

# Founders' Circle Bulletin



The Mint Museums  
**Founders' Circle**  
 Mint Museum of Craft + Design

## Message from the President



A great big hello to all of our Founders' Circle Members!

We are working away here in Charlotte with our marathon board meeting of December 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> just over. Barbara Berlin, our Founders' Circle Weekend Chair told us about the many exciting events planned for the weekend, includ-

ing such craft stars as Jaroslava Brychtová, Michael Monroe, and Gloria and Sonny Kamm. As usual, the Mint Condition Gala will be the highlight of the weekend. Co-chairs Marjorie Serralles-Russell and Rochelle Grubb and Auction Co-Chairs Lisa and Dudley Anderson are making sure that the Rare, Unusual, and Unobtainable will dazzle our gala attendees. Bring your friends and join in the fun!

Thank you also to Emily Gurtman for putting together our panel discussion, and Mark Leach as our moderator for "The Role of the Gallery in the New Millennium", which was held in October at SOFA Chicago. We had a packed room filled with a crowd that stayed till the very last words were spoken.

Rebecca Klemm and Diane Grainer along with our Trip Coordinator, Barbara Waldman, led a terrific trip to Santa Fe. From October 29 – November 1 we visited private collections and artists' homes and studios that are not open to the ordinary traveler. What an exhilarating experience to take part in this outstanding trip. You recently received info on the COLLECT trip to London organized around the British Craft Council's COLLECT art fair. Diane and Marc Grainer will be leading this trip which begins in London on February 19. A big thank you to our travel team!

Please be sure to look for our new programs that are now being planned by Susan McKeithen, our Program Chair. You will have opportunities to mingle with the many "Craft Stars" that will be coming to MMC+D. Keep your eye out for your Founders' Circle mailings.

We hope that many of you have taken advantage of the opportunity to see *Spectrum: The Sculpture of Jon Kuhn*. Don't miss this exciting exhibit which runs through March 21, or the upcoming opening on January 30 of *The Artful Teapot*. And coming soon ...our latest glass acquisition, Ivan Mares's "Wing."

This spectacular piece of glass will soon be installed for everyone to enjoy.

Please be sure to congratulate Mary Beth Ausman, our Education Coordinator, on receiving the NC Museum Educator of the Year Award. What an honor!

We have an absolute gem in MMC+D and hope all of our members are visiting our museum often. The Founders' Circle is proud to devote our funds to support the museum's programs, exhibitions, acquisitions, and publications. To our members, we say THANK YOU!

Sincerely,

**Patty Gorelick**

President, Founders' Circle, Ltd.

Ivan Mares, *Wing*



This spectacular piece was acquired by MMC+D with the generous help of Dan Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser through the Heller Gallery of New York.

## From the Editor



There are so many exciting things going on at the Mint that I don't know where to begin. Fortunately, thanks to the President of the Founders' Circle and others at the Mint it's all covered elsewhere in this issue. Patty has written about Mary Beth Ausman's award. *The Artful Teapot* is well described by Sonny and Gloria Kamm, and Melissa Post has done a great job on

the Jon Kuhn exhibit and the wonderful new acquisitions of the Mint, including Ivan Mares' masterwork which was acquired primarily through the generosity of Dan Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser and the Mint Museum of Art. Then there is Barbara Waldman's account of the Founders' Circle's trip to Santa Fe which was the "best ever."

The big personal story for me is Jack Larsen's visit to Charlotte on November 20th. Cheryl Palmer and Melissa have given a good account of what he said at the *Art Talks* program that night at the Aunt Stella Center. Jack was and is a good friend of mine. Jack is a living legend and patriarch of the American and World craft movements, having been an early leader of the American Craft Council and founder of the American Craft Museum in New York. He had a one-man show at the Louvre. When I saw Jack in New York in June he told me about his trips to two new Museums in Racine and Tacoma, which he had enjoyed. I felt jealous that he hadn't been to MMC+D. I got my chance when Cheryl Palmer, Director of Education at the Mint called me to see if I could get Jack to speak in Charlotte. Jack said yes. When he arrived in Charlotte he toured MMC+D and then had lunch with Phil Kline, Mark Leach, Cheryl, Patty, Melissa and McColl Center leaders. He was excited by his tour and later that day he told his audience that MMC+D was the biggest and the best craft museum in the country and possibly in the world!! That was a night to remember. And special thanks to Cheryl for her concept and execution of a great idea.

