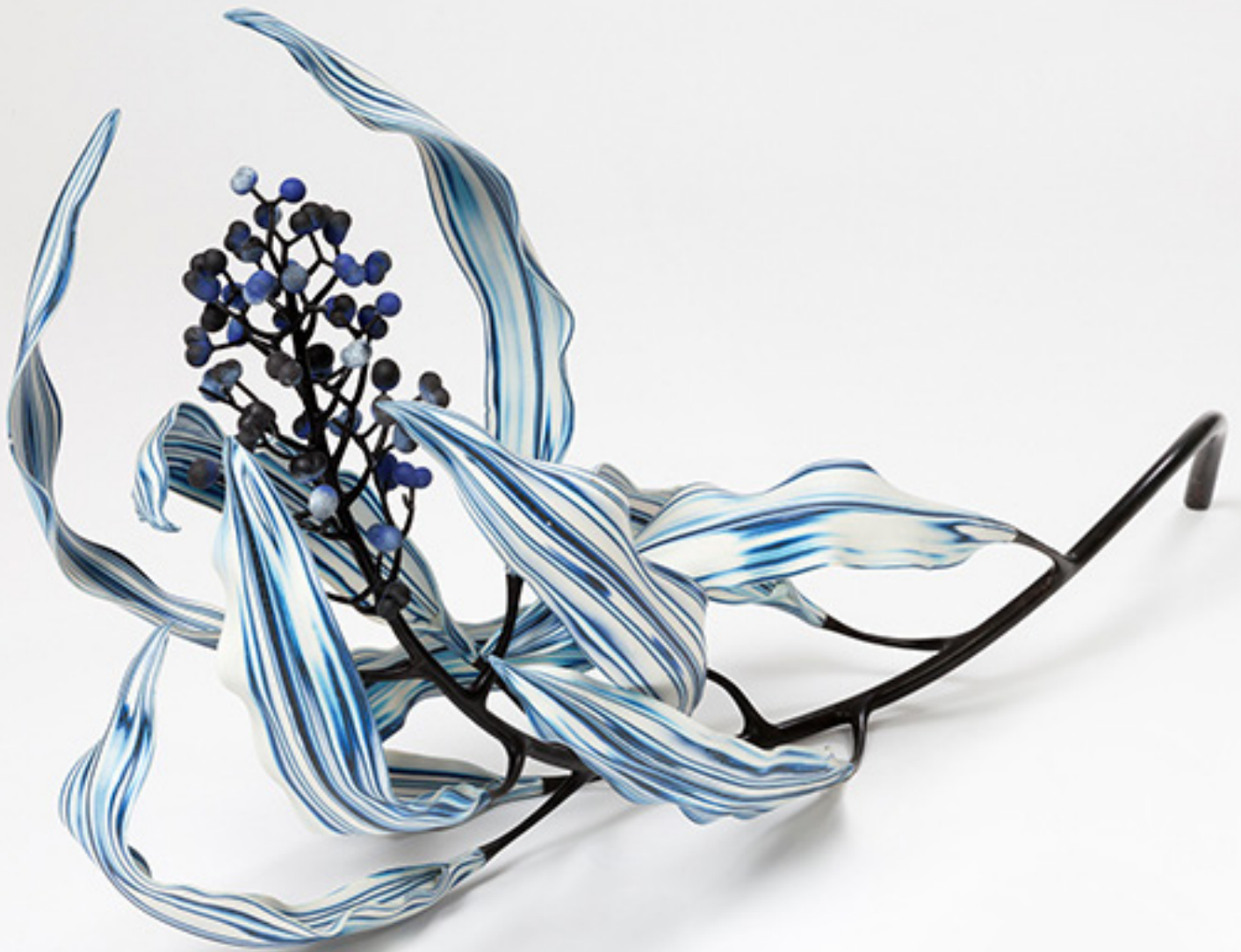


CRAFT QUARTERLY



James Renwick Alliance

Fall/Winter 2018



**ANNOUNCING THE
SPRING CRAFT WEEKEND
MASTERS OF THE MEDIUM**

DESIGNER & EDITOR Jaimianne Amicucci
COPY EDITORS Diane J. Charnov, Michele A. Manatt,
Geraldine Ostrove

The JRA Craft Quarterly is published three times a year by the James Renwick Alliance, an independent national non-profit organization that celebrates the achievements of America's craft artists and fosters scholarship, education, connoisseurship and public appreciation of craft art. Founded in 1982, the Alliance fulfills its mission through public programs, educational trips, publications, recognition of craft artists, and financial support of museums and other non-profit organizations, including the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

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

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DISTINGUISHED ARTISTS

ON THE COVER:

Michael Sherrill. *Dutch Soloman* (2015). John Michael Kohler Arts Center, gift of the artist. Photo by Scott Allen.

ON THE BACK:

Detail of *Koi Grid 3* by Distinguished Artist Series participant Tim Harding.

The James Renwick Alliance annual Distinguished Artist Series brings notable craft artists from around the country to provide insight into their work with a Saturday workshop and Sunday lecture.

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Master of the Medium Michael Hurwitz. *Oval Cabinet with Mica* (2015) In the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Photo by Fred Kenner.

LEARN MORE

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Since assuming my position as the JRA President in early October, it's been quite a whirlwind with many rich programs, travel to my first-ever SOFA Chicago (Sculptural Objects Functional Art and Design), and opportunities to get to know many members better. Though I have been on the board for several years, I am now realizing how much

more I have to discover and learn.

Our fall programming has been stimulating and very well attended. Columbus Day weekend was an outstanding celebration of glass artist talent with the Distinguished Artist lecture by the formidable glass artist Tim Tate and a presentation by our 2018 Chrysalis Award winner Dean Allison. And on December 8-9 we hosted ceramic master Bennett Bean, whose philosophy erases the borders between studio, home, environment, objects and garden.

In this issue you will learn more about our Director Jaimianne Amicucci, who has a great deal of non-profit arts experience, deep knowledge of Craft, and keeps things moving at an excellent pace. She has brought us together with new partners like District Clay Center, Montgomery College Rockville Art Department and the Washington Guild of Goldsmiths.

Our signature event, Spring Craft Weekend, will be April 26-28, 2019. You can learn about the five Masters of the Medium we will honor in these pages. Stay tuned for exciting announcements about the SCW venues early next year and please Save the Date.

Relationships, shared experiences and a passion for Craft are what fuel the JRA and make it satisfying for so many of us. If you have ideas or suggestions that you want to share with me, I invite you to do so. My email is president@jra.org.

