

FORGING FUTURES

Studio Craft in Western North Carolina



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Asheville, NC

Editor and Catalog Coordinator: Marilyn Zapf
Copy Editor: Melissa Tullos
Design: 7 Ton Design and Letterpress Co.
Printed and bound: Blue Ridge Printing

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Published by The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design (CCCD) in conjunction with the exhibition *Forging Futures: Studio Craft in Western North Carolina*, curated by Jordan Ahlers and Marilyn Zapf and organized by Blue Spiral 1 and CCCD. CCCD is supported in part by a grant from the N.C. Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.



June 29–August 25, 2017
Blue Spiral 1
38 Biltmore Ave
Asheville, NC 28801

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Cover image: Detail shot taken in Hoss Haley’s West Asheville studio space.

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FOREWORD

Ten years ago, The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design (CCCD) and Blue Spiral 1 (BS1) partnered to create the first survey of contemporary studio craft in western North Carolina, entitled *Pursuing Excellence*. This seminal exhibition was shown across both locations and included a publication documenting the rise and prominence of studio craft in the region. The catalog is testament to the wealth of skill and creativity embedded in this relatively rural area.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of *Pursuing Excellence*, CCCD and BS1 are partnering again, revisiting the original premise of the show and updating the checklist to highlight the defining artists of today. Artists that were featured in the original exhibition are included alongside emerging artists who are creating, or should we say forging, the future of studio craft for the region.

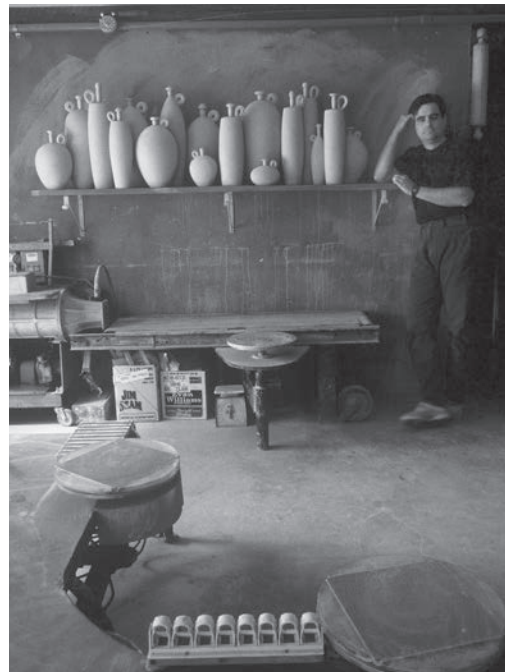
Forging Futures will be exhibited at BS1 in conjunction with programming and a catalog produced by CCCD. We are excited to be collaborating in celebration of the vibrancy of craft in western North Carolina.

John Cram	Stephanie Moore
Founder	Executive Director
Blue Spiral 1	The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design

FROM PURSUING EXCELLENCE TO FORGING FUTURES

MARILYN ZAPF,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
AND CURATOR,
THE CENTER FOR CRAFT,
CREATIVITY & DESIGN

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Shortly after I set up my first studio, I asked Cynthia Bringle if I could visit her to talk about my work. She took the time to hear my story, look at my [ceramics], and discuss what was working successfully and what was not. Then, Cynthia generously opened her personal book of glazes and slips and showed me which ones she thought would be helpful with the glazing of my wares.

I sat on the back stoop of the studio and copied all of the information that she shared with me. When I finished, I thanked her and handed the book back to her. And this is the moment I remember so well: Cynthia took hold of that book, looked me straight in the eye, and said “Michael, I am happy to help. **I have done this for you, now you go and make this part of what you do for others.**”

—Michael Sherrill (emphasis added)'

The story of how studio craft emerged in western North Carolina is succinctly summarized for me in this account of the prominent clay artist Cynthia Bringle sharing her glaze recipes with a then young and aspiring ceramist, Michael Sherrill. Bringle plainly lays out a founding principle upon which the studio craft community in this region has been built: Pass it on. Whether sharing technical skills or an eye for aesthetics, business advice or life lessons, the willingness of artists to “pass it on” has produced a culture of respect for tradition as well as a welcoming and growing group of artists.

Above from left:
Michael Sherrill, teapot, ca. 1970.

Michael Sherrill pictured in
his studio, ca. 1980.

Western North Carolina has a long and vibrant history of craft to honor and respect, beginning with the traditional handwork of the Cherokee, continuing with the craft revival, and later including the studio craft movement. Today the region is home to one of the largest concentrations of craft artists within the United States. A 2008 study surveyed over 2,200 full- and part-time craft artisans residing and working in western North Carolina (a 198% increase from a similar 1995 study), identified over 130 craft galleries, and estimated the total annual economic impact of the professional crafts industry to be \$206.5 million.² And yet, despite the notoriety of western North Carolina artists, the large concentration of craftspeople, and the widely recognized role that craft plays in the economic development of the region, studio craft is still relatively new here.

PURSUING EXCELLENCE

Ten years ago, The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design (CCCD) partnered with Blue Spiral 1 (BS1) to exhibit the first survey of studio craft in the region. *Pursuing Excellence: The Studio Craft Movement in Western North Carolina* highlighted 19 artists spanning the five major craft media—wood, fiber, clay, metal, and glass—who were making exceptional handmade, one-of-a kind objects.



Cover Image. Melissa Post,
Pursuing Excellence (Asheville:
The Center for Craft, Creativity
& Design, 2007).

Notably, not one artist in the original exhibition was born in North Carolina.³ Only three artists were born in the South (two from Tennessee and one from Virginia).⁴ The majority moved from the Northeast and Midwest to this region after the age of 30, predominantly settling here in the 1970s and 1990s.⁵ Examining the movement and timing of when these artists came to the region is important because it underlines the fact that beginning around the 1970s the first generation of studio craft artists were bringing skills and knowledge from elsewhere, plugging into a preexisting regional craft heritage, and establishing a new artistic community that continues to thrive and grow today.

Indeed, many of the artists put forward in this original survey show helped to establish studio craft as a defining marker of this region and paved the way for other artists to migrate here and set up their shops in the Blue Ridge Mountains. It is no wonder, then, that the *Pursuing Excellence* author Melissa Post sought to “illustrate the factors that have attracted these artists to the area” in her catalog essay, concluding that a combination of “community, environment, resources, and preservation” were among the main reasons artists moving to the area decided to remain.⁶

This exhibition, *Forging Futures: Studio Craft in Western North Carolina*, surveys 24 emerging and established artists shaping the future of studio craft in western North Carolina. It builds on the idea of *Pursuing Excellence* by incorporating a second generation of artists, demonstrating the power of a “pass it on” ethos in building community. Many of the emerging makers included in this show have

trained with or been mentored by founding studio craft artists in this region, many of whom were in the first exhibition. In this sense, *Forging Futures* looks forward at the same time it looks backward. It is through this lens that I hope to first revisit western North Carolina in the 1970s and trace the rise of studio craft in this region through three prominent craft institutions, before examining the artists that are poised to shape the next iteration of studio craft in the region today.

THE RISE OF STUDIO CRAFT IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Studio craft—as opposed to traditional, production, DIY, or contemporary craft—is distinguished by the production of handmade, one-of-a-kind art objects that reflect the maker’s artistic expression or point of view. With roots in both arts and crafts and the craft revival, the studio craft movement is generally thought to have begun in America post WWII due to the converging impact of the G.I. Bill, the expansion of art schools to include craft media, and the establishment of the American Craft Council and its publication *Craft Horizons*, among other factors.⁷ And although early signs of this movement can be found in western North Carolina in the 1960s, studio craft did not fully take root in the region until the 1970s.

Certainly some of the benchmark moments for craft in this region follow the expected studio craft trajectory, such as the proliferation of craft taught through university art programs. At Western Carolina University, the ceramist Joan Falconer Byrd was hired as faculty in the newly renamed Department of Art in 1968 and began building the reputation of a now well-known and respected ceramics program.⁸ However the unique history of the region, in particular, its connection to the craft revival, and its rural and (at the time) relatively undeveloped nature, created an alternative and highly local story of studio craft.

In some cases the movement transforms institutions founded as part of the craft revival, including Penland School of Crafts and the Southern Highland Craft Guild. In other cases new programs and organizations are formed in response to or alignment with the rise of studio craft, such as the Haywood Community College Professional Crafts Program. A closer examination of these three entities begins to trace the unique rise of studio craft in western North Carolina.

PENLAND

Located approximately fifty miles north of Asheville, Penland Weaving Institute—now Penland School of Crafts—originally built its reputation as a place where local Appalachian women were taught skills to earn or supplement family income.

Hired in 1962, the school’s second director, Bill Brown, transformed Penland Weaving Institute from a site of heritage craft preservation to a bastion of the studio craft movement. He expanded the types of craft media taught at the school and began employing and attracting emerging artists as teachers and students respectively.

Mary Savig, curator of manuscripts at the Archives of American Art, succinctly explains, in her essay “Pillars of Penland,” the impact of Brown’s tenure.⁹ Beyond simply infusing Penland with an influx of studio artists, Brown is perhaps best associated with the establishment of a residency program in 1963. Through this program, not only did artists move to the region but also many of them—for example, Cynthia Bringle—stayed long after their residency was over, building a stable network of studio craft artists in the region.

Bill Brown pictured in the The Barns studios with work by Penland resident artists ca. late 60s early 70s. Courtesy of Penland School of Crafts Archives.



SOUTHERN HIGHLAND CRAFT GUILD

Like the Penland Weaving Institute, the Southern Highland Craft Guild was established during the craft revival and went through an institutional transformation in the 1960s and 1970s due to the arrival of studio craft. Chartered in 1928 by Frances Goodrich, the Guild was a cooperative that sought to educate mountain craftspeople and provide a marketplace for their wares.¹⁰ However, by the 1970s, not only were the markets for craft shifting (the Guild moved both their July and October fairs to Asheville, North Carolina in 1978) but the type of craft artist in the region was shifting as well. As studio craft artists moved to the mountains, they became members of the guild, redefining

the organization from one that promoted heritage mountain crafts to one that promotes the work of multiple types of craft in the region.

