ichi and Kimiake are inspired by love of nature. They collaborate but also create individual work. Shin-ichi's work reflects his fascination with architecture and mosaics as well as the insects that inhabit their garden.

Kimiake's painterly and melodic application of color is delicate and unique. Her garden is as much a part of her artistic process as her glass studio. "I plow the soil, sow the seeds, and water and fertilize the plants for six months, a year, or even several years, feeling the changing of the seasons in the eternal flow of Nature that is too magnificent for humans to create. . . I pick the flowers and vegetables in their prime and, through my hands I sculpt their living images in glass. . . not only the motifs, but also the time I shared with them is embedded in my works and lives there eternally." [Kimiake Higuchi in *Pâte de Verre*, 1997]

In the four years since the earthquake the Higuchis have reclaimed their garden and rebuilt their home and studio. Luckily for those of us entranced by their work some of the earlier work survived. And their creative spirit continues to blossom.

The Higuchis generously share their knowledge and skill — teaching master classes around the world. On August 23 the JRA was honored to have Shin-ichi Higuchi talk about this luminescent and expressive art form. He joined us after teaching at The Studio at the Corning Museum of Glass where Higuchi workshops have been "waiting list only" favorites for seventeen years. ■

**Pâte de verre*, pronounced: (pât du ver) loosely translated "paste of glass" is a glass casting technique where finely crushed glass mixed with a binder and water is kiln-fired in a plaster mold to create a vessel or sculptural object. Originating in Egypt the technique was all but eclipsed by the invention of glass blowing. *Pâte de verre* reemerged in the work of Art Nouveau artists. These new masters of *pâte de verre* closely held its secrets for most of the next century leading it to be called "the phantom technique."

Akio Takamori

Figurative ceramicist Akio Takamori's slab built and painted 'people' are charming and apparently childlike. They are done from memory of life in a Japanese industrial town.

But the villagers, school children, shop keepers and infants are actually the result of a long process of development starting with attending Musashino Art College in Tokyo followed by an apprenticeship with a traditional folk potter who produced utilitarian ware.

Doubts about his future as an industrial potter started when he saw a traveling exhibition of contemporary ceramic art from Latin America, Canada and the United States. He was impressed by the "antiauthoritarian" quality of the work and thus was open to renowned American ceramist Ken Ferguson's suggestion that Takamori study with him at the Kansas City Art Institute.

He took the suggestion, came to the U.S. in 1974, obtained a B.F.A. and M.F.A. followed by a residency at Archie Bray Foundation. He then moved to Seattle, WA and took a teaching position at the University of Washington.

Many of us have seen Takamori's work in museums and private collections, and last year we had the privilege of watching him build and then paint a piece at a Distinguished Artists workshop. But somehow his work is very sparsely represented in the Renwick collection.

Nicholas Bell, the Fleur and Charles Bresler Senior Curator of American Craft and Decorative Art, found a way to remedy this. An exhibit of Takamori's work at a Seattle gallery included a series of landscapes. Nicholas was amazed at "how fresh and mature they were. They were recognizable as Takamori's work, but had a wisdom and newness about them."

Acquiring two pieces was important since they "summarized in a beautiful way" the two cultures that Takamori has built his career in. One of them clearly is a Japanese landscape, the other is Western, being based on an Italian drawing.

Some of the Renwick's permanent collection will be reinstalled in July, 2016, and happily that exhibit will include some of Takamori's work. ■



*Akio Takamori Green Mountain, 2015.
Stoneware with underglazes.
24"x33"x15"
Photo: © 2015 RJ Sanchez*



*Akio Takamori Ochre Landscape, 2014.
Stoneware with underglazes.
14"x26"x20"
Photo: © 2015 RJ Sanchez*

Donors to Renovation

In the fall of 2013 an announcement was made that there could be a gallery named for the James Renwick Alliance in the newly renovated Renwick Museum if the Alliance was able to make a contribution of \$500,000. Thanks to the leadership of President Giselle Huberman and the overwhelming generosity of the following members, that challenge was met.

Be sure to visit the James Renwick Alliance Gallery on the second floor of the Renwick when you visit the Museum after its reopening on November 13, 2015.