I want to thank you for your involvement in and generosity to the JRA. I look forward to a terrific 2019 together.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michele A. Manatt". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michele A. Manatt
JRA President

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WOMEN OF THE ALLIANCE

The James Renwick Alliance welcomes three new leaders, each of whom brings talent and expertise to the organization.

Photo courtesy Wolfram Anders.

JAIMIANNE AMICUCCI DIRECTOR

Jaimianne Amicucci assumed her new role as Director in July 2018, after working with the James Renwick Alliance for two years as the Programming and Marketing Manager. Previously she was the Executive Director of the Shenandoah Arts Council and owned and operated The Gray Gallery in Winchester, Virginia. Additionally, she currently serves as the Executive Officer of the Creative Crafts Council and is working on her first publication, "The History of Craft in our Nation's Capital."

Her background includes working with organizations like The Clay Art Center, Baltimore Clayworks, and Glen Echo Park. She has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramics and a Master of Fine Arts in Curatorial Practice from the Maryland Institute of Art.

MICHELE A. MANATT PRESIDENT

Michele Manatt was elected president of the JRA in October 2018 after being a JRA board member since 2014.

She serves as a board director of the U.S. Diplomacy Center Foundation, which is helping build the first museum of American Diplomacy that will be located at the State Department and open to the public. It is expected to open in 2021.

During the Clinton Administration, she served as the Senior Policy Advisor to three Assistant Secretaries of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs (encompasses all of Latin American and the Caribbean) and as Director of Congressional Affairs at the White House Drug Czar's Office.

Michele and her husband Wolfram Anders are collectors of contemporary American craft and of Latin American art. Those interests developed when they lived in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 2003-05. They are members of the SAAM Director's Circle and of the James Smithsonian Society.

EMILY SCHIMMEL OFFICE MANAGER

Emily joined the JRA as Office Manager in September 2018. She is currently completing her MA in Decorative Arts and Design History at the Smithsonian/GW-Corcoran. Her particular interest is early decorative arts of the American South. In addition, she is a guide at the President Woodrow Wilson House in Washington, an intern at Woodlawn/Pope-Leighey House in Virginia and she volunteers at Riversdale House Museum in Maryland and the Alexandria Lyceum.

ROBERTO LUGO

A PHILADELPHIA NATIVE AND AWARD WINNING CERAMIC ARTIST

By Robert Sinclair

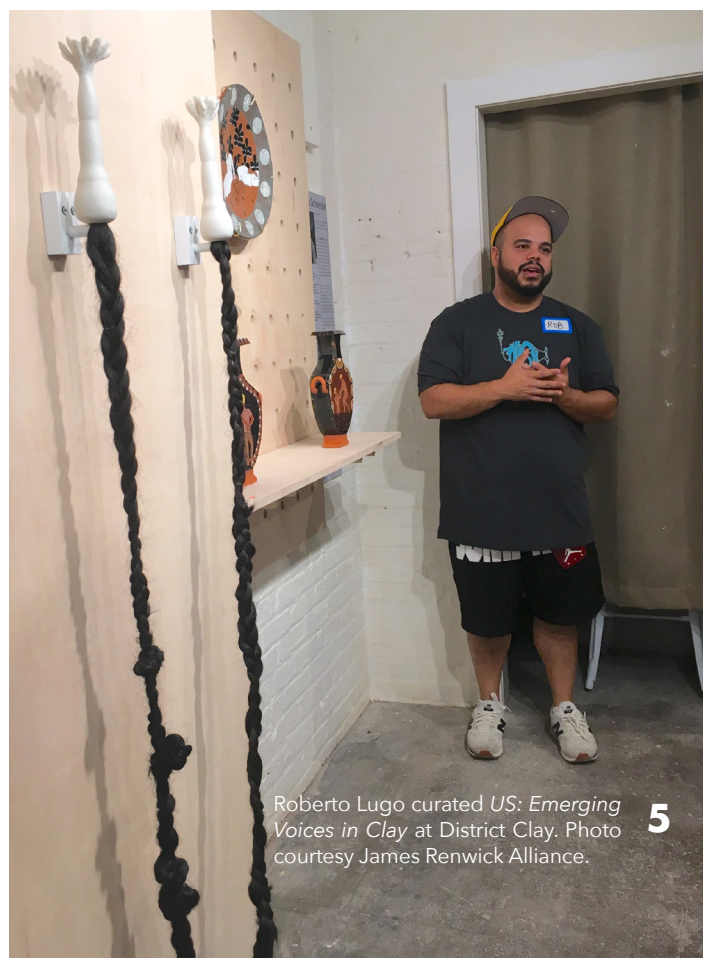
On a hot, rainy August day, some two dozen Renwick Alliance members traveled to the District Clay Center in Northeast Washington for a meet-up with “potter, activist, culture-maker, rapper, poet and educator” Roberto Lugo. Lugo quickly made it clear that clay plays a central role in his brand of activism.

Lugo was a graffiti artist well before becoming a potter. His parents were born in Puerto Rico and he grew up in a “dirt-poor” neighborhood of Philadelphia. He says, “I couldn’t make the pottery I make today if I hadn’t started doing graffiti as a teen.”

He did not discover clay until he and his family moved to south Florida, where he enrolled—and excelled—in a ceramics class at a community college. “It was the first time in my life I was ever told I was good at anything,” he says. Art making immediately became his calling; “Right off the bat, it felt important.” He has been prodigiously productive ever since.

Lugo received a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute and an MFA from Penn State. He is Professor of ceramics at Marlboro College. The National Council on Education in Ceramic Arts (NCECA) named him its 2015 Emerging Artist. His NCECA conference speech that year was about how pottery saved his life, and included the fact that the phrase, “This machine kills hate,” is painted onto his pottery wheel; the speech received a standing ovation. In 2018 the Ceramic Arts Network, *Ceramics Monthly* and *Pottery Making Illustrated* named him Ceramic Artist of the Year.

Lugo makes big pots. His forms often reflect historical ceramic patterns; in particular, he is drawn to Royal Worcester porcelain. The images, however, reflect the world of an up-from-the-bottom, non-white Philadelphian. Lugo says, “Although my history is filled with adversity, racism and sheer bad luck, I celebrate these moments in my work. I could not make art without the experiences they have offered to me. ... The act of making pots is similar to transforming the ground we walk on into something we eat from. We prize it; we search all day for the perfect spot to put it on display. In many ways this relationship from tragedy to triumph is a metaphor for my life’s story.”