Unlike Penland, which shifted from teaching production heritage crafts to promoting the making of one-off studio craft objects, the Guild maintained its ties to mountain crafts, and the two art forms were asked to coexist under the same organization. Thus, traditional coverlet weavings were promoted and sold in the same venue as contemporary sculptural pottery. Often, differing artistic visions for the organization were worked out in the Standards Committee, whose charge was to set the standards for new members to be accepted into the Guild. Membership is based on a jury process that requires an application, image, and object review. Even today applicants must apply under one of two memberships classifications: general or heritage.

The Guild became an important institution for studio craft because it provided an outpost for artists that did not move to the region via Penland. Their annual meetings and fairs provided the opportunity for makers to sell their work, share skills through demonstrations, seek inspiration through exhibitions, and find other artists seeking to make a living from their work. It was a hub of shared knowledge and artistic community.

Below from left:
Aerial view of 1981 Southern Highland Craft Guild Fair in Asheville, NC. Courtesy of Southern Highland Craft Guild Archives.

Artist Stoney Lamar giving a wood turning demonstration at the 1989 Southern Highland Craft Guild Fair in Asheville, NC. Courtesy of Southern Highland Craft Guild Archives.



HAYWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Another key component of the growing studio craft community in western North Carolina was the establishment of the Haywood Community College's Professional Crafts Program in 1977. Still in operation today, the Professional Crafts Program was revolutionary for combining the teaching of technical craft

Catharine Ellis is forever a teacher, [and] forever a student—every time I see her she has a little update on some [dye] recipe she thought was the best, but just learned an even better way! ... I can't thank her enough for all the ways she's made me feel seen and welcome as a fellow weaver.

—Jessica Green¹⁵

skills with the business know-how needed to make a living as a craftsperson. Seeds of the program were planted when Gary Clontz was hired in 1974 to start a production pottery program modeled on a similar curriculum written for the Montgomery Community College (near the well-known pottery production centers of Seagrove and Jugtown, North Carolina). A few years later, the program grew into a comprehensive studio craft program with the addition of faculty in wood, fiber, metal, and, later, design. Over the years a core faculty would come to include the studio furniture maker Wayne Raab, the textile artist Catharine Ellis, the metalsmith Arch Gregory, and the design instructor Bob Gibson.

Illustrating the still-forming community of craft during the 70s, the founding teachers recall how most students came either from out of state or from other parts of North Carolina. There was not an active craft community in Waynesville at that time. Today, approximately 10% of the current Southern Highland Craft Guild membership is made up of Haywood graduates.

Through their teaching, personal craft practice, and community service Clontz, Raab, Ellis, Gregory, and Gibson modeled for hundreds of students what it means to be part of a craft community. All were members of the Guild at some point during their career, and many served Guild committees. Clontz became the president of the board from 1998 to 2001 and from 2015 to the present. In addition, Ellis was a founding board member of Handmade in America, served on the boards of The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design and Penland School of Crafts, and in 2012 established the Western North Carolina Textile Study Group.

In addition to Penland School of Crafts, the Southern Highland Craft Guild, and Haywood Community College, there are many other institutions, people, and locations that factored into making this region a home for studio craft. Organizations such as Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, John. C. Campbell Folk School, Handmade in America, Energy Xchange Incubator, and Piedmont Craftsmen are vital to building such a strong craft community, not to mention historical craft production sites such as Seagrove, Jugtown, Brasstown, and the Toe River Valley. And unlike many other regions of the United States, where studio craft sprang from university art school programs, this region exhibits a more grassroots transformation. The proliferation of community, opportunities, and organizations quickly distinguished western North Carolina as a refuge and incubator for studio craft.

Working for Hoss Haley was more than a job—it was a priceless education and the start of an ongoing dialog of art, craft, career, and life that continues today.

—Andrew Hayes¹¹

FORGING FUTURES

We are only now beginning to see a second generation of studio craft artists emerge in this region. Some were born here, like Alex Bernstein and Hayden Wilson, their parents being among the first wave of glass artists to settle in the region. Some are continuing the legacy of institutions begun during the

studio craft movement. For example, Amy Putansu recently took over for Catharine Ellis to lead the Haywood Professional Crafts Fiber Program, and Heather Mae Erickson is following Joan Falconer Byrd as head of ceramics at Western Carolina University. Many continue to find their way to the area through the Penland Residency Program, including Dean Allison, Dustin Farnsworth, Andrew Hayes, Rachel Meginnes, Jaydan Moore, and Tom Shields. Still others, like Jessica Green, move here because they are inspired by the regional craft history, attracted by the artistic community, and stimulated by the “pass it on” mentality.

It should be noted that the “pass it on” culture is about not only intergenerational mentoring but peer-to-peer learning as well. Artists like Josh Copus and Eric Knoche, among others, have reflected on the importance to their studio practice of working side by side with colleagues. Copus recalls how “Eric Knoche and I spent eight years working in Clayspace together... We grew up together as artists and learned so much from each other. Eric is my peer, but he is also one of my greatest teachers and many of the most valuable lessons in this life I learned with him.”¹²



Elizabeth Brim’s words of encouragement and sense of play in the studio allowed my confidence to grow and [helped me] understand that playfulness can lead to creativity. Elizabeth was one person who showed me that following through with what you love to do will bring you a sense of happiness that nothing else will.

—Zack Noble¹⁶

From the left:
Amy Putansu teaching weaving
to students at Haywood
Community College, 2017.
Photo: Jessica Duque.

Zack Noble with mentor
Elizabeth Brim.

Meanwhile, the first wave of artists who moved to the region have established community and modeled for a next generation different modes of “passing it on.” Artists like Elizabeth Brim, Lisa Clague, Mark Peiser, and Pablo Soto teach workshops at Penland. Others continue to be active members of the Guild, including Kathy Triplett and Brian Boggs. Still others, such as Hoss Haley, Michael Sherrill, Stoney Lamar, and George Peterson, have set up studios where younger artists can assist, apprentice, and intern. Most of these artists’ current practice involves a combination of teaching, mentoring, and community building.

The secret that Bringle didn’t tell Sherrill about “passing it on,” at least not overtly, is that the teacher-student or mentor-apprentice relationship is not

a one-way street. The “master” does not simply pass on knowledge to pay it forward, settling up on a debt of knowledge received. In a 2012 CCCD Craft Think Tank on apprenticeships, mentors articulated the “vitality of participating in an intergenerational community,” the value of “interplay [between] new ideas and older tradition,” and how “having assumptions challenged by a younger person” pushed their own body of work forward.¹³ The act of sharing becomes part of a lively creative relationship. It is this back-and-forth that occurs in the act of “passing it on” that forged the studio craft community in this region and gives me a reason to believe the next generation of artists will carry this legacy forward.

GRATITUDE

The *Forging Future* artists would like to recognize the following western North Carolina craft mentors, teachers, idols, and institutions that have inspired, shaped, and influenced their careers:

- Bandana Pottery
(Michael Hunt and Naomi Dalglish)

Paulus Berensohn

Alex Bernstein

William and Katherine Bernstein

Elizabeth Brim

Cynthia Bringle

Bill Brown

Gary Clontz

Cristina Cordova

Catharine Ellis

Shane Fero

Greg Fidler

Don Forrister

Frances Goodrich

Kathryn Gremley

Hoss Haley

Andrew Hayes

Alex Irvine

Marvin Jensen

Gil Johnson

Eric Knoche

Bethanne Knudson

Stoney Lamar

Rachel Meginnes

Daniel Miller

Lucy Morgan

Zack Noble

Kenny Pieper

Mark Peiser

Richard and Jan Ritter
- Rock Creek Pottery
(Will Ruggles and Douglass Rankin)

Brent Skidmore

Michael Sherrill

Pablo Soto

David Wilson

Barbara Zaretsky

Warren Wilson College Fiber Crew

Penland School of Crafts

Black Mountain College

Haywood Community College

Professional Crafts Program

The Center for Craft, Creativity
& Design

PILLARS OF PENLAND

MARY SAVIG,
CURATOR
OF MANUSCRIPTS,
ARCHIVES OF
AMERICAN ART

17 –
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“Community is anywhere artists gather together and find a sympathetic milieu,” observed the glass artist Harvey Littleton in a 2001 oral history interview, “whether it was Paris at the turn of the century, or New York in the 1940s, or the mountains of North Carolina in the 1980s. These are all places where one artist works with another.”¹⁸ As Littleton suggests, a stimulating social environment is both the catalyst and the condition for transformative art. Western North Carolina, in particular, has become an inimitable incubator of the studio craft movement. Penland School of Crafts has served the region as a creative crossroads, a central meeting place where ideas and people are constantly in exchange, since its second director, Bill Brown, founded a residency program in 1963. Amidst the constant ebb and flow of visiting students and instructors are the resident artists who have established their studios in the region, forming a dynamic, intergenerational community. They are the pillars of Penland.

The oral history interviews and personal papers in the Smithsonian’s Archives of American Art provide firsthand accounts of the everyday lives and social networks of hundreds of craft artists.¹⁹ Drawing on evidence collected by the Archives, this essay puts in conversation four artists who have shaped (and continue to shape) the history of studio craft in western North Carolina: Bill Brown (1923–1992), Harvey Littleton (1922–2013), Cynthia Bringle (b. 1939), and Paulus Berensohn (b. 1933). Together, these primary sources create a constellation of interrelated resources that tell a story of Penland from the 1960s through the 1980s.