-
- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Abramson | Ms. Mary Giles | Dr. and Mrs. Norman Mitchell |
| Mr. and Mrs. Peter Agnew | Mr. Tony Glander | Clemmer and David Montague |
| Ms. Patricia Arnold and
Mr. Dennis McCloud | Ms. Marsha Gold | Dr. Page S. Morahan |
| Mr. Stanley Asrael | Ms. Joan Gottfried | Ms. Nichole O'Neill |
| Ms. Ivy Baer | Mr. and Mrs. Marc Grainer | Ms. Geraldine Ostrove |
| Mr. and Mrs. Jay Barrett | Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Green | Dr. and Mrs. Paul Parkman |
| Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Berger | Ms. Dorothy J. Gusler | Dr. and Mrs. Jerome Paulson |
| Mr. and Mrs. Allen Berk | Ms. Kathrin V. Halpern | Ms. Laura Peery |
| Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Berlin | Ms. Marilyn Hardis | Ms. Judy Lynn Prince |
| Mr. and Mrs. Alton Boyer | Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Heide | Ms. Carol N. Radin |
| Mr. and Mrs. Steven Bralove | Ms. Tina F. Heller | Ms. Rebecca Ravenal |
| Mr. and Mrs. Robert Buchanan | Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Huberman | Ms. Chris Rifkin |
| Mrs. Fran Burka | Dr. and Mrs. Mark Immergut | Mr. and Mrs. Michael Root |
| Ms. Rachel Carren and Mr. Mark Young | Mrs. Shirley Jacobs | Ms. Miriam B. Rosenthal |
| Dr. Judith Chernoff and
Dr. Jeffrey Bernstein | Mr. and Mrs. Norman A. Jacobs | Ms. Doris Ross |
| Ms. Sonya Clark | Ms. Randi S. Jacobs | Mr. and Mrs. Michael Rotenberg |
| Dr. Lois Cohen | Ms. Renita Johnson | Mr. and Mrs. Fredric M. Sanders |
| Ms. Winfield P. Crigler | Mr. and Mrs. Jerome A. Kaplan | Ms. Cicie Sattarnilasskorn |
| Ms. Rebecca Cross and
Mr. Max Mackenzie | Ms. Sharon Karmazin and
Mr. Dave Greene | Ms. Brigitte Savage |
| Mr. Patrick Doust and Mr. Richard North | Ms. Phyllis Kaye | Ms. Jan Schachter |
| Ms. Elizabeth Doyle | Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Krupsky | Dr. and Mrs. William Schneider |
| Mr. David Ellsworth | Dr. and Mrs. Stephen Kurzbard | Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Schwartz |
| Mr. and Mrs. Leon Ellsworth | Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Lane | Ms. Ruth P. Siegel |
| Ms. Linda W. Engel | Ms. Mallory Lawson | Mr. and Mrs. Bob Sinclair |
| Mr. and Mrs. Carl Fisher | Mr. and Mrs. Herb Lerner | Ms. Ann L. Smith |
| Ms. Gayle Friedman | Ms. Mina Levin and Mr. Ronald Schwarz | Dr. Kathryn E. Stein and Mr. James Merrill |
| Ms. Virginia M. Friend | Ms. Anne Mehringer and
Mr. John T. Beaty | Mr. and Mrs. Gary G. Stevens |
| Mrs. Genevieve A. Gee | Ms. Sara Melendez | Ms. Jill Tanenbaum |
| Ms. Jere Gibber and Mr. J.G. Harrington | Mr. and Mrs. Allan Mendelsohn | Mr. Tim Tate |
| | Dr. and Mrs. Robert Mendelsohn | Ms. Johanna Thompson |
| | | Ms. Jacqueline D. Urow |
| | | Ms. Judith S. Weisman |