Roberto Lugo curated *US: Emerging Voices in Clay* at District Clay. Photo courtesy James Renwick Alliance.

FIBER ART AT DC ARTS STUDIOS THREE DYNAMIC ARTISTS

By Brenda Erickson

In late summer, members of the JRA met at the DC Arts Studios for a fiber art tour with Saaraliisa Ylitalo, Hillary Steel and Dominie Nash, three stellar artists from the Washington, D.C. area. The DC Arts Studios is an artist cooperative that provides studio space, exhibition space and interaction among Washington artists. The artists learn various techniques, see new art and get inspiration from other artists.

The three artists have exhibited widely and are represented in national collections. By coincidence, all began as weavers. They practice one of the oldest art forms, and are all strongly influenced by, and have explored, ancient techniques. And they have all traveled widely to study indigenous techniques in order to learn directly from the cultures where the techniques arose. But each artist has developed her fiber art in an individual way. Each explained her techniques and how her influences have changed and deepened her approach to art.

The fiber art by these artists demands serious reflection and repeated viewing. Nothing is facile or trite. Their pieces command the same skill and attention that any contemporary art does. The JRA tour members were drawn into the complexities of the designs and their artistic expressions. Their questions were probing and indicative of deep thought and sharp intellectual inquiry.

Hillary Steel

Hillary Steel has been a weaver since 1979. While traveling to the Ivory Coast in 1992, she discovered ikat. With ikat, the threads are dyed

6 or over-dyed before the piece is woven. Today, while double ikat and warp ikat

are present in most of her works, her weavings have evolved into large three-dimensional pieces, sometimes with a kimono design. Hillary explained how she blends and folds her weavings to make these complex structures.

Recently, Hillary, with her fellow artist and teacher Virginia Davis, has spent time each year in Mexico studying with master weaver Don Evaristo Borboa Casas. There she has produced rebozos using a backstrap loom. She still uses ikat dyed threads, a return to her previous ikat weaving designs.

Dominie Nash

Dominie Nash makes art quilts. Some are abstract still lifes; others, suggestive of nature, evoke a sense of calm, deep thought, even of meditation. Previously her work was based on vessels, bowls, and other containers that were often photocopied and sometimes patched onto fabric. She now defines her work as deconstructed screen painting, in which she uses successive impressions of printed images to take advantage of how the impressions become fainter as the work progresses. Dominie layers these fabrics to create a collage of images. She is currently moving toward working in black and white, creating the design by sketching in ink directly on the fabric.





Saariisa Ylitalo

While traveling with her husband with the Foreign Service, Saariisa Ylitalo absorbed and studied numerous fiber techniques that supplemented her formal training in textiles at college. But it was her five years in Japan that instilled a love of paper and its potential to be manipulated into varied and distinctive forms. For the tour group, she demonstrated joomchi, a Korean technique that produces a textured fabric by wetting and kneading mulberry paper to the point where the re-dried fiber creates a rough texture that becomes the canvas for her work. On this background, she often paints a meditative circle, usually with India ink, sometimes with gold wash. The recent death of her husband has intensified the meditative aspect of her work. She frequently works in series that, in the Japanese manner, always have an odd number of pieces.

For other pieces, she uses folded or rolled paper, paper patterned with stitches and woven and overlaid designs. While her processes

seem simple, each piece shows extended thought and complex interaction between the material, form and design.

Each artist actively exhibits her work locally as well as elsewhere in the country. Saariisa will be showing at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta, and in the coming year, she will be part of three shows with the Textile Art Group. Hillary Steel was part of the VisArts 30th anniversary show in Rockville, Maryland. Last year, she and Dominie Nash exhibited together at the BlackRock Center for the Arts in Germantown, Maryland. Dominie Nash had a show this past September at Mary Condon Hodgson Art Gallery at the Frederick Community College in Maryland. Dominie, along with Saariisa and the other fiber artists of the New Image Artists Group, presented *13 Perspectives* at the Exhibit Gallery at the Wayne Theatre in Waynesboro, Virginia.

Page 6: Dominie Nash speaking to guests in her studio.

Above: Saariisa Ylitalo with guests. Both photos courtesy James Renwick Alliance.



THE FORMIDABLE GLASS ARTIST TIM TATE

By Jaimianne Amicucci

On the weekend of October 6th, longtime member and supporter Tim Tate stepped into the spotlight as one of the featured artists in the 2018/19 James Renwick Alliance (JRA) Distinguished Artist Series. The spotlight is not a difficult place for Tate, who recently was the featured artist in Penland School of Crafts 33rd Annual Benefit Auction in August, and who was noted in American Craft's 2018 December/January issue as having a "big presence, a brash sense of humor and friends in every corner of the craft and art worlds."

Tim Tate is one of over 100 craft artists who have been featured as a Distinguished Artist to date. The Series has brought notable craft artists from around the country to the D.C. region since 1992. With four artists

a year, each presents a Saturday workshop and Sunday lecture that is free and open to the public. The 2018/19 series continues to impress guests with artists Bennett Bean, Tim Harding, Elizabeth Brim and, of course, Tim Tate. Three of the four are in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Tim Tate is an artist who looks forward, continuing to expand his artwork into new fields. But let us look back at the mark he has made as a glass artist in Washington area. Tate is a D.C. native who began taking glass classes after being diagnosed as HIV positive in 1989. The diagnosis helped him decide to pursue his passion for glass making. He began by attending classes at Penland School of Craft, while continuing to work full time. "I took all of my vacation time for 10 years to go to Penland," he told William Warmus in an interview for

American Craft Magazine, December/January 2018.

In 2001 Tate helped establish the Washington Glass School, which serves as a working and teaching studio. It was at his studio that the JRA Distinguished Artist Series workshop took place, and where he demonstrated his newest work.

Tate's works have developed in consecutive series, including one using heart imagery, one of narrative, reliquary-like vessels that incorporate video, and one of framed pieces; each series informs the next. Video has been an important component of some of these works. His video frames, or "moving paintings," show a silent engagement, sometimes between two figures on a screen and sometimes between the figure and the viewer. His recent series of infinity mirrors allows viewers to see their reflection and encourages self-reflection all at once. These mirrors have also allowed Tate to address current political issues like gun violence, immigration and social media.

Tate's use of polyvitro, a resin-glass polymer, has provided him new freedom to work lighter and faster. Polyvitro is a medium that was first adapted for making art by Dale Chihuly. During the workshop, Tate explained the process and demonstrated a large cast piece. He mixed the polyvitro and added colorants, then poured the mixture into a handmade mold. Two lucky guests helped spread the mixture before pouring a second color, which added dimension



to the piece.