Many studio craft stories in the region build on the work of Bill Brown, Penland’s second director.²⁰ His papers at the Archives include rare photographs documenting the extraordinary growth of Penland during his tenure, 1962 to 1983. Brown came to Penland after 12 summers at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Deer Isle, Maine. At Haystack, he grew close to Haystack’s founding director, Francis Sumner Merritt, who, with the aid of Brown and the enthusiasm of a number of emerging craft artists from across the United States, had built the school from the ground up. When Brown received the job of director at Penland in 1962, he immediately set to work recruiting talented artists from his expansive network. He also began rearranging existing workspaces, and building the glass and iron studio spaces. To the existing curriculum of weaving and pottery, he added courses on metal, glass, and photography, and developed the signature Resident Artist Program. Instructors like M. C. Richards, Paulus Berensohn, Toshiko Takaezu, and Fritz Dreisbach expanded the boundaries of craft, and many resident artists, including Adela Akers, Cynthia and Edwina Bringle, Mark Peiser, and Richard Ritter became influential instructors.²¹ Photographs illustrate the school’s rapid expansion as well as daily life on campus, from concentrated studio work to lively festivals, performances, and puppet shows. As these images reveal, Brown did not hesitate to get his hands dirty, and he often relied on the resident artists for help. For example, in the summer of 1963, the potters Ed Brinkman and Cynthia Bringle helped Brown



Penland Spring event, 1977. Photograph by Peter Ray. William J. and Jane Brown papers, 1948–1991. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

build the school's first gas kiln. In a 1992 oral history interview, Bringle recalled how Brown purchased used bricks from a nearby mica factory:

Bill Brown . . . started hunting around and located some bricks that came out of a boiler in a mica factory that they would sell [to] the school for a nickel apiece, and we would have to go get them. So Bill went on the first trip. We took Bill's station wagon and a trailer, and we'd load up bricks from back behind the boiler . . . [the bricks were] totally black and covered with soot, but they were brick, so that's what we did; we went and got the bricks. We must have made four loads to get all these bricks.²²



Left: Cynthia Bringle, Ed Brinkman, and Bill Brown building the first gas kiln at Penland, 1963. William J. and Jane Brown papers, 1948–1991. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Right: Cynthia Bringle in the Penland Pot Shop, ca. 1964 or 1965. William J. and Jane Brown papers, 1948–1991. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

1963 marked Bringle's first summer at Penland. She had first visited the region as a teenager to take a course at the Painting in the Mountains school in Burnsville. The precocious artist would go on to attend the Memphis Academy of Art in her hometown. During her second year in Memphis, Bringle applied to take a pottery course at Haystack. Just before she left for Deer Isle, she suffered a shoulder injury. "You sure know how to pick them," Brown joked to Merritt upon first meeting the temporarily impaired Bringle. In recollection of this memory, Bringle herself said, smirking, "Little did he know that 20 years later he'd still have me around."²³

After the first summer, artists started flowing into Penland. According to Bringle, "[Brown] was trying to bring new people in, and just making it an exciting place for artists to be with no restrictions."²⁴ This environment compelled Bringle to stay. In 1969, she finalized an agreement with Penland's board to build her home



studio on the school’s property, where she continues to flourish as an artist today. She later reflected,

These mountains just feel good to me and the place to be. Every time I would leave here, I hated it. I’d come back and I’d start seeing the mountains as I’m driving down the road, I’d go “Ha, I’m in the right place.” And I still feel that.²⁵

In a 2009 oral history interview, the potter-poet-dancer Paulus Berensohn also reminisced on his first visit to Penland: “I felt, oh this is the place. It seemed so very alive.”²⁶ Born in New York City, his life took many twists and turns before he planted roots in the Blue Ridge Mountains. In the mid-1950s, after pursuing dance at Bennington College in Vermont and the Juilliard School in Manhattan, Berensohn joined Merce Cunningham on a visit to the Gate Hill Cooperative Community outside of New York City for the annual picnic. A pottery demonstration by Karen Karnes sparked his interest:

I stood there and watched Karen from the back, sitting on her old Italian kick wheel...the first thing, I saw her pull up a cylinder of clay and at the same time lengthen her spine. And then—this is what got me—she reached for her sponge in the slip bucket, picked up the sponge without taking her eyes off the cylinder, and squeezed some slip onto her work. The gesture of reaching [that] her hand made was elegant and inevitable. I thought, “That’s a dance to learn.”²⁷

At Karnes’s suggestion, Berensohn enrolled in a course taught by M. C. Richards at Haystack around 1960. While Brown brought the tenets of Haystack to Penland, it was Richards who brought the vanguard art of Black Mountain College to Haystack. Soon after his first Haystack experience, Berensohn established the Endless Mountains Farm in northern Pennsylvania, where he strengthened his pottery practice and grew close with Richards.²⁸ In 1967, Berensohn, Richards, and Karnes organized a kiln festival on the farm.²⁹ Bringle attended the festival and was introduced to Berensohn. She returned to Penland and encouraged Brown to invite Berensohn to teach his dance-like approach to pottery. In 1968, Bringle and Berensohn teamed up to teach a course. Bringle taught students how to throw pottery on a wheel, and Berensohn taught his pinching methods. Some of his approaches were unorthodox, even for Penland:

That first summer...I had the students all lie on the floor, blindfolded, pinching a pot on their chest. Bill Brown came into the studio...and there were 30 people lying on the floor, including Cynthia...[Brown] took one look and turned purple, and walked out. At the end of the three weeks, he said, “I don’t know what the hell you’re up to, but the students were very touched by you. Come back next summer.” At that time, to be invited to teach at Penland was like being nominated for some important award.



Paulus Berensohn, ca. 1970. William J. and Jane Brown papers, 1948–1991. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

For a few years, Berensohn stayed in the barn along with the resident artists, where he was inspired to write the influential book *Finding One's Way with Clay* (1972). He eventually moved from Endless Mountains Farm into a home near the Penland Post Office and General Store, just down the road from the school. Many ambitiously imaginative artists like Bringle and Berensohn chose to live in the vicinity of Penland because it offered countless opportunities to experiment freely with new mediums and techniques. "Teaching pinching led to other workshops, principally in journals and poetry, which involved me with paste paper painting, bookmaking, paper weaving, doodling, and stitching," explained Berensohn.³⁰

Harvey Littleton was a luminary in the field of studio glass when he retired to Spruce Pine in 1976, just after an ice storm in Wisconsin. In his 2001 oral history interview, he discussed how Penland was an ideal community for pursuing new lines of inquiry in his work.

In this community, the will of craft was maintained, but its spirit could be continually transformed. You could teach somebody to blow glass in three weeks. Penland proves that.... Our training teaches someone to make each piece different from the one before, a richer experience, a stronger form—not to be tied to a tradition, but to look at the tradition and understand it, to move somewhere else, if you want to.³¹

Indeed, Littleton was always moving "somewhere else" with his own work. During the late 1970s through the 1980s, he continued to refine his glass techniques and explored printmaking with sheets of glass. He joined Penland's board just as Brown was stepping down as the director in 1983. The controversial transition rattled many in the community, but Littleton had confidence that Brown had created a strong foundation on which Penland would continue to grow.³²

The 2007 exhibition *Pursuing Excellence: The Studio Craft Movement in Western North Carolina* and the recent ten-year anniversary prove Littleton's point. Each generation of artists in western North Carolina contributes innovative concepts and techniques to the continually evolving craft world. Along these lines, snapshots and snippets of history will continue to emerge from the Archives of American Art. While this essay focused on just four artists, there are many more discoveries and connections to be made in the Archives' collections. The fragmentary, personal nature of primary source materials demands additional recovery, preservation, and interpretation. With this in mind, archival research is comparable to craft in that the process generates more questions than answers. From the government support of craft revivals to countercultural art movements, the Archives' resources help place western North Carolina in the broader context of American art and culture.

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CRAFTS: A TIMELINE

25 –
30



The first Allanstand Cottage shop, built in 1897 on the main road in the Laurel Community, Madison County. Courtesy of Southern Highland Craft Guild Archives, Frances L. Goodrich Collection.

1897 **Allanstand Cottage Industries, Inc.** is founded by Frances Goodrich, a missionary of the Presbyterian Church. As a cottage industry of traditional weavers, basket makers, and woodworkers, Allanstand helped improve the subsistence income in Madison County, moving to downtown Asheville in 1908.

1901–1917 **Biltmore Estate Industries** is founded and financially supported by George and Edith Vanderbilt, owners of Biltmore Estate, in Asheville. Charlotte Yale and Eleanor Vance manage the industries. Through the efforts of Biltmore Estate Industries, people are taught weaving and wood carving in an effort to revive interest in the native mountain crafts.

1913–today **Grove Park Inn**, distinctive for its period arts and crafts furnishings and lighting fixtures, including work by Roycroft, opens in Asheville. www.grovecparkinn.com

1917–today **Biltmore [Estate] Industries** is purchased by Fred L. Seely from Edith Vanderbilt. Seely, the manager of the Grove Park Inn and the son-in-law of its owner, Edwin W. Grove, moves **Biltmore Industries** to six English-style buildings adjacent to the inn. Under Seely's guidance, the hand-woven fabric created at **Biltmore Industries** receives international recognition. The business continues after Seely's death, in 1941, under the management of Harry Blomberg, until the early 1980's.

Groveswood Gallery and Studios are opened by the Blomberg heirs, Buddy and Marilyn Patton and Barbara Blomberg. The 1917 buildings created for Biltmore Industries were revitalized into a 9,000-square-foot gallery with an additional 11 acres featuring garden sculptures. In addition to the gallery, which represents artists from across the United States, there are studios for resident artists. **The North Carolina Homespun Museum** was developed and is housed in one of the buildings. www.groveswood.com

1924–today **Penland Weavers** is established by Lucy Morgan as an economic outreach and craft revival project sponsored by the Appalachian Industrial School and the Episcopal Diocese of western North Carolina. Morgan trains local mountain women as the workforce for this production-oriented craft cooperative, which continued to operate until 1967. Initially training only local weavers, the program changes focus in 1929 and becomes known as the **Weaving Institute**. The Institute attracts students from across the nation to study with Edward Worst, an expert in hand weaving, and continues until 1948. **Penland School of Handicrafts** is also founded in 1929, becoming the parent organization for these other projects and offering classes in a wide variety of hand crafts.