New Books in November

FALL PUBLISHING PREVIEW

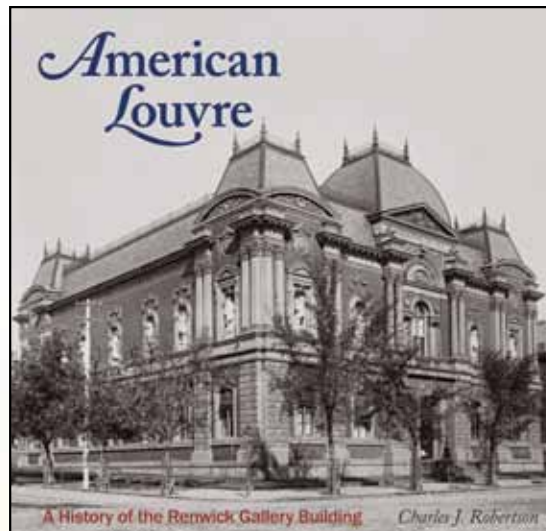
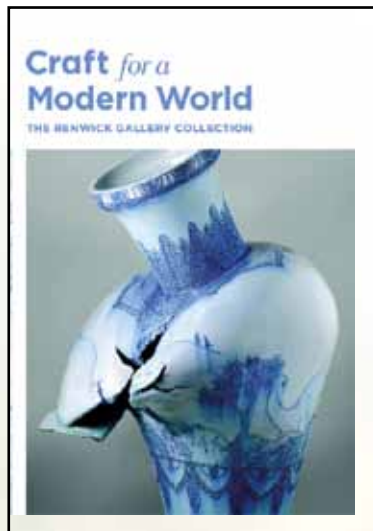
In conjunction with the reopening of the Renwick Gallery, the Smithsonian American Art Museum will publish three new books this November:

A fully-illustrated catalog of the WONDER exhibit written by Nicholas Bell, the Fleur and Charles Bresler Senior Curator of American Craft and Decorative Art of the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery. It is titled *On Wonder*.

The new Renwick curator Nora Atkinson, the Lloyd Herman Curator of Craft, takes a fresh new way of looking at the Renwick

collection in her *Craft for a Modern World, The Renwick Gallery Collection*. It includes classic pieces from the studio craft era, but also many pieces acquired more recently that show the collection to be a continuously developing one.

American Louvre, A History of the Renwick Gallery Building, was written by Smithsonian American Art Museum's deputy director emeritus Charles Robertson. He is also the author of *Temple of Invention* (2006) a history of the Old Patent Office building which is now the home of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. ■





Chakaia Booker, *The Fatality of Hope*, 2007. Rubber tires and wood, 85"x201"x32"
Installation photograph from 2010 exhibit at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln MA. Photo: Peter Vanderwacker.

WONDER is the inaugural exhibit at the Renwick when it reopens on November 13, 2015. The name is taken from a description of the exhibit by Nicholas Bell, the Fleur and Charles Bresler Senior Curator of American Craft and Decorative Art, who organized the exhibit.

"The experience of 'wonder' is deeply intertwined with how we experience art, and why these nine artists create the works they do. They are each masters of constructing works that startle us, overwhelm us and invite us to marvel – to wonder – at their creation."

The exhibit is actually nine exhibits under one roof. Each of the nine is executed by a different artist who is known for spectacular work, responsive to its surroundings. Each artist has selected a gallery in the Renwick in which to create a site-specific installation. Thus, they will turn the building itself into a major immersive artwork.

Jennifer Angus covers gallery walls in spiraling, geometric designs reminiscent of wallpaper or textiles. Her designs are made using specimens of different species of shimmering, brightly-colored insects.

Chakaia Booker creates art from recycled materials, such as rubber tires. She splices and weaves them into enormous, complex labyrinths.

Gabriel Dawe's fiber installation is made from thousands of strands of individually hung cotton embroidery thread to create rainbow-like waves of color and light sweeping from floor to ceiling.

Willow saplings are the material Patrick Dougherty will hand weave into a structure to engulf the rear gallery.

Towers constructed of hundreds of thousands of index cards are glued together by Tara Donovan to form irregular, looming spires.

Janet Echelman will suspend an enormous hand woven net across the 100 foot length of the Grand Salon. Her diaphanous nets seem to float, growing from her exploration of volumetric form without solid mass.

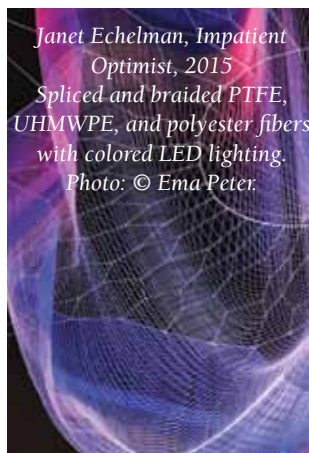
Using hundreds of thousands of pieces of reclaimed, old-growth cedar, John Grade reconstructs a hemlock approximately the same age as the Renwick's building, based on a complete plaster cast he made of the tree in situ in the Cascade Mountains.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial designer Maya Lin will create a deluge of green marbles, flowing across the floor and up walls, recalling the tides of the Chesapeake Bay.