Finally, I would like to say we will have a great gala weekend April 16-18 graced by the presence of Jaroslav Brychtová. Michael Monroe's *Art of Gold* will have opened on April 3; *The Artful Teapot* will still be up and with a great auction arranged by Lisa Anderson it will be a weekend you cannot miss.

I gratefully acknowledge the help of Melissa Post, Curator of Craft + Design, Anna Sims of the Founders' Circle office and John Drake, graphics expert extraordinaire, without whom this Bulletin would not have been possible.

**Arthur Mason**

## Recent Acquisitions

Through the generosity of patrons, such as the Founders' Circle, we continue to build what textile design pioneer Jack Lenor Larsen most recently called "the foremost craft museum in this country, maybe the world!" We are proud to present some highlights from our 21st century acquisitions.

**Melissa G. Post, Curator**

Mint Museum of Craft + Design



Jane Blackman, *Pasture*

Philip Moulthrop, *Vertical Pine Mosaic Bowl*

Christopher Dresser, *Tri-Legged Sugar Bowl*

Tina Rath, *Purple Hanging Wrap Necklace*

Jere Osgood, *Desk*

Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, *Relations*

Monden Kogyoku, *Flower Bud*

## Spouting Off! *about teapots.....*



Gloria and I are absolutely delighted that the *Artful Teapot* exhibit will be at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design. When we embarked on this adventure a few years ago we could not visualize how popular an exhibit of teapots would be. The media

attention has been wonderful, but more importantly word of mouth has brought in very large attendance, including record attendance at the Long Beach Museum of Art and the Gardiner Museum in Toronto. Part of the reason for the exhibit's success is that it appeals to people of all ages, from grandchildren all the way up to senior citizens. It appeals to people with differing backgrounds. Most importantly, it is an exhibit of contemporary art that is accessible to people who do not have any background in contemporary art and who often do not frequent museums. Because the teapot is a form that is familiar to everyone, many people feel much more comfortable in actually looking at the object than they would an abstract painting or another work of contemporary art that is less familiar. While there are certainly many sophisticated teapots in the exhibit, many are fun and whimsical. We believe that it is just as important to smile, perhaps to laugh and just have a good time – something that is often difficult to do in these trying times.

Since the Mint Museums will provide you information about the exhibit, we thought it might be helpful to tell you a little bit about how this collection has grown and developed. From the very beginning of our collecting, artist-made teapots were part of our collection of contemporary paintings, glass, ceramics and sculpture. In 1985 we decided to display our teapots on shelves that were much too narrow for other sculpture. Seeing these artist-made teapots as a group made us aware of the wonderful creativity of artists and the diversity of form, all within a framework of a teapot body, spout, lid and handle. While the focus of our teapot collecting initially was only work of contemporary artists, out of curiosity we began to go to antique shows where we were exposed to a wide array of wonderful antique teapots and tea sets. The antique portion of our collection has now grown to the point where it rivals our artist-made teapots both in size and scope.



People ask us how we find teapots. There are so many sources, including the traditional galleries, auction houses and art fairs. Perhaps the most interesting facet of our collecting has been the commissioning of artists to make a sculpture in the form of a teapot. There are many examples of commissioned teapot sculptures in the *Artful Teapot* exhibit. Commissioning artists to make teapots has broadened and expanded the scope and quality of our collection and has made our collection different than any other collection.

People have also asked us: “Why teapots?” There are many reasons:

We are fascinated by the fact that throughout the almost 400 year history of teapots, artists, architects and designers have applied their artistic creativity to take an every day utilitarian object to a higher level. There is such a broad range of teapots from novelty production teapots to artistic large scale and non-functional sculpture. We have also frequently been asked about the size of our collection. While we are in the process of inventorying our collection, we certainly can “admit” to over 6,000 objects – but there are many more. Certainly there is no more comprehensive collection of artist made contemporary teapots.



We have also been asked what plans we have made for our collection. Because of the enjoyment that the *Artful Teapot* exhibit has given, we definitely want to keep the collection intact and accessible to the public. During the last six months or so we have been working with some wonderful folks in Sparta, North Carolina (near the Blue Ridge Parkway) to have a museum built there to be the eventual home of our collection. We are very excited about this possibility, especially in light of the long time and continuing interest and support of the arts and crafts in North Carolina. Stay tuned, much is “brewing.” We hope to have some important developments during the next number of months.