After a heat-producing drying period, Tate pulled the rubber mold from the piece to unveil the final cast. This mold was used to make "Sunset Lover," pictured here, and other works.

Tim's public lecture the following day took place in the Alper Initiative for Washington Art in the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center. Among the 150 attendees were students, longtime Alliance members and Carolyn Alper herself. Glass artist, Michael Janis, gave a humorous introduction that was fitting for Tim Tate, an artist known for having a big personality, and Tim continued to engage the audience as he explained the inspiration and motivation for his work.

During his lecture, Tim recounted speaking early in his career with JRA founding member Paul Parkman, who gave him some advice that he would carry with him, "Make something they can't forget." As a man who has made himself and his artwork an irreplaceable part of the James Renwick Alliance, the Washington art community and the studio glass movement, all can agree, Tim Tate is someone you can never forget.

Page 8: Tim Tate demonstrates his process at the Distinguished Artist Series workshop.

Above: Tim Tate *Sunset Lover*. Polyvitro and digital media.

Left: guests at Distinguished Artist Series workshop. All photos courtesy James Renwick Alliance.



Dinner with the Collectors. Photos courtesy James Renwick Alliance.

DINNER WITH THE KAPLANS

Guests entered a tall foyer of the Kaplan's home with awe at the James Renwick Alliance (JRA) *Dinner with the Collectors* on October 6th. Director Jaimianne Amicucci welcomed and directed guests up the few stairs to be greeted by the gracious hosts, Deena and Jerome Kaplan.

The Kaplans have seriously collected since moving into their home in 1990. The collection includes works large and small by all the major artists in studio craft. In the foyer stands an impressive Jun Kaneko piece purchased at auction and complemented with a signature head sculpture acquired when the Kaplan's traveled to the artist's studio with the JRA. The couple has acquired a number of pieces with the James Renwick Alliance, both on trips and at auction during the JRA's annual Spring Craft Weekend. In a brief conversation with Deena Kaplan, she quickly listed works by Kiyomi Iwata, John Garrett and Tommy Simpson, amongst others, all acquired at JRA auctions.

In 2014, the Kaplans were honored with a One-of-a-Kind Award by the Alliance for their dedication and service to the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Renwick Gallery, the wood art

community and the Washington, DC area art and craft community. As part of their ongoing legacy, the Kaplans have donated many fine craft pieces to major museums including 40 pieces to the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, five to Penland School of Craft, three to Yale University Art Gallery and recently one to the Folk Art Museum. Additionally, the couple has served on numerous JRA committees and on the board of directors and hosted the first Spring Craft Weekend Masters of the Medium Award Dinner at their home.

Their generosity continues and is evident as hosts of *Dinner with the Collectors*. Of the 75 guests in attendance, 30 were from the Metropolitan Contemporary Glass Group (MCGG). The MCGG is one of the country's oldest clubs of contemporary studio glass collectors. Founded in 1983, its members come primarily from the New York Metropolitan area, as well as several other states. Once a year, the group takes a glass related trip, this year to the DMV with other stops including the Washington Glass School and the home collections of JRA board member, Leslie and Bruce Lane and the home of JRA past president and former board members Diane and Marc Grainer. However, as one visitor spoke about Dinner with the Collectors "this may be the highlight of our trip".

With a sit-down dinner on the patio lit by ambient torch lights, the sun set on an amazing evening of new and old friendships tied together by a common interest in collecting craft. Deena Kaplan reflected on the evening saying, "We very much enjoyed entertaining the group and found the guests to be very knowledgeable and very appreciative."

DEAN ALLISON

RECEIVES THE 2018 JRA CHRYSALIS AWARD

By Nikki O'Neill

Recognizing that emerging artists are the future of the craft field, the James Renwick Alliance (JRA) sponsors the annual Chrysalis Award to an emerging craft artist whose work shows merit, skill and innovation. The award helps the JRA fulfill its mission to celebrate the achievements of America's craft artists and foster scholarship, education and public appreciation of craft art.

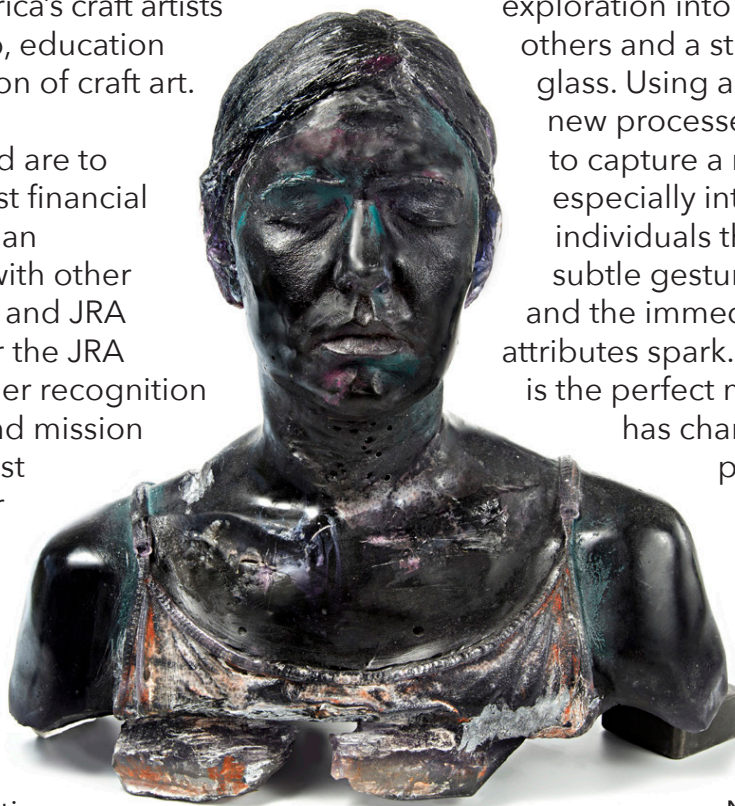
The goals of the award are to give an emerging artist financial support, visibility and an opportunity to meet with other craft artists, collectors and JRA members. Benefits for the JRA include providing wider recognition of our organization and mission and generating interest in the JRA from newer artists and from institutions.