And 23,000 LEDs, programmed by Leo Villareal to display endless variations, will hang above the Grand Staircase. ■



Gabriel Dawe, *Plexus 19*, 2012, thread, wood and hooks.
Photo courtesy of the artist.



Janet Echelman, *Impatient Optimist*, 2015
Spliced and braided PTFE, UHMWPE, and polyester fibers with colored LED lighting.
Photo: © Ema Peter.



7 Middle Fork-Detail. John Grade.

CRAFT2WEAR

Kathryn Horlick

The Smithsonian's Craft2Wear, an annual fall show of wearable art, will be held on October 1-3, 2015. The artists, all previously juried into Smithsonian Craft Shows, return to the historic Great Hall of the National Building Museum in Washington, DC, for a show and sale focused exclusively on one-of-a-kind articles of clothing, jewelry and accessories created by some of America's foremost craft artists.

Craft2Wear is sponsored by the Smithsonian Women's Committee (SWC), which is dedicated to advancing the Smithsonian's mission to increase and diffuse knowledge. The SWC has raised and awarded nearly \$11 million in grant awards for the Smithsonian complex of museums, scientific facilities and the National Zoo.

The event opens Thursday night, October 1, with the *Advance Chance Party*. Visitors who purchase tickets by advance reservation will be admitted to an evening of shopping accompanied by wine, a light buffet, modeling and music.

The show continues on Friday, October 2, from 10:00 am – 8:00 pm, by general admission at the door. The *Artful Happy Hour*, 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm, will give art and fashion lovers a chance to mingle and relax.

Saturday, October 3, from 10:00 am to 5:30 pm, will conclude this celebration of American wearable design.

Tickets for a raffle offering two prizes: a stunning pair of black pearl mica pod earrings by Keith Lewis, and an exquisite handbag by Bozenna and Lukasz Bogucki, will be available throughout the show. ■



Black pearl earrings made by Keith Lewis. Photo by Ralph Gabriner.

James Renwick Alliance

A \$5000 cash award presented annually to an emerging clay, fiber, glass, metal or wood artist who has exhibited extraordinary originality, skill and creativity in their work.

CALL FOR ARTISTS

The Chrysalis

APPLY BY December 1, 2015 www.jra.org

EIGHTH ANNUAL JRA DAY

J.G. Harrington

The eighth annual JRA Day Craft Artist Exhibition and Sale will be held on Saturday, December 5 from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm at the Woman's Club of Chevy Chase. Begun in 2008, JRA Day has given JRA artist members a chance to show and sell their craft work, and part of the proceeds benefit the JRA.

More than 35 artists across all of the craft media will be participating in this year's show. And featured will be 10 new artists including mosaic maker Carol Talkov and jeweler Bodil Lund. Some of the favorite returning artists include jewelry and fiber artist Eileen Doughty, ceramic artist Rebecca Ravenal and wood artist Phil Brown. Information on the artists is available on the JRA Day web site (www.jraday.com) and Facebook page (JRA Day Show). This

year's show features artists whose work has been shown at SOFA Chicago, the American Craft Council's Baltimore Craft Show, the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, Virginia and Glen Echo.

JRA Day has broken sales and attendance records three years in a row, and this year's artist lineup has the JRA Day team gunning for another record-breaking show. The JRA Day committee is once again looking for sponsors to help support free admission to the show. We also need volunteers to help the day of the show – everything from set up and take down to transporting lunch to the artists. If you're interested in helping, please contact the JRA office (jamesrenwickalliance@gmail.com) or co-chairs Jere Gibber (jgibber@aol.com) or J.G. Harrington (jgharrington@cooley.com).



Spring by Carol Talkov.



Ceramic pieces made by JRA Board member Rebecca Ravenal. Photo by Miriam Rosenthal.



Photo by Miriam Rosenthal.

Spring Craft Weekend Preview

Even though April 1 - 3 seems like a long time in the future, the people who are planning and organizing all the events for the Spring Craft Weekend 2016 are already at work. Pictured above are most of them. However, the little lady standing on the table* is not expected to help much.

Plans are still evolving, of course. And some are still under wraps. But we can give you a bit of a preview of the auction which will be a little different in 2016.