1925–today **John C. Campbell Folk School** is established by Olive Dame Campbell in honor of her late husband, in Brasstown, North Carolina. Based on Danish folkehøjskole (folk school) the school seeks to encourage the preservation of Appalachian folk culture and craft. It currently offers more than 800 weeklong classes per year, in traditional and contemporary craft, art, music, dance, cooking, gardening, nature studies, photography, and writing. www.folkschool.com

1928–today **Southern Highland Handicrafts Guild**, a cooperative educational and marketing organization, is created in Penland's weaving cabin and assumes the ownership of the Allanstand Shop in Asheville and marketing the work of regional craft artists. Today Southern Highland Craft Guild has five shops, including one at Milepost 382 on the Blue Ridge Parkway that opened in 1980. The Guild hosts a July and October craft show showcasing work juried from a membership of over 900 traditional and contemporary craft artists from a nine-state region. www.southernhighlandguild.org



Weavers and their families gathering at the Penland Weaving Cabin on Weaving Day, ca.1930. Courtesy of Penland School of Crafts Archive. Photo: Bayard Wootten.



Craftsman's Fair, Gatlinburg, TN, 1949. Courtesy of Southern Highland Craft Guild Archives.



The Studies Building on Lake Eden at the second Black Mountain College campus. Courtesy of Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center.

1933–1957 **Black Mountain College** is established as one of the leading experimental liberal arts colleges in America until its closure in 1957. Conceived by John Andrew Rice, the College is “born out of a desire to create a new type of college based on John Dewey’s principles of progressive education.” Influenced by the German Bauhaus, it attracts some of the greatest artists and thinkers of its time: the artists Josef and Anni Albers, Robert Motherwell, Willem and Elaine de Kooning, Robert Rauschenberg, John Cage, Buckminster Fuller, and many others.

1937 **Allen Eaton’s Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands** is published; it becomes the classic resource on traditional crafts in the southern Appalachians.

1962–today **Penland School of Handicrafts’s** founder and first director, Lucy Morgan, retires. Under the new leadership of Bill Brown, and with a new name—**Penland School of Crafts**—new programs, and a focus on immersive studio practice, the school becomes highly influential to the American studio craft movement. Penland now hosts programs throughout the year, offering instruction in well-equipped studios to over 1,500 individuals each year. The school also offers artists’ residencies and community collaborations programs. The 420-acre campus has an archives, a gallery, and a visitors center that are open to the public. www.penland.org

1972–today **New Morning Gallery** opens and the annual **Village Arts & Crafts Fair** in Biltmore Village, Asheville, is launched by John Cram. In 2000, New Morning Gallery grew to 14,000 square feet and today offers quality decorative and functional craft created regionally and nationally. The Village Arts & Crafts Fair features juried work by over 130 craft artists. In 1991, adjacent to New Morning Gallery, Cram opened **Bellagio**, which features handcrafted wearables, jewelry, and home and fashion accessories. www.newmorninggallery.com



New Morning Gallery. Courtesy of Blue Spiral 1.

1977–today **Haywood Community College Professional Crafts Program** is established in Clyde County as the only professional crafts program in the nation that provides both a hands-on craft curriculum and a business skills development experience in clay, fiber, jewelry, and wood. www.haywood.edu

1986–today **Lark Books**, a premier U.S. publisher on crafts, is established in downtown Asheville by Rob and Kate Pulleyn. During its twenty-plus years in North Carolina, Lark Books has published more than 500 books under the motto “celebrating the creative spirit.” Today Lark is an imprint of Barnes and Noble, headquartered in New York City. www.larkcrafts.com

1991–today **Blue Spiral 1** is opened in downtown Asheville by John Cram, with 15,000 square feet on three floors, featuring some of the finest work in craft media, principally by studio craft artists of the region. www.bluespiral1.com

1993–2015 **HandMade in America** is founded to grow economies through craft and creative placemaking, transforming both individuals and communities through education, entrepreneurship, and economic development. One of their signature programs includes the *Heritage Trails of Western North Carolina*, connecting audiences for fine craft with the array of artist studios dotting the western North Carolina landscape, as well as economic development studies commissioned in 1995 and 2008 documenting the significance of the professional craft industry.

1993–today **Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center** preserves and continues the legacy of educational and artistic innovation of Black Mountain College through exhibitions, publications, and public programs. As the only museum in the world with such a mission, its downtown Asheville location provides a gathering point for people from a variety of backgrounds to interact—integrating art, ideas, and discourse. www.blackmountaincollege.org



Interior view of Blue Spiral 1: Courtesy of Blue Spiral 1.

1995 *The Determination of the Economic Contribution of the Craft/ Handmade Industry in Western North Carolina* is published by HandMade in America. It estimates the economic impact of the craft industry to be \$122,000,000 in a twenty-county region of western North Carolina.

1996–today **The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design (CCCD)** is founded as a regional, inter-institutional center of the University of North Carolina, and opened in Hendersonville, North Carolina, to advance scholarship on U.S. studio craft through exhibits, publications, grantmaking, and convening leaders in the field annually at a think-tank session. CCCD grew out of an educational study by HandMade in America.
www.craftcreativitydesign.org

2003–today **The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area** designation for twenty-five counties in western North Carolina is established by Congress and the president as the nation's 24th National Heritage Area in 2003. One of its four core cultural themes is Contemporary and Heritage Craft. www.blueridgeheritage.com

2007 *Pursuing Excellence: The Studio Craft Movement in Western North Carolina* is the first exhibition to survey studio craft in the region. Blue Spiral 1 and CCCD produced this joint exhibition, which is shown in both locations March 1–April 28.

2008 *The Economic Impact of the Professional Craft Industry in Western North Carolina* is published by a consortium of regional organizations, including Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, CCCD, HandMade in America, Haywood Community College, Penland School of Crafts, and the University of North Carolina at Asheville. The study estimated the total annual economic impact of the twenty-five counties designated at the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area (BRNHA) to be \$206,500,000.

2013–today CCCD moves from Hendersonville to downtown Asheville with the purchase of a historic 1912 three-story building. The organization becomes an independent 501c3, recommitting to advance the understanding of craft by encouraging and supporting research, critical dialogue, and professional development in the United States.



The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design

FORGING FUTURES

Studio Craft in Western North Carolina

31 –
32

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

The ten years since *Pursuing Excellence* have passed quickly, and the area surrounding Asheville has continued to grow exponentially and receive attention for its many charms. Creative individuals continue to be drawn here, inspired by the natural beauty and an evolving community of people enjoying the quality of life that the region offers. It is an honor to curate this anniversary exhibition, yet once again it proves challenging as well.

As in 2007, this year’s exhibition is essentially a survey of the incredible makers who reside here in western North Carolina. There are a number of equally accomplished artists that were not included for one reason or another. That said, the assembled group is exemplary of the substantial talent and scope of work being found here. These artists collectively represent a relatively small geographical area, but it’s one of historical significance in the field of contemporary craft that, for generations, has proven fertile ground for clever makers and the groundbreaking institutions dedicated to training and supporting them. We are fortunate to have these resources here, along with our share of living legends; as mentors and pillars of the creative community, they continue to define the vitality of the region and nurture its uniqueness. Works by several of these mentors are included in this collection, presented alongside those of promising and influential younger artists who are contributing in a meaningful way to the area’s creative output.

The artists in this exhibition adapt tools, innovate techniques, and rethink materials, finding new ways to express concepts, convey emotion, and create compelling works that transcend traditional notions of craft. The objects they make are honest expressions of hands, head, and heart—naturally accessible because they’re grounded in materials, forms, or functions we encounter in our daily lives. These works share a refined aesthetic that develops when an artist is in tune with a material, has knowledge of its history, and has an understanding of its place in industry and design.

This collection of thoughtful works made with a keen attention to detail offers a snapshot of this moment in Western North Carolina studio craft. It reflects the sensibilities of a modern and progressive Appalachian community. The objects assembled demonstrate the artists’ curiosity, ingenuity, and consciousness of issues facing our planet, our humanity, and the ways we live and interact with the handmade.

Jordan Ahlers
Director
Blue Spiral 1

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

- DEAN ALLISON
- ALEX BERNSTEIN
- BRIAN BOGGS
- ELIZABETH BRIM
- LISA CLAGUE
- JOSH COPUS
- HEATHER MAE ERICKSON
- DUSTIN FARNSWORTH
- JESSICA GREEN
- HOSS HALEY
- ANDREW HAYES
- ERIC KNOCHE
- STONEY LAMAR
- RACHEL MEGINNES
- JAYDAN MOORE
- ZACK NOBLE
- MARK PEISER
- GEORGE PETERSON
- AMY PUTANSU
- MICHAEL SHERRILL
- TOM SHIELDS
- PABLO SOTO
- KATHY TRIPLETT
- HAYDEN WILSON

33 –
81



DEAN ALLISON

My work seeks to capture and document the human condition and draw attention to our preconceptions of others, in the hope that people can see how alike we all actually are.

BORN: Chicago, IL

BIRTH DATE: 1976

SETTLED IN WNC: 2001

RESIDES: Penland, NC



From left:
Dean Allison, *Rose Colored Reign*
(detail), 2015. Cast glass;
23 x 13 x 14 inches.
Photo: Mercedes Jelinek.

Dean Allison, *Rose Colored Reign*, 2015.
Cast glass; 23 x 13 x 14 inches. Private
collection. Photo: Mercedes Jelinek.

Dean Allison, *Older Sister*, 2016.
Cast glass and paint;
24 x 17 x 14 inches. Private collection.
Photo: Mercedes Jelinek.



ALEX BERNSTEIN

My cast, carved, and polished glass sculptures provide the viewer with intimate narrative landscapes, drawn from light, form, and color. I explore ideas about the passage of time and the processes of creation and transformation.

BORN: Spruce Pine, NC

BIRTH DATE: 1972

SETTLED IN WNC: 1972

RESIDES: Asheville, NC



Counterclockwise from top:
Alex Bernstein, *Aqua Steel Shadow*, 2015. Cast and cut glass with fused steel; 20 x 21 x 3 inches. Private collection. Photo: Steve Mann.