The Chrysalis Award rotates each year among fiber, glass, metal, wood and mixed media. Applications are reviewed by a panel of jurors, which this year included Nikki O'Neill, Rhoda Baer, Diane Charnov and Janet Wittenberg. The recipient receives \$5,000, membership in the JRA for one year and opportunities to present his or her work and participate in JRA events. From an exceptionally strong field of applicants, this year in the medium of glass, the Alliance is pleased to announce that Dean Allison was selected as the 2018 Chrysalis Award recipient. Dean is known for his mesmerizing portraits of people in glass. Through an

innovative approach that combines old and new techniques and materials, he creates three-dimensional photographs of ordinary people, capturing their uniqueness through a multilayered glass casting process.

In his submission, Dean described his work as a documentation of human form, an exploration into the ways we perceive others and a study of portraiture in studio glass. Using a combination of old and new processes and materials, he aims to capture a moment in time. He is especially interested in understanding individuals through an analysis of subtle gesture, physical attributes and the immediate perceptions those attributes spark. He described how glass is the perfect medium for him, since it

has characteristics common to people: it is transparent, opaque, fragile, broken, sharp, incompatible, rough, polished and colorful.



The award was presented to Dean Allison by

Nikki O'Neill, Chrysalis

Committee Chair, at the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center on October 7. The presentation was held in conjunction with artist Tim Tate's public lecture as a participant in this year's JRA Distinguished Artist Series. In Allison's acceptance, he offered insightful comments about his career and work. He has recently completed a three-year residency at Penland School of Crafts, and has moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he is currently establishing his new studio.

For local glassmakers, it was a particular pleasure to host Dean during the JRA *October Glass Fest*, regarded as a celebratory weekend of glass. He had the opportunity to meet many local glass artists and to visit artists' studios, including the Washington Glass School, Weisser Glass Studio and several private studios. He was also able to exchange greetings and receive congratulations from many JRA members and from members of the New York Metropolitan Contemporary Glass Group, who had come to town for festivities that included the afternoon award presentation and lecture at American University's Katzen Arts Center.

Dean Allison's work can be viewed at www.deanallison.net.

Past and Future JRA Chrysalis Awards

The 2016 JRA Chrysalis Award, generously underwritten by JRA member Darcy Walker, was made to fiber artist Shea Wilkinson, from Nebraska. Shea has since observed that the award had a significant and positive impact on her life and her work, which can be viewed at www.sheawilkinson.com.



We are pleased to announce that the 2019 Chrysalis Award will be sponsored by long-time JRA member and craft art devotee, Pati Young. The category will be mixed media. In 2020 the Award will be open to artists working in wood, and in 2021 to ceramic artists.

Page 11: Dean Allison *Breakdown* (2016). Photo courtesy the artist.

Above: Dean Allison presenting at the Distinguished Artist Series lecture and Chrysalis Award for the JRA October Glass Fest.

Below: Group photo of Dean Allison, Susan Sanders, Tim Tate, Cicie Sattarnilasskorn, Donovan Lessard, Michael Janis and Fred Sanders.

All photos courtesy James Renwick Alliance.



MASTERS OF THE MEDIUM

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR SCW 2019

The James Renwick Alliance (JRA) bestows our Masters of the Medium Award biannually to an artist in each of the five craft materials who has influenced their medium, demonstrated craftsmanship and contributed to the craft field. The impact they have made on the field of craft will be celebrated at several events during Spring Craft Weekend (SCW). Please plan to join us and support the ongoing work of the JRA and the wider craft community.

Michael Sherrill - Ceramics

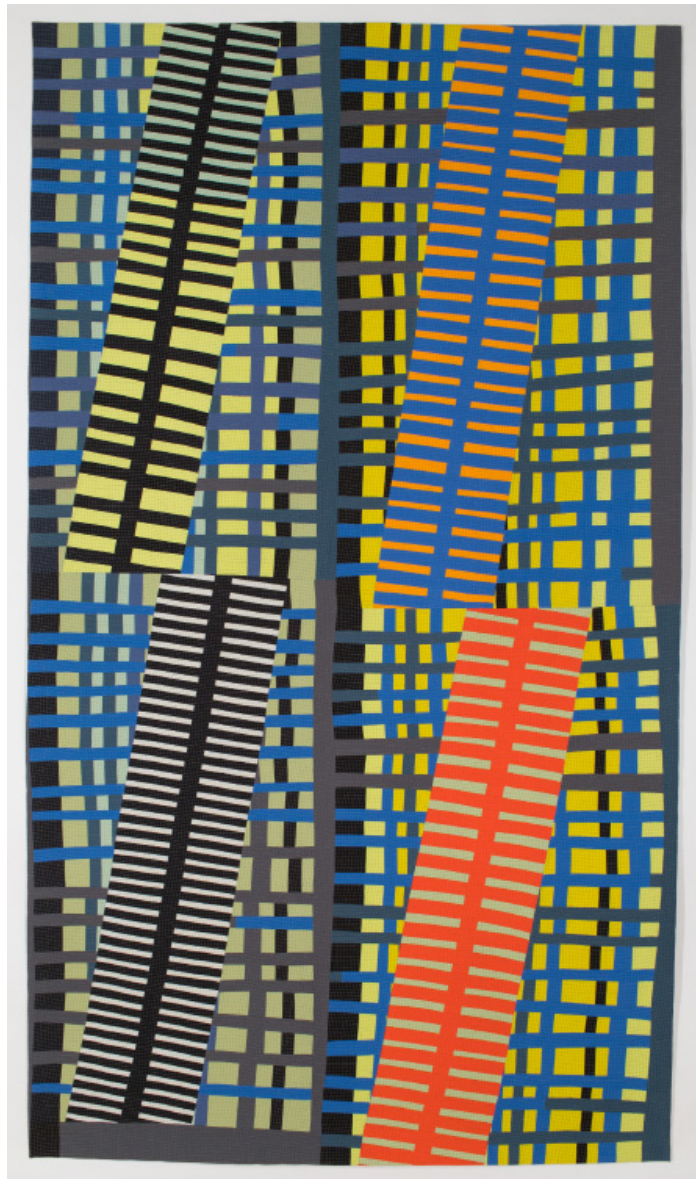
Michael Sherrill considers himself a materials-based artist experimenting primarily in the media of clay, metal, and glass. At the heart of his interest is the intersection of where humans and materials meet in both handmade objects and the natural world. Michael's work is in several public collections, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum Renwick Gallery, the Mint Museum, Corning Museum of Glass, and the Takoma Glass Museum, among others. In the summer of 2004, Michael was one of 10 artists invited to participate in a residency focused on creating outdoor sculptures to be permanently placed at the International Ceramic Museum in Incheon, South Korea. His other residencies include the Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts (2005), the John Michael Kohler Arts Center (2006), the Museum of Glass (2010), and the LH Project (2015). His first retrospective opened at the Mint Museum in Charlotte, NC and will be on display until April 7, 2019. It will arrive at the Renwick Gallery in June 2019 and will then travel to the Arizona State University Art Museum in early 2020.