For those who can't wait until Saturday night, some of the items to be auctioned will be featured on the JRA website, as they are received. And, on Caucus Day, Friday, April 1, a few of the auction items will be displayed and will be discussed by Michael Monroe, the former Curator in Charge of the Renwick Gallery.

The auction itself, entitled "Not Your Grandfather's Auction: Adventurous, Innovative, Wow Factor, Fun, High Energy and Participatory" will have three parts: Silent Auction, a Drawing, and Live Auction.

There will be more items offered than in the past, largely because of the addition of the Drawing, which will consist of table top items offered at more affordable prices. Attendees will put their names into a jar beside an item of interest preceding a drawing for each item.

The powers-that-be promise that dinner will be earlier in 2016, and that a revised check-out process will be initiated. Responsible for bringing all of this into being are:

- Barbara Berlin and Sandy Mitchell, Spring Craft Weekend Co-Chairs
- Rebecca Ravenal and Lynn Chadwick, Co-Chairs, Caucus Day
- Barbara Wolanin and Diane Charnov, Co-Chairs, Saturday morning Panel Discussion
- Bonnie Schwartz and Raeanne Hytone, Co-Chairs, Saturday Gala
- Norman Mitchell and Marc Grainer, Co-Chairs of the Auctions, and the Live Auction
- Clemmer Montague, Chair, Silent Auction
- Toni Alaimo and Susan Jenkins, Co-Chairs, Drawing
- Marilyn Hardis and Julianna Mahley, Co-Chairs, Sunday Awards Brunch
- Shirley Jacobs, Patrons Promotion
- Judith Weisman, Exhibition Installation
- Martin Gammon (of Bonhams) Auctioneer

Now, while all these people are working to put together a spectacular Weekend, it's your turn to make plans to join us in April!

*Sculpture by Akio Takamori ■

SAVE THE DATES

OCTOBER 9 – 23

The Kilns and Craft of Japan. Trip led by ceramist Jeffrey Shapiro, who lived in Japan for 10 years.

NOVEMBER 6 – 8

SOFA Chicago. The world-renowned art fair dedicated to Sculpture, Objects, Functional Art and Design returns to the Navy Pier. There will be an Opening Night Preview on November 5. More than 70 galleries will display works by emerging and established artists.

NOVEMBER 10

Renwick Gala: Crafting the Future, 6:30 - 9:30 pm. A sophisticated evening honoring America's amazing craft and decorative art traditions. Enjoy fabulous food and desserts throughout the museum, and meet local artists whose work is featured in the collection. Tickets \$75. Visit americanart.si.edu/renwickgalas for information.

NOVEMBER 11

Celebrate WONDER, 8:00 – 11:00 pm Experience the transformation of the Renwick. Immerse yourself in the inaugural exhibition *WONDER* and meet the curator. It's a night of dancing, creative cocktails, and local craft beers. Tickets \$75. For more information, visit americanart.si.edu/renwickgalas.

NOVEMBER 13

Reopening of the Renwick Gallery 10:00 am
A ribbon-cutting ceremony outside the Renwick during which the museum will be rededicated to "the future of art."

10:30 am – 4:00 pm Open house in the museum will offer the first opportunity to see the exhibit *WONDER* showcasing installations by nine young artists doing exciting work. (See article on page 14) There will be live music, book signings, building tours and a chance to meet curators Nicholas Bell and Nora Atkinson.

6:00 pm – 9:00 pm Handi-hour returns home to the Renwick. This event offers the chance to make a craft object, enjoy craft beer and culinary samples and live music. Must be 21 years old. Tickets available at americanart.si.edu/handihour for \$25, or \$30 at the door (cash only).

NOVEMBER 14

Family Festival in the newly renovated Renwick Gallery, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm. Features craft making, artist demonstrations, musical performances, and games. Visit americanart.si.edu/renwick for the full schedule.

NOVEMBER 17

Annual JRA membership event at the Renwick A chance for members to see the newly-renovated space and its inaugural *WONDER* exhibit and to meet the curators. See jra.org for further information.

DECEMBER 5

JRA Day, 11:00 am – 5:00 pm. Show and sale of craft art made by JRA artist members. At the Chevy Chase Women's Club, 7931 Connecticut Avenue. Information on participating artists at www.jraday.com.

FEBRUARY 17 – 21, 2016

ACC Craft Show at the Baltimore Convention Center
During the show, the JRA award for Excellence in Innovation will be presented.