Alex Bernstein, *Arched Emerald Sprout*, 2012. Cast and cut glass with fused steel; 23¾ x 6 x 3 inches. Private collection. Photo: Steve Mann.

Alex Bernstein, *Neo Stretch*, 2015. Cast and cut glass; 21 x 21 x 3, Private collection, Photo: Steve Mann.



BRIAN BOGGS

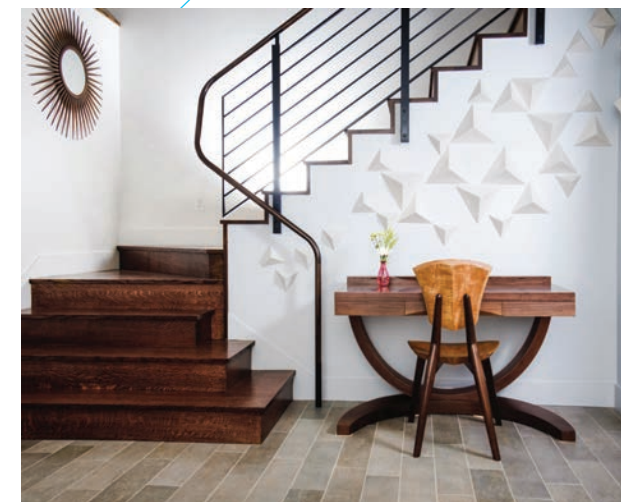
My furniture is rooted in my experience as a traditional chairmaker working solely by hand to develop a deeper relationship to history and material. I strive to convey my passion for artistic expression and for bringing wood back to life in a meaningful form.

BORN: Charlotte, NC

BIRTH DATE: 1959

SETTLED IN WNC: 2009

RESIDES: Asheville, NC



From left:
Brian Boggs, *Ebonized Sculpted Fanback Arm Chair*, 2016. Maple; 39½ x 29½ x 20½ inches.

Brian Boggs, *Grand Lily Arm Chair*, 2015. Curly maple and walnut; 41½ x 20 x 21½ inches.

Brian Boggs, *Mahogany Desk* (in situ), 2015. Mahogany and ebonized maple; 48 x 24 x 30 inches.



ELIZABETH BRIM

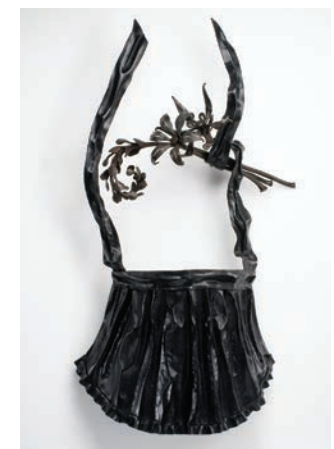
I am a sculptor using ancient traditional blacksmithing techniques to produce pieces that reflect my upbringing as a "Proper Southern Lady."

BORN: Columbus, GA

BIRTH DATE: 1951

SETTLED IN WNC: 1995

RESIDES: Penland, NC



From left:
Elizabeth Brim, *Scroll*, 2015.
Forged and fabricated steel;
15 x 12 x 7 inches.

Elizabeth Brim, *Pillow*, 2015.
Fabricated and etched inflated
flocked steel; 9 x 8 1/2 x 21 1/2 inches.

Elizabeth Brim, *Catch!*, 2005.
Forged and fabricated steel;
36 x 24 x 8 inches. Collection of
The North Carolina Museum of Art.



LISA CLAGUE

I create sculptures that explore the momentum of our daily lives and the accumulation of events that become the anatomy of our existence. I draw inspiration from the natural world and the idiosyncrasies of human nature.

BORN: Cleveland, OH

BIRTH DATE: 1962

SETTLED IN WNC: 2001

RESIDES: Bakersville, NC



From left:
Lisa Clague, *Queen*, 2014.
Mixed media; 34½ x 12 x 13 inches.
Photo: Sylvia Ferrari Palmer.



Lisa Clague, *Gender Imbalance*, 2017.
Mixed media; 22 x 17 x 5 inches.
Photo: Sylvia Ferrari Palmer.

Lisa Clague, *Delirium*, 2012. Ceramic and mixed media; 23 x 19 x 10 inches.
Photo: Sylvia Ferrari Palmer.



JOSH COPUS

My ceramic studio practice is essentially an effort to distill the experiences of my life and infuse them into my work with clay. Because I use wild materials dug from the river bottoms and mountainsides of North Carolina, my work gains a connection to place and establishes the materials as a valuable source of influence.

BORN: Floyd, VA

BIRTH DATE: 1979

SETTLED IN WNC: 1998

RESIDES: Marshall, NC



From left:
Josh Copus, *Large Stone Vessel*, 2017.
Wood fired wild clay; 24 x 16 x 8 inches.
Photo: Tim Barnwell.



Josh Copus, *Vessel*, 2016.
Wood fired wild clay; 23 x 12 x 10 inches.
Photo: Tim Barnwell.

Josh Copus, *Collection of Small Vessels*, 2017. Wood fired wild clay; size varies.
Photo: Tim Barnwell.



HEATHER MAE ERICKSON

"The Perfect Imperfection Collection: Bird Series" is an investigation into how living in western North Carolina is influencing my current design work. This project is inspired by direct contact with, and examination of, my surroundings through photographing, researching, and abstracting findings through my ceramic filter, to break expectations of what slip cast and other industrial processes yield.

BORN: Wilmington, Delaware

BIRTH DATE: 1977

SETTLED IN WNC: 2014

RESIDES: Sylva/Dillsboro, NC



Counterclockwise from top:
Heather Mae Erickson,
The Perfect Imperfection Collection
(installation shot), 2016. Porcelain,
gold luster and wood; 96 x 48 inches.

Heather Mae Erickson,
American Values / Handmade in America
(installation shot), 2015. Porcelain,
AMACO underglazes and wood;
96 x 48 inches. Photo: Western Carolina
University Photography Services.

Heather Mae Erickson, *American Values /
Handmade in America* (detail), 2015. Porcelain,
AMACO underglazes and wood; 96 x 48 inches.



DUSTIN FARNSWORTH

As a contemporary figurative carver, I create visceral and cerebral portraiture of today's youth with a critical portrayal of their worldly inheritance. These figures, adorned with head-dresses that reference industrial architecture, challenge and contrast our past and present. By confronting complex issues of social justice, I engage in visual rhetoric representing a generation in need of protection, empowerment, and change.

BORN: Lansing, MI

BIRTH DATE: 1983

SETTLED IN WNC: 2010

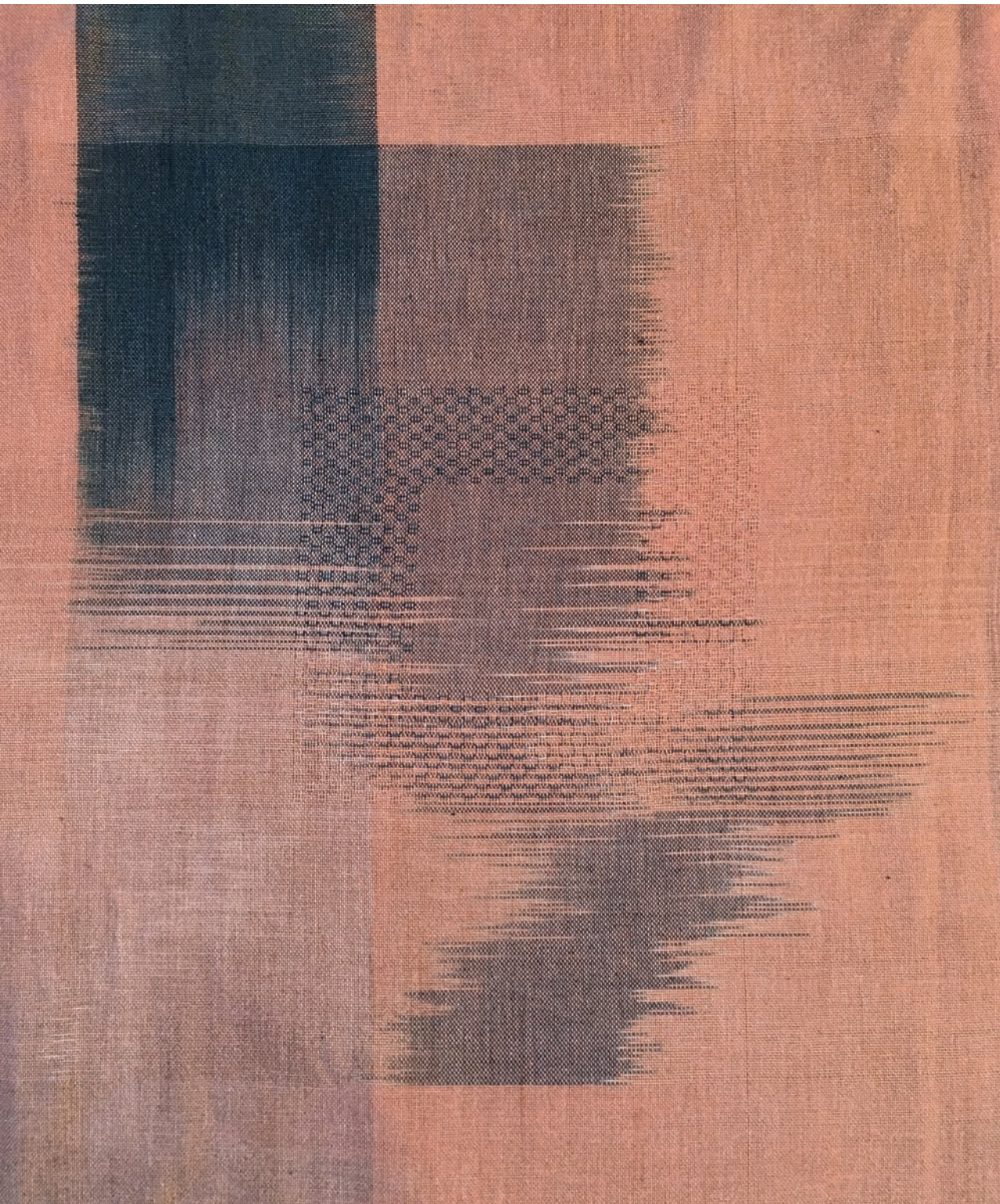
RESIDES: Charlotte, NC



From left:
Dustin Farnsworth, *Order of Lords*, 2015. Basswood, poplar, charcoal, and various polychrome; 55 x 22 x 30 inches. Collection of the Hunstville Museum of Art. Photo: Steve Mann.