Nancy Crow - Fiber

Nancy Crow has been making quilts for over 40 years and is one of the leading figures in the development of the art quilting movement of the 1970s and 1980s. Crow studied ceramics and weaving at Ohio State University, where she earned a BFA in 1965 and a MFA in 1969. In 1979, Crow began to concentrate on quilt making and co-founded the Quilt National exhibitions, a juried biennial exhibition of contemporary quilt art. In 1996, she received the National Living Treasure Award from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and was inducted into the Quilters Hall of Fame in 1997. She was named a fellow of the American Crafts Council in 1999 and received



an Individual Artist Fellowship from the Ohio Arts Council in 2002. She has authored six publications and work in collections at the Smithsonian American Art Museum Renwick Gallery, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and the Museum of Art and Design, New York, among others. Most recently, she has curated a traveling exhibition *Color Improvisations 2*, a large-scale invitational exhibition by 43 contemporary quilters from Canada, France, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, Scotland and the United States. She maintains a teaching facility and large studios on her 100-acre farm east of Columbus, Ohio.



Michael Hurwitz - Wood

Michael Hurwitz has been making studio furniture for forty years, striving to create work that is timeless, elegant, and respectful of the nature of the material. After earning a BFA from Boston University's Program in Artisanry in 1979 he established a studio in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He later moved to Philadelphia to serve as Head of the Wood Department at University of the Arts from 1985 to 1989. Hurwitz is the recipient of many honors including three National Endowment for the Arts Visual Artist Fellowships, Japan Foundation Fellowship, Tiffany and PEW Foundation in the Arts Fellowships, and in 2014 he was made a Fellow of the American Craft Council. He has exhibited extensively, including several solo exhibitions at the Peter Joseph Gallery and Pritam & Eames Gallery, both in NY. His work is included in several public collections, including the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.

Therman Statom - Glass

Therman Statom is a sculptor, glass artist, and painter. He is most notably known as a pioneer of the contemporary glass movement for his life-size glass ladders, chairs, tables, constructed box-like paintings, and small-scale houses; all were created through the technique of gluing glass plate together. Over the span of his career, he has completed over thirty large, site-specific installations, including permanent installations at the Los Angeles

Page 13: Michael Sherrill. *A Beautiful Death* (2017). Photo by Scott Allen.

Above: Nancy Crow. *Drawing: Riff #7* (2018©Nancy Crow). Photo by J Kevin Fitzsimons.

14 Top right: Michael Hurwitz *The Twelve Leaf Resin Table* (2013). Photo by David Harrison

Public Library, Corning, Inc. Headquarters, the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, the Toledo Museum of Art, the New York State Arts Commission and several hospitals across the United States. Statom includes among his honors an Outstanding Achievement Award presented in 2008 by UrbanGlass in Brooklyn, NY. He was awarded fellowship grants by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1982 and 1988. He also was the recipient of a Ford Foundation Artists Grant in 1997 and was named a Fellow of the American Craft Council in 1999.

Myra Mimlitsch-Gray - Jewelry/Metals

Myra Mimlitsch-Gray earned her BFA degree from Philadelphia College of Art in 1984 and her MFA degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1986. As a professor at the State University of New York at New Paltz, Mimlitsch-Gray received the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1998 and the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Work in 2018. She was the recipient of the 2016 American Craft Council Award and inducted into its College of Fellows. Other awards include Individual Artist Fellowships in Craft/Sculpture from the New York Foundation for the Arts (1997, 2005, 2014), the United States Artists Glasgow Fellowship in Craft and Traditional Arts (2012), Individual Artist Fellowships from the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation (1995), the National Endowment for the Arts (1994), and the New York Foundation for the Arts (1997, 2005). In 2014, the Metal Museum in Memphis, Tennessee named Mimlitsch-Gray a “Master Metalsmith” and presented her first museum retrospective. Her work is in the collections of the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, Cranbrook Art Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Mint Museum of Craft and Design, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Racine Art Museum, the Smithsonian American Art Museum Renwick Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, among others.



SPRING CRAFT WEEKEND
SAVE THE DATE
APRIL 26-28, 2019



Top: Therman Statom. *Glass House* (1994/1998). Courtesy the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The Leatrice S. and Melvin B. Eagle Collection, museum purchase funded by the Caroline Wiess Law Accessions Endowment Fund

Bottom: Myra Mimlitsch-Gray, *Candelabrum, Seven Fragments* (2002-03) Courtesy of Cranbrook Art Museum, Photo by R. H. Hensleigh and Tim Thayer.

Learn more: www.jra.org

FEWER, BETTER THINGS

THE HIDDEN WISDOM OF OBJECTS

Book by Glenn Adamson, Bloomsbury Publishing, New York, 2018

Book Review By Diane Charnov

Renowned scholar and curator, Glenn Adamson, turns his knowledge and experience to the state of modern craft in this finely researched book, *Fewer, Better Things: The Hidden Wisdom of Objects*. His detailed observations span continents, centuries and materials as he focuses on the rise of the digital world and its conflict with the material world. At the heart of this work, Adamson warns of, "overconsumption and waste," grapples with issues of "accessibility and affordability" and observes, "When we ignore our material environment, we are essentially forgetting who we are."

Adamson, an eloquent observer of craft, reveals his personal connections to the field. He opens with a reference to his teddy bear, his most treasured object as a child. He sharply contrasts this common attachment among 20th century children with 21st century youth who are often more attached to smartphones. He also reveals the "Eureka" moment that led him to his profession. During a course on Chinese ceramics, he turned an ancient piece upside down and experienced that moment as his hand united with the fingerprint of the piece's 15th century maker. Such personal moments set the stage for this book, which ranges from observations about the Japanese tea ceremony to the untapped potential for 3D printers in the modern world.