### Gloria and Sonny Kamm

IMAGES

Peter Shire, *Scorpion Float*, 1993  
Robin Michael Campo, *Mr. Spuds*, 1997  
Peter Grieve, *Armadillo Teapot*, 1997

## Visiting Santa Fe

Susan Beech, Peggy Culbertson  
and Barbara Waldman

To say the Founders' Circle Santa Fe trip was a success would be a tremendous understatement. Rebecca Klemm and Diane Grainer, our trip leaders, did a great job of arranging a mix of fascinating visits and fabulous meals at some of Santa Fe's finest restaurants.

Each of the collectors' homes we visited was unique and gave us an interesting array of different architecture and collecting styles. We visited the home of Sandy Besser whose collection of ceramics, tapestries, African artifacts, drawings, teapots and more is made up of 3,800 objects and is still growing. At the home of Jane and Bill Buchsbaum we saw their amazing collection of Pueblo pottery representing contemporary potters from all 19 pueblos up and down the Rio Grande as well as some "ancestral" pieces. Natalie Fitzgerald describes her collection as "eclectic" since it contains so many objects that are seamlessly mixed from different places around the world - Japan, Africa, and the American southwest to name a few. The hilltop home of Barbara-Rose and Ed Okun provided 360-degree views of the Santa Fe area along with their collection of paintings, wood, ceramic and metal sculpture, outsider art, folk art, African currency and art furniture.

Dave and Susie Wahl are both artists and collectors. After viewing their broad collection, we saw Susie demonstrate her current work with wax and paint on paper while Dave showed us the art of turning wood. At the studio of glass artist Flo Perkins, who is best known for her glass cacti, she explained the evolution of her work and showed some of her newest pieces combining glass and bronze. Tom Joyce, recent winner of the McArthur award, demonstrated the making of a small table piece in his blacksmith studio and showed the influence of the Fibonacci mathematical sequence on his work. At the home gallery and studios of Gail and Zachariah Rieke we saw different work yet again. Zachariah is an abstract painter working with a variety of non-traditional materials and Gail, who is a collage/assemblage artist, is also known for her work with written and visual travel journals.

Thirteen Moons Gallery provided the opportunity to meet and hear talks from five fiber artists who have work in the gallery: Kay Kuhn (quilted baskets), Joan Brink (baskets with her own symbolic language), James Koehler (tapestries), John Garrett (metal baskets and sculpture), and Teri Greeves (beadwork). At Patina Gallery, in addition to being hosted to a wonderful cocktail party, we heard owner and artist Ivan Barnett talk about his new sculptural work. Rebecca Bluestone described her weaving techniques and influences while we viewed her solo exhibition at the Gerald Peters Gallery. Stops at Santa Fe Clay, Casa Nova and the Shidoni Foundry added to the gallery visits.

From our welcome reception to our farewell dinner, everyone raved that it was a wonderful trip.



Ron Wornick, Bill Buchsbaum, Bill Beech and Alfred Brand at the Buchsbaum's home



Alfred Brand, Bob and Peggy Culbertson, Patty Gorelick and Natalie Fitzgerald



Jim and Mary Lou Babb



Dave Wahl shows Bill Gorelick how to turn wood

## Spectrum: The Sculpture of Jon Kuhn



Captivating, dazzling, and mystifying perhaps best describe an initial encounter with Jon Kuhn's glass sculpture. Throughout his 27-year career, Kuhn has moved fluidly from organic vessel forms to highly intricate, geometrized sculptures, both of which can be defined by the dynamic dialogue between their interiors and exteriors. With each successive technical and

artistic advancement, Kuhn has fortified not only his aesthetic, but also his studio, building a team of talented professionals, and investing in cutting edge equipment.

He creates his visually scintillating signature works through a precise and disciplined series of cutting, grinding, polishing, and laminating various types of glass. *More is more* in the stacked and suspended interior elements of his glittering, kinetic sculptures and in their dramatic prismatic effects. These works illuminate the pioneering efforts and remarkable artistic accomplishments of this internationally recognized glass virtuoso.

His first experiments with glass resulted in organic stone and vase forms defined by their decorative floral *murrino* interiors. Like the studio glass pioneers before him, Kuhn constantly experimented with the vitreous material, seeking his own form of artistic expression. By 1981, he had developed his signature *Chemically Treated Vessel Forms*, whose viscous, vaguely geological walls were cut like geodes to reveal their pale-hued, freeform interiors. Variations on this mineral theme would reappear in subsequent works.

In 1985, Jon Kuhn's life changed dramatically, both personally and professionally. His work of this period reflects a strong stylistic foundation and illustrates a distinct departure *away* from vessel forms and *toward* geometric forms and architectonic monoliths. From this point forward, Kuhn's work becomes decidedly geometric.