Dustin Farnsworth, *XLIII*, 2016. Poplar, reclaimed wood, chair, pencil, and various polychrome; 60 x 36 x 84 inches.

Dustin Farnsworth, *Wake II* (installation detail collaboration with Timothy Maddox), 2017. Aqua resin, polychrome, canvas and acrylic cedar paint; 336 x 120 inches.



JESSICA GREEN

developing a mark making system, putting it in action, and paying attention.

*count.
counts. mends. listens.
recounts.*

*a reflection of true observation—an experience
of being changed
a cognizance of the way being and doing changes you.*

BORN: Austin, TX

BIRTH DATE: 1986

SETTLED IN WNC: 2013

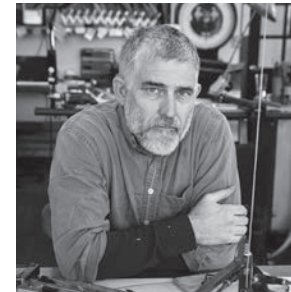
RESIDES: Sandy Mush, NC



From left:
Jessica Green, *Woven Panel No. 2* (detail),
2016. Cotton dyed with homegrown
indigo, madder, and black walnut;
57 x 70 inches.

Jessica Green, *Farm Calendar*
(installation view), 2016-2017.
Cotton, organza, silk noil, linen,
and wool.

Jessica Green, *Farm Calendar*,
2016-2017. Cotton, organza, silk noil,
linen, and wool; 10 x 12 inches.



HOSS HALEY

My work is the direct result of an ongoing dialog with metal. The common perception of metal, especially steel, is that it is a rigid, inflexible material. In fact, it can be both pliable and receptive. It is these characteristics I am interested in exploiting.

BORN: Dodge City, Kansas

BIRTH DATE: 1961

SETTLED IN WNC: 1997

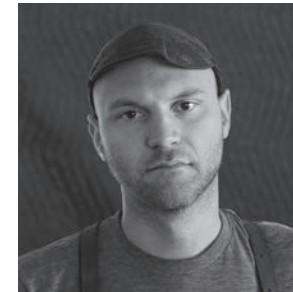
RESIDES: Spruce Pine, NC



From left:
Hoss Haley, *Erratic Union No. 1*,
2012. Corten steel; 96 x 58 x 55 inches.

Hoss Haley, *Old Growth* (installed at
the Charlotte Douglas Airport, FBO
Terminal), 2015. Corten steel;
40 x 40 x 30 feet. Photo: David Ramsey.

Hoss Haley, *Architectural Coil maquette*,
2011. Steel; 8 x 10 x 15 inches.



ANDREW HAYES

Book paper and steel are placed in different contexts in our lives. The book is appreciated as an object of education, growth, and escape, whereas steel is often invisible, even though it is a primary structure of our constructed environment. I strive to level the playing field between these disparate perceptions and materials.

BORN: Tucson, AZ

BIRTH DATE: 1981

SETTLED IN WNC: 2007

RESIDES: Asheville, NC



From left:
Andrew Hayes, *Distinction No. 3*, 2016.
Steel and paper; 17 x 10 x 3 inches.
Photo: Steve Mann.



Andrew Hayes, *Distinction No. 2*, 2016.
Steel and paper; 27 x 6 x 3½ inches.
Photo: Steve Mann.

Andrew Hayes, *Station*, 2015. Steel, book paper, and paint; 18 x 18 x 6 inches.
Private collection. Photo: Steve Mann.



ERIC KNOCHE

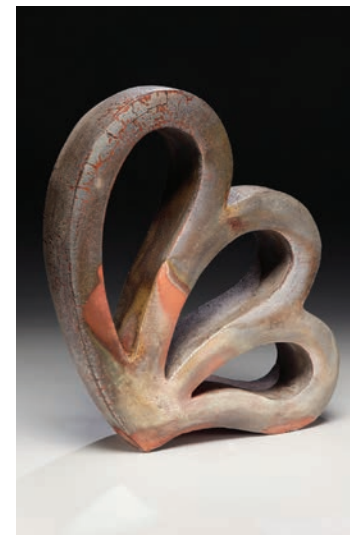
The work tends to evolve out of itself, and I often feel like I am an archeologist excavating my own self-subconscious.

BORN: Minneapolis, MN

BIRTH DATE: 1978

SETTLED IN WNC: 2006

RESIDES: Asheville, NC

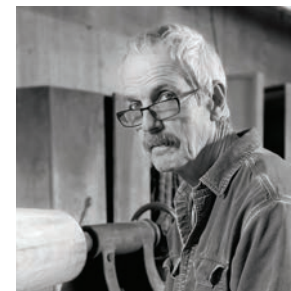


From left:
Eric Knoche, *1212*, 2012. Wood fired stoneware with slip; 22 x 20 x 8 inches. Photo: Tim Barnwell.



Eric Knoche, *Butterfly Wing*, 2013. Wood fired stoneware with slip; 25 x 22 x 6 inches. Photo: Tim Barnwell.

Eric Knoche, *Puzzle*, 2015. Wood fired stoneware with slip; 10 x 27 x 5 inches. Photo: Tim Barnwell.



STONEY LAMAR

The work begins as a relationship I have established with a particular piece of wood and how its characteristics will interplay with my intentions and my emerging technical and conceptual vocabulary. As I adjust the work's axis and continue turning, new challenges and possibilities are constantly presented.

BORN: Alexandria, LA

BIRTH DATE: 1951

SETTLED IN WNC: 1973

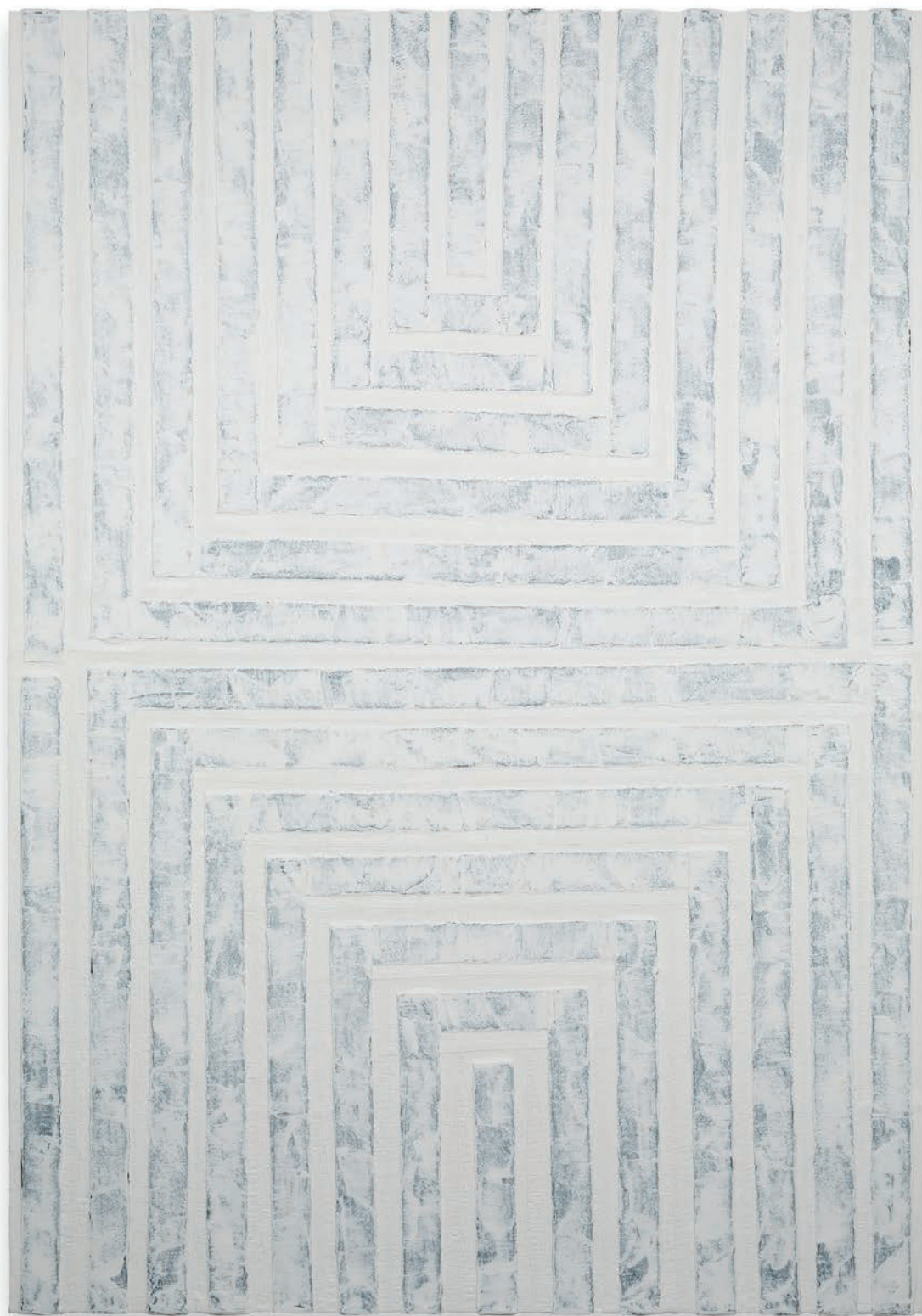
RESIDES: Saluda, NC



From left:
Stoney Lamar, *Untitled Trio*, 2016.
White oak, steel, and milk paint.
Size varies (tallest 60 3/4 x 11 x 8 inches).
Private collection. Photo: Steve Mann.