Adamson also provides a portal into the mind of a museum professional. He shares insights into his views on the future of the museum, from his description of enhanced technology at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum to concerns

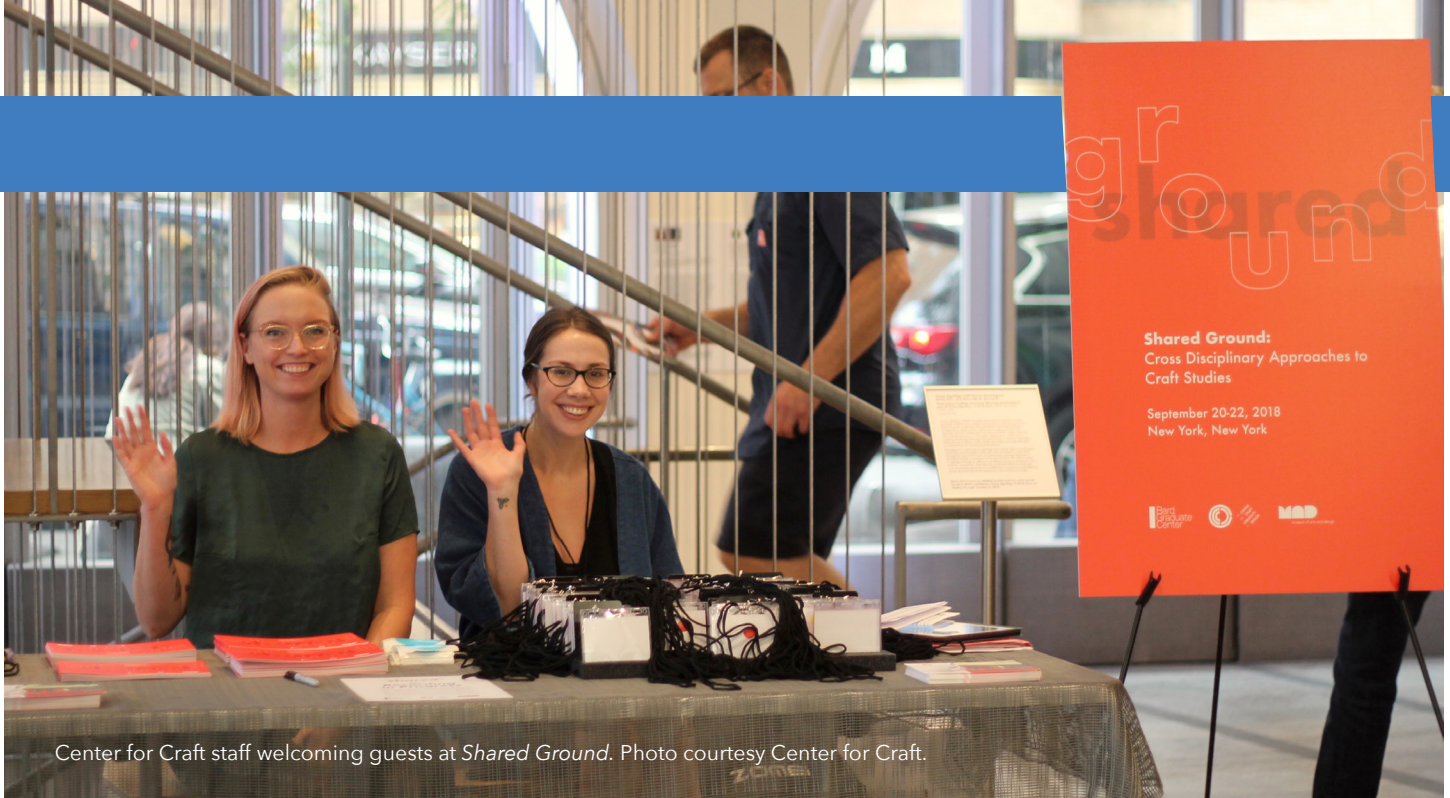
that the emphasis on the virtual world may undercut the importance of the material world. He praises museums, such as Belgium's Musical Instruments Museum that includes hands-on learning in its violin-making workshops yet also offers technological enhancements. As evidence, he cites the positive role of a proximity-sensor audio tour where period-appropriate music is played through visitor's headphones. He even highlights a small museum in the New Mexico, where an ink spot, mistakenly spilled on the floor by the caretaker's grandson, has been permanently enshrined. It has earned its own label that draws attention to the materiality of ink as a "pretty potent item... doesn't matter the year." Adamson's reverence for carefully selected objects also extends to the set of "Mad Men," whose acclaim can partly be traced to its "precise period re-creation," which extends to Don Draper's carefully selected highball glass.

Adamson makes a strong case for his goal to "build respect" for material intelligence in this 34-chapter study filled with insights from makers, scientists, curators, and even a NASA space architect. In an age of tension between the material and virtual world, this work is a penetrating examination of craft. It is part history lesson, part aesthetic inquiry, and part siren call about the future of craft. Adamson concludes, "We truly can live with fewer, better things." Even with the urgent message to carefully curate one's things, this book is highly deserving of treasured space on any maker's or collector's shelf.

Glenn Adamson is a senior scholar at Yale Center for British Art and works across the fields of design, craft, and contemporary art. A former Director of the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, he has also been head of research at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and curator of the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee. His books include, *Art in the Making* (co-authored with Julia Bryan-Wilson) and *Thinking Through Craft*, among others.

Photo of book cover courtesy of Bloomsbury Publishing.





Center for Craft staff welcoming guests at *Shared Ground*. Photo courtesy Center for Craft.

SHARED GROUND CONFERENCE: CROSS-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO CRAFT

Center for Craft, Museum of Art and Design and Bard Graduate Center
Collaborate to Break New Ground in the Field of Craft Studies

By Diane Charnov

Shared Ground: Cross Disciplinary Approaches to Craft Studies broke new ground in the field of craft during the Symposium that took place in New York City over the weekend of September 22-24, 2018. Organized with support from the Windgate Foundation, planning spanned two years and included three significant craft leaders and their organizations: Marilyn Zapf of the Center for Craft, Elissa Auther of the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD), and Catherine Whalen of the Bard Graduate Center. Opening remarks emphasized that, "The study of craft is at a critical moment... [This] symposium explores cross-disciplinary approaches to craft studies, with an eye towards intersecting and divergent theories, methodologies and sites of practice."

Over three days, more than 150 participants and 35 presenters came from the U.S. and around the world to engage in provocative discussions on issues that spanned history,

geography, materials and disciplines. Presentations ranged from *Stitching the Transatlantic: Quilting, Diplomacy and Activism in the Nineteenth Century* to the *Effects of Farming Practices and Animal Husbandry on the Material Properties of Bone China*. In addition, the impact of ecotourism on craft in Costa Rica and the role of women and weaving core memory into the space launch of Apollo 8 were all topics under discussion. Whether learning about *The Culture of Craft in the Era of the Kunstkammer* (cabinets of curiosities - precursors to museums) from Bard's Professor Morrell or the craft of *The 'Carnival' in New Orleans* from Fath Davis Ruffins, Curator of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, the breadth of presentations spanned the universe of craft.