FEBRUARY 19, 2016

Guided introduction to the ACC Craft Show conducted by JRA members

FEBRUARY 27, 2016

10:00 am. John Grade will be the Distinguished Artist giving a workshop on this day followed by a pot luck dinner in the evening.

FEBRUARY 28, 2016

Distinguished Artist John Grade will present a lecture on his work at the Renwick Gallery's Grand Salon.

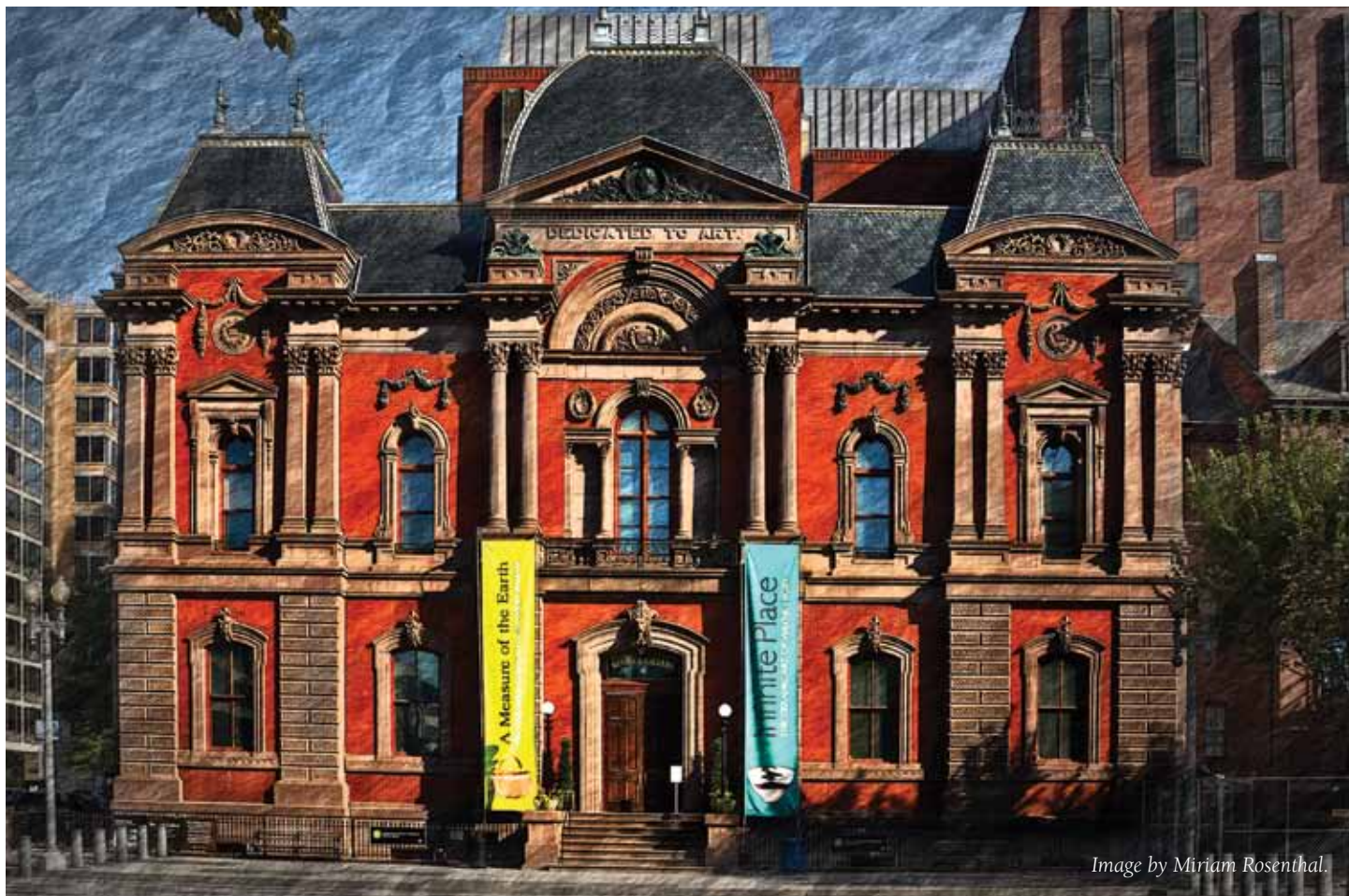


Image by Miriam Rosenthal.