Stoney Lamar, *Birds on a Wire*, 2016.
Ash, steel, and milk paint;
23 1/2 x 8 1/2 x 5 inches. Photo: Steve Mann.

Stoney Lamar, *Beanstalks*, 2015.
White oak, steel, and milk paint;
53 x 9 x 10 inches. Private collection.
Photo: Steve Mann.



RACHEL MEGINNES

Using vintage quilts destined for the trash, I reconstruct deteriorating tops and battings into paintings for the wall. My objective is not one of preservation or conservation, but rather an honorific act aiming to appreciate the stillness, the beauty, and the essence of the abandoned quilt.

BORN: South Royalton, Vermont

BIRTH DATE: 1977

SETTLED IN WNC: 2012

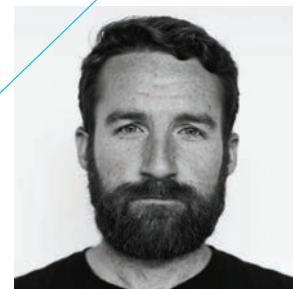
RESIDES: Penland, NC



From left:
Rachel Meginnnes, *Distillation*, 2017.
Pieced quilt back, cotton batting,
and acrylic; 68 x 48 inches.

Rachel Meginnnes, *Holding*, 2017.
Pieced fabric and acrylic; 32 x 32 inches.

Rachel Meginnnes, *Landing*, 2017.
Pieced fabric and acrylic; 32 x 32 inches.



JAYDAN MOORE

I am drawn to objects that commemorate specific moments, from the variety of societal forms to the individual keepsakes that we all display. I am enticed by these wares because they show how our knowledge of objects is both individually and communally formed.

BORN: Antioch, CA
BIRTH DATE: 1986
SETTLED IN WNC: 2014
RESIDES: Penland, NC



From left:
 Jaydan Moore, *Utensils*, 2017. Found silver-plated utensils; size varies.
 Photo: Mercedes Jelinek.

Jaydan Moore, *Platter/Rather*, 2016.
 Found silver platters; 45 x 76 x 2 inches.
 Photo: Mercedes Jelinek.

Jaydan Moore, *Platter/Tatter*, 2016.
 Found silver platters; 59 x 57 x 3 inches.
 Photo: Mercedes Jelinek.



ZACK NOBLE

The beauty of forged iron is linked directly to the hand of the smith; every hammer blow is moving the metal and leaving its mark. The blacksmith has a responsibility to produce quality work for the sole reason that the iron will record that work long after the smith is dead.

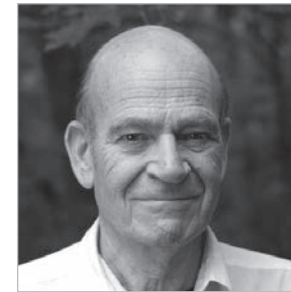
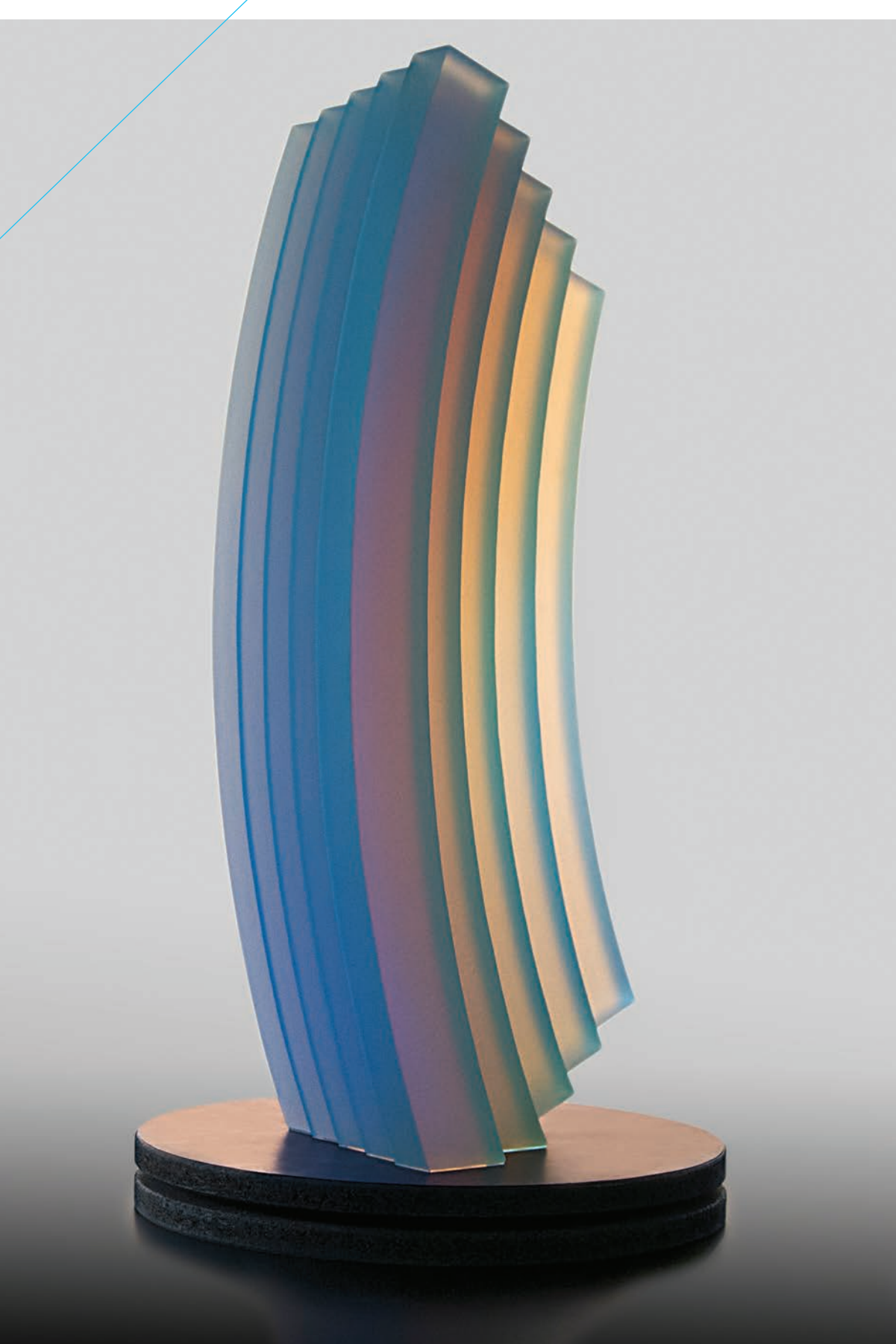
BORN: Brooklyn, NY
BIRTH DATE: 1971
SETTLED IN WNC: 1999
RESIDES: Asheville, NC



Counterclockwise from top:
 Zack Noble, *Oval Table 2*, 2007.
 Forged iron and glass; 34 x 18 x 20 inches.
 Photo: Mary Vogel.

Zack Noble, *Florida Rail*, 2008.
 Forged iron; 100 feet x 56 inches x 10 inches.

Zack Noble, *Element of a Kiss*, 2011.
 Forged iron; 23 x 8 x 8 inches.



MARK PEISER

Glass is fragile, unforgiving, demanding, and costly. But glass has no imagination or hidden agenda. If you are attentive, learn its ways, are understanding in what you ask of it, and treat it with care, its spirit emerges.

BORN: Chicago, IL

BIRTH DATE: 1938

SETTLED IN WNC: 1967

RESIDES: Penland, NC



From left:
Mark Peiser, *Etude Tableau 6*, 2015.
Hot cast phase separated glass;
22 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 34 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
Private collection. Photo: Mercedes Jelinek.

Mark Peiser, *Satin Garnet Arabesque*,
2008. Cold stream cast vessel;
9 x 21 x 21 inches. Private collection.

Mark Peiser, *Anxiety*, 2003. Cast glass,
carved, acid finished, and hand
polished. 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 10 x 10. Photo: Tom Mills.



GEORGE PETERSON

For me, the adventure and challenge of sculpting lies in focusing on the natural tension and drama I find in the wood, and in contrasting and complementing that drama with my expressive mark as an artist.