As Professor Hideo Mabuchi of Stanford University, who teaches both physics and ceramics remarked, "...it's important to push boundaries of properties and materials...and the mind." Even with the

esteemed panels, the audience also initiated serious discussions. Craft icons, including Helen Drutt English (a recent JRA Distinguished Educator) and Lloyd Herman (for whom a curatorial position at the Renwick Gallery is named) sat side-by-side graduate students, makers and others drawn to the world of craft.

Co-organizer Marilyn Zapf observed, "...with so many changes in the field and the rising momentum, enthusiasm and interest in craft, it seemed like now, more than ever, it is time to take stock of these shifts..." Presentations on the craft of food highlighted "shared ground" between art and science. Professor Bernard Herman of the University of North Carolina focused on "*The Craft We Eat*" in his mouth-watering presentation on oyster farming along the Eastern Shore and aesthetic elements of food presentation.

The Symposium also included curator-led tours of MAD's exhibition, *Future of Craft*, *Tanya Aguiniga: Craft & Care* and *La Frontera: Encounters along the Border*. The tours shed further light on the museum's exhibitions including Tanya's work, which blends fiber art, design, social practice and activism. Her experience crossing the Tijuana border daily for 14 years played a major role in her project AMBOS - Art Made Between Opposite Sides (AMBOS). JRA members will be fortunate to see her installations first-hand in *The Renwick Invitational: Disrupting Craft* exhibition on display from November 9, 2018 - May 5, 2019.

Rewarding conversations also emerged between presentations, including a memorable one with Elissa Auther of MAD, who proudly remarked that her JRA Renwick Fellowship in 2002 had a major impact on her life. She gratefully acknowledged that the JRA's recognition and support not only helped her complete her book, *String, Felt, Thread: The Hierarchy of Art and Craft in American Art*, but that without it, "I cannot imagine being where I am and doing what I'm doing today."

18 In a closing session, Namita Wiggers, founding Director of the Master of



Shared Ground organizers. Photo courtesy Center for Craft.



Shared Ground conference guests. Photo courtesy Center for Craft.

Arts in Critical & Historical Craft Studies at Warren Wilson College, shared reflections and divulged her use of the phrase, "Yes, and..." in response to student research inquiries. The "yes" underscored her support of the student's research interest, while the "and" was her way of saying, "...and let's figure out how to make it happen - and expand the craft space."

This conference also followed a "yes, and" approach. The "yes" was evident in its inclusion of a broad realm of craft inquiry, while the "and" was apparent in bridging connections on a local, global, intergenerational, material and historic level. The Center for Craft, MAD and Bard should take great pride in knowing that their efforts enhanced understanding, promoted scholarship, fostered significant conversations and created a dynamic forum to explore ideas in the field of craft currently undergoing seismic shifts.

Note: All sessions were recorded. Visit cccdnow.org/sharedground to access the conference

MEMBER PROFILE

LARRY HAWK, JRA MEMBER AND COLLECTOR

Tell us a bit about your professional history.

I have an information systems background. I was fortunate to serve as one of the first personnel systems managers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Later I held positions at the Department of Defense and at the Treasury Department. I only recently retired.

How and when did you get involved with the James Renwick Alliance?

I joined at the time when David Montague was JRA president. I got to know David through a Friends group at the Corcoran Gallery to which we both belonged.

What draws you to collecting craft? Can you tell us about one of your favorite pieces and how you came to acquire it?

I was collecting contemporary art on a budget when, after moving to St. Louis Missouri, I bought some pieces from Sissy Thomas at the Okun-Thomas Gallery, one of the first galleries to show fine art and crafts. They mounted shows with artists including Robert Turner, Betty Woodman and Peter Voukos. Ceramics became my sculpture alternative. One of my favorite pieces is "Big Bear Frog" by David Gilhooly, which I acquired from Okun-Thomas. It is a bust of a frog as an Indian chief on a log pedestal. The piece was included in a small Currents exhibition at the St. Louis Art Museum. The exhibit was curated by Jack Cowart, whom I knew at the time and later became reacquainted with when he came to the National Gallery of Art in Washington.

This past year you attended the National Council on Education in Ceramic Arts (NCECA) conference in Pittsburgh. Tell us a bit about your experience there.

This was the second conference I attended. As is my custom, I went with the collector's tour, so I got to see a lot with a group of people who attend often, making it like a group of old friends. Collectors tours have greater access and have more fun than going solo. Also, I got to meet some artists whose work I had acquired but whom I had never met before.

While there, you purchased a piece by Sharif Bey, who is featured in the Renwick Gallery's new exhibition *Disrupting Craft*. Can you tell us about this artist and what drew you to him?

I liked the way he included African images with a current look and feel. I earlier bought folk art (Mose Tolliver and Bessie Harvey) and some fine art (including Kojo Griffin) by African-American artists, so I already have some background in collecting similar artists. In the past year, I commissioned a pot by Roberto Lugo with images of favorite musicians Jimi Hendrix and B.B. King. In addition, I am buying a small sculpture by Kahlil Robert Irving, who grew up in St. Louis (another connection!).



Photo from Sharif Bey: *Dialogues in Clay and Glass* exhibition presented during the 2018 NCECA conference.

SAVE THE DATES

JANUARY 2019

1/29- Cuba Arts Trip
2/5

MARCH 2019

- 3/9 Tim Harding Workshop
9:30am - 12:00pm at
Artists & Makers Studios
- 3/10 Tim Harding Lecture
2:00pm - 3:00pm at
American University
Katzen Arts Center
- 3/16 Visit with glass artists Mel Douglas
and Nancy Callan
- 3/24 Video screening of
J. Fred Woell: An American Vision
Montgomery College Robert E. Parilla
Performing Arts Center
(tentative date)

APRIL 2019

4/26 - **SPRING CRAFT WEEKEND**
4/28

MAY 2019

- 5/4 Elizabeth Brim Workshop
9:30am - 12:00pm at
Chris Shea's studio
- 5/5 Elizabeth Brim Lecture
2:00pm - 3:00pm at
American University
Katzen Arts Center



MEMBERSHIP

RENEW OR JOIN TODAY

www.jra.org