Jon Kuhn's glass is expansive. It evolves along with his augmented understanding of glass's scientific properties, of reflection and refraction. To his aesthetic repertoire of the 1990's, Kuhn added variations on totemic, triangular, and pyramidal forms. Progressively rhythmic colors, derived from transparent colored and optical glasses, are implemented along with gold leaf, further distinguishing the structural works created during this period.

During the new millennium, Jon Kuhn continues to make significant advancements, both technically and artistically. With the mounting demands of his increasingly intricate and arduous work, Kuhn has fortified both his team and his technological resources, employing 27 talented craftsmen, engineers, glass technicians, machinists, and a chemist, as well as state-of-the-art equipment, all within a 25,000 square foot space. Today, the artist spends anywhere from 3 months to 2 years to complete a single work.

Infinite possibilities await this artist, whose love of the medium fuels his passions to relentlessly refine his intellectually compelling work. Dynamic and daring, Jon Kuhn's sculpture enriches and redefines the glass spectrum.

*Spectrum: The Sculpture of Jon Kuhn* will be on view at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design December 6, 2003-March 21, 2004.

**Melissa Post**

Curator, Mint Museum of Craft + Design

IMAGES

Jon Kuhn, *Infinite Dream*, 2002

Jon Kuhn, *Angel's Ring*, 2003

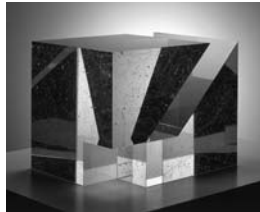
## The Fourth Annual Mint Condition Gala

Art for new and seasoned collectors.

The Founder's Circle 4<sup>th</sup> Annual *Mint Condition Gala* will be held on Saturday, April 17, 2004 featuring an auction of the Rare, the Unusual and the Unobtainable by such artists as Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, Dale Chihuly, and William Morris. We promise you a vibrant and spectacular evening filled with many treasures and surprises.

Beginning with a cocktail reception featuring a spectacular view provided by the 59th and 60th floors of the Bank of America Corporate Center, guests will discover a wide array of tempting silent auction items. Gala patrons will then descend to Founders' Hall for the live auction during a gourmet seated dinner, prepared by Bank of America Executive Chef Chris Ivens Brown. Bank of America's legendary culinary expert will ensure a festive and exquisite dining experience.

Auction pieces will include 3 museum quality pieces by Libenský/Brychtová, Chihuly and Morris. In all there will be over 50 pieces of craft art one can purchase in both the silent and live auctions. A wide array of auction offerings makes it possible both new and established collectors to purchase craft art treasures. Live auction items will also include unique "experience packages."



We are particularly honored to have Jaroslava Brychtová with us as our Guest Artist at this year's Gala. Ms. Brychtová and her late husband, Stanislav Libenský have been recognized as among the most influential glass artists of our time. Ms. Brychtová will be traveling from the Czech Republic to be with us for the Gala weekend. The Libenskýs' work is sought by international museums and collectors and is displayed in museums and galleries throughout the world.

This year the Founder's Circle website will allow bidders to commence bidding over a month prior to the night of the Gala auction. All silent and live auction item descriptions and photographs will be accessed via the Founder's Circle website ([www.founderscircle.org](http://www.founderscircle.org)).

Founders' Circle members are invited to purchase Gala tickets early as a Patron, Benefactor or Table Sponsor. Each of these early sponsors will have their names printed on the invitation. Table Sponsors and Benefactors will be invited to a special reception to personally meet Ms Brychtová. Gala tickets are available at \$250 per Patron and \$350 per Benefactor. For ticket purchases and other information call Anna Sims at the Founder's Circle office at 704-337-2008 or email [founderscircle@mintmuseum.org](mailto:founderscircle@mintmuseum.org).

## Founders' Circle Weekend

The Founders' Circle is gearing up for its 4<sup>th</sup> annual Founders' Circle Weekend, running April 15-18, 2004. Guest artist Jaroslava Brychtová along with her late husband, Stanislav Libenský, will be honored for their work in contemporary glass. Mrs. Brychtová and Mr. Libenský created the stunning glass wall *Relations* showcased in the Mint Museum of Craft + Design, and Mrs. Brychtová will see what has become known affectionately as the "Great Wall of Charlotte" for the first time since its installation during her visit.

The Weekend will also spotlight two exciting exhibitions at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design: the *Art of Gold* and the *Artful Teapot: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Expressions from the Kamm Collection* through a Friday evening reception and educational programming on Saturday. The *Mint Condition Gala* on Saturday evening will feature an extraordinary dinner and both silent and live auctions of the Rare, the Unusual and the Unobtainable in craft objects. Look for program and auction information, coming soon to the Founders' Circle website ([www.founderscircle.org](http://www.founderscircle.org)) and mark your calendars today for the exciting weekend celebration of craft!



Gala co-chair  
Marjorie Serralles-Russell  
&  
Gala committee member  
Barbara Jamison

## Dean of Modern Textile Design Praises Mint Museum of Craft + Design as Leading Craft Museum in the Country

One of the most influential voices in the world of craft and design, Jack Lenor Larsen came to Charlotte on November 20, 2003 to speak at The Mint Museums' lecture series *Art Talks*. A craftsman, weaver, designer, collector, and a gardener, Larsen's influences are as diverse as his textile designs, which define famous interiors ranging from Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water to Pan Am airplanes.

Larsen began by presenting an overview of his work and discussing his "charge," which was to use fabrics "to bring nature indoors in big cities." "Everything in nature is broken color" described Larsen. It "vibrates, pulsates with pixels of broken color. "Fabrics, more than any other material can bring the broken color...of the outdoors indoors." Fully half of his talk, however, focused on the continuing need for the world to have craft and craftsmanship, in general and his observations of Charlotte and on the Mint Museum of Craft + Design, in particular.

Larsen described Charlotte as progressive and having the openness and sensitivity to the environment similar to southern California. Since the "American Craft Museum has decided to be the Museum of Arts & Design," said this President Emeritus of the American Craft Council and long time member of the American Craft Museum Board, the Mint Museum of Craft + Design has become "the foremost craft museum in this country, maybe the world." He described the size and quality of the collection and the location of the museum, itself as "enviable" and the leadership as "enthusiastic." Larsen urged the museum to embrace "the responsibility of leadership, to be a mentor to smaller organizations," declaring that "the mission of a museum is to teach how to see and how to be, how to relate to things, people, and ideas....Museums help us in this process of learning, make us more knowledgeable, more perceptive and understanding. Museums teach us about living." He challenged the Mint Museum of Craft + Design to continue to improve the museum experience and to enhance the presentation of this relatively new art form, a challenge we embrace with enthusiasm!

Thanks to Arthur Mason's friendship with Jack Larsen, The Mint Museums were fortunate to bring this remarkable crafts advocate to our city, to show him our collection and to hear his constructive assessment and, for just a moment, enjoy his enthusiastic recognition of our role in the museum world. "I have been watching (The Mint Museum of Craft + Design) from afar" said Larsen "and am ever so much more impressed now that I have seen it up close."

**Cheryl A. Palmer & Melissa G. Post**

## Founders Circle Education Program Opportunities Winter-Spring 2004

The Founders' Circle program offerings are special opportunities for our members to be "up close and personal" with the artist, expert or collector.

***Gallery Talk by The Artful Teapot Collectors***  
**Sunday, February 1, 3:00 pm**  
 at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design

Listen to Sonny and Gloria Kamm, the couple behind this exhibition, as they tell the story of their collection.

\* In conjunction with this public forum, the Founders' Circle will host a private cocktail party with the Kamms. The time yet to be determined will be communicated to all Founders' Circle members via mail as well as published on the website.

***An Evening with James Tanner***  
**Tuesday, February 24, 6:30 pm refreshments,**  
**7:00 pm talk**  
 at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design

The Mint Museums proudly host James Tanner for a talk about his innovative work in ceramics.

\* In conjunction with this public forum, the Founders' Circle will host Mr. Tanner at dinner after the talk for a private "up close and personal" conversation. Details to follow via mail and on the website.

***Lecture: The Art of Gold, Sources & Influences***  
**Thursday, April 1, 6:30 refreshments, 7:00 pm**  
 program at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design

Bruce Metcalf, exhibitions chair of the Society of North American Goldsmiths and featured artist in *The Art of Gold* and the Mint metals collection, delivers a talk on contemporary goldsmithing to celebrate the exhibition's opening.

\* In conjunction with this public forum, the Founders' Circle will host Mr. Metcalf at dinner after the talk for a private "up close and personal" conversation. Details to follow via mail and on the website.

***Lecture: The Art of Gold***  
**Thursday, May 13, 6:30 pm refreshments,**  
**7:00 pm program**  
 at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design

Curator of the exhibition and former Renwick Gallery curator, Michael Monroe, will offer his insights on current creative expression in gold among international artists.

\* In conjunction with this public forum, the Founders' Circle will host Mr. Monroe at dinner after the talk. Details to follow via mail and on the website.