BORN: Long Beach, CA

BIRTH DATE: 1966

SETTLED IN WNC: 1998

RESIDES: Brevard, NC

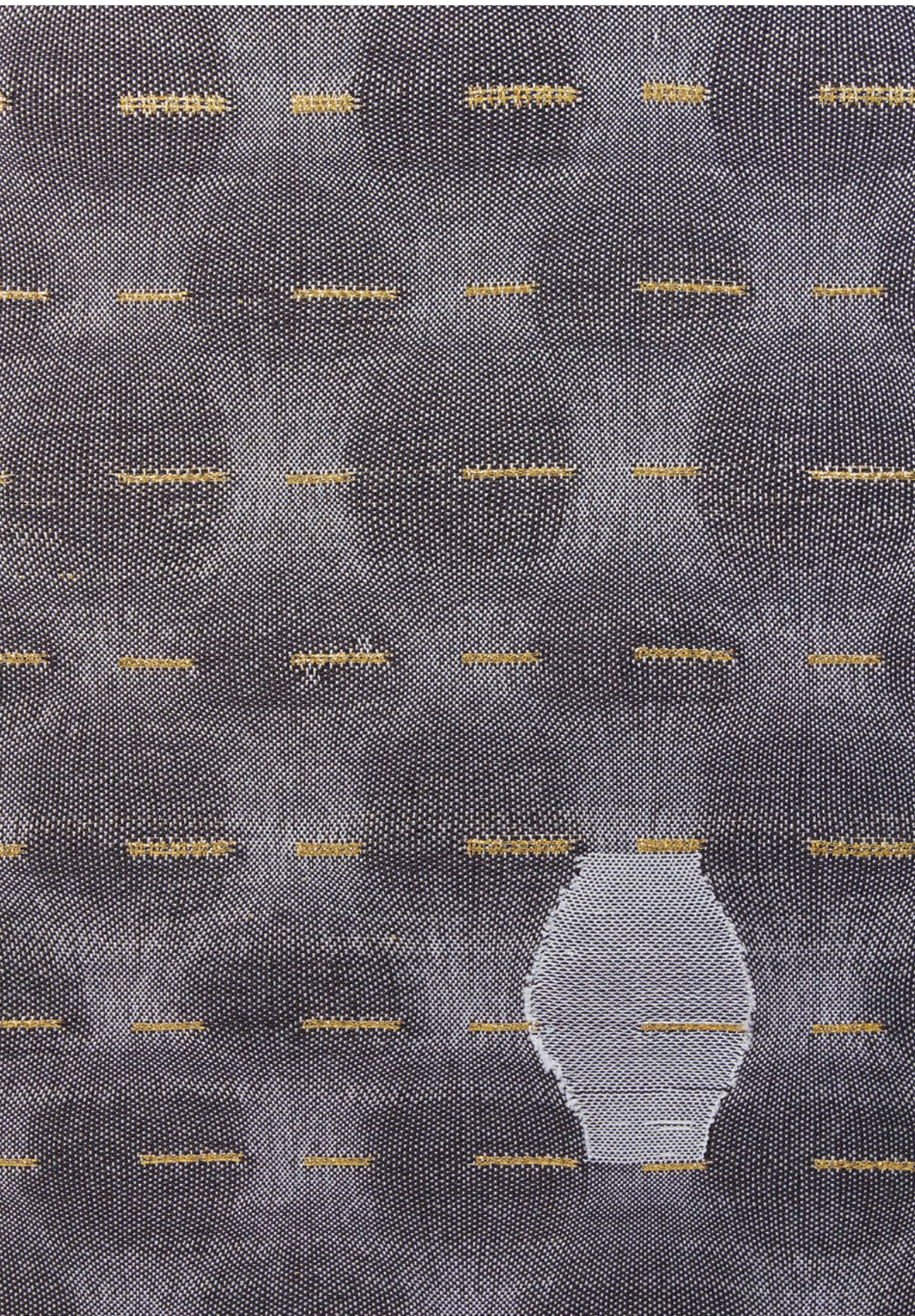


From the left:
George Peterson, *Lingo*, 2016.
Recycled skateboards, mixed media;
8 x 32 inches each. Photo: Tim Barnwell.



George Peterson, *Spiral*, 2016.
Recycled skateboards, mixed media;
7 x 6½ feet. Collection of Asheville
Art Museum.

George Peterson, *Circle*, 2009.
Carved Cherry, mixed media;
40 x 40 inches.



AMY PUTANSU

The longing, the melancholy, and the transcendent sense that the sea evokes find expression in a language of thread and interlacement, texture and material quality. Patterns repeating rhythmically are like chanting meditation; fields of subtlety are a respite and an invitation for contemplation. In this way my process is strongly reflected in each piece.

BORN: Clark Island, Maine

BIRTH DATE: 1973

SETTLED IN WNC: 2008

RESIDES: Waynesville, NC



From the left:
Amy Putansu, *The Vessel* (detail), 2017.
Hand woven ondulé panel;
23½ x 20½ inches.

Amy Putansu, *Beacon*, 2015.
Hand woven ondulé panel;
36 x 36 inches. Photo: Steve Mann.

Amy Putansu, *Whispers*, 2016.
Hand woven ondulé panel, ikat resist,
and vegetable dyes; 13½ x 15 inches.



MICHAEL SHERRILL

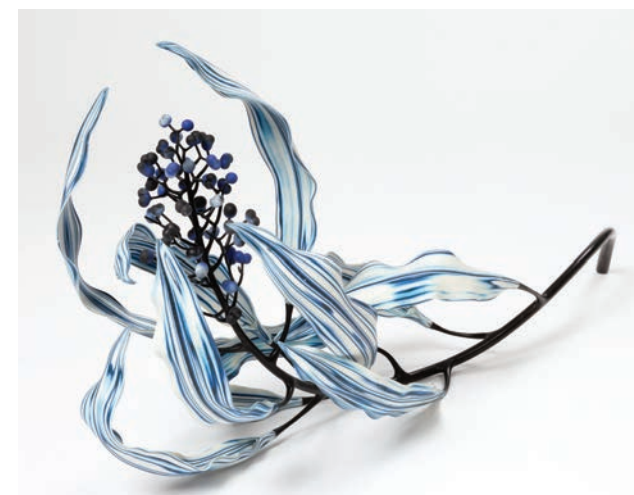
I am compelled by the sensation of seeing things fresh, as if for the first time. It is as if I have been asleep, and when I wake up, I am surprised by the things that surround me. In my case, it is the flora and fauna surrounding my studio that continue to surprise me. For me, these discoveries are epiphanies. My desire is to create something that might bring its observer to the same place of discovery.

BORN: Providence, Rhode Island

BIRTH DATE: 1954

SETTLED IN WNC: 1974

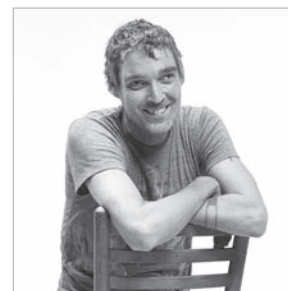
RESIDES: Bat Cave, NC



From the left:
Michael Sherrill, *Remnant*, 2016.
Porcelain and silica bronze;
48 x 34 x 12 inches. Private collection.
Photo: Scott Allen.

Michael Sherrill, *Dutch Solomon*, 2015.
Layered colored porcelain with a forge
fabricated silica bronze armature and
flame worked glass; 27 x 8 x 12 inches.
Photo: Scott Allen.

Michael Sherrill, *Chief Joseph Large
Platters*, 2016. Colored laminated
porcelain; 37 x 12 x 1 inches each.
Photo: Scott Allen.



TOM SHIELDS

Classic wooden chairs, as well as many other furniture forms, have become icons that are so common to us that we no longer notice them or consider the cultural and personal histories they embody. I use the content inherent in these forms to create personal narratives. My arrangements challenge the viewer to reconsider their assumptions and step back to re-examine the form and history these objects embody.

BORN: Boston, MA

BIRTH DATE: 1970

SETTLED IN WNC: 2002

RESIDES: Asheville, NC



From the left:
Tom Shields, *Bones*, 2014.
Found furniture; 45 x 27 x 21 inches.
Photo: Steve Mann.

Tom Shields, *Bridges*, 2016.
Powder coated cast iron; 43 x 85 x 17
inches. Photo: Courtesy of Kohler Co..

Tom Shields, *Cluster Table*
(collaboration with Century Furniture).
Wood; 26 x 76 x 42 inches.
Photo: Fanjoy Labrenz.



PABLO SOTO

As a maker, I react to purity of form and materials. Recently, I have begun to reconnect with my roots as a functional craftsman. You are just as likely to find me building a steel and wood door as you are to find me blowing glass forms for lighting, drinking, or sculpture.

BORN: Georgetown, TX

BIRTH DATE: 1979

SETTLED IN WNC: 2002

RESIDES: Penland, NC



From the left:
Pablo Soto, *Nest Lights*, 2016.
Blown glass; 9 x 9 x 9 inches.
Photo: Mercedes Jelinek.

Pablo Soto, *Tejida Cylinders*, 2016.
Blown glass with cane patterning;
10 x 12 inches. Photo: Mercedes Jelinek.

Pablo Soto, *Fitted Forms*, 2012.
Blown glass; 18 x 5 inches.
Photo: Steve Mann.



KATHY TRIPLETT

The texture of cork, whether it is used as a sanded, smooth composite material or left in its natural form as bark, has inspired a new body of work. I contrast rough and smooth in large platters and trays with cups. Clay is pushed, pulled, and punctured until it bulges and rips to represent the rugged terrain of geological degradation or a lunar landscape. Some platters remain as smooth curved austere slabs to contrast with cork bark. Some are functional, some not, but all are one of a kind.

BORN: Culpeper, VA
BIRTH DATE: 1949
SETTLED IN WNC: 1973
RESIDES: Weaverville, NC



Counterclockwise from top:
 Kathy Triplett, *Platter*, 2016.
 Clay; 30 x 12 x 8 inches.
 Photo: Tim Barnwell.

Kathy Triplett, *Seven Cups and Cork*, 2017.
 Clay and cork; 25 x 4 x 3 inches.
 Photo: Tim Barnwell.

Kathy Triplett, *Gates and Window*, 2017.
 Clay metal and cork; 38 x 12 x 8 inches.
 Photo: Tim Barnwell.



HAYDEN WILSON

This work reflects my interest in how we perceive the world around us. Through assembling individual images into compositions, I find that what once seemed a simple object takes on new contexts and meanings through its relationships with other objects.

BORN: Celo, NC

BIRTH DATE: 1983

SETTLED IN WNC: 1983

RESIDES: Asheville, NC



From the left:
Hayden Wilson, *Over the Wall*, 2016.
Glass powder print and steel;
16 x 16 x 4 inches. Photo: Steve Mann.

Hayden Wilson, *Revolution*, 2016.
Powder print on blown glass;
6½ x 11 x 3 inches. Photo: Steve Mann.

Hayden Wilson, *Passing By*, 2016.
Glass powder print and steel;
12 x 48 x 4 inches. Photo: Steve Mann.

NOTES

1 Michael Sherrill, e-mail message to author, May 2, 2017.

2 Dinesh Davé, James Stoddard, and Michael Evans, *The Economic Impact of the Professional Craft Industry in Western North Carolina* (Blowing Rock, North Carolina: DESS Business Research, 2018), accessed May 15, 2017, www.craftcreativitydesign.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/2008EconomicImpact.pdf

3 Melissa G. Post, *Pursuing Excellence* (Asheville: The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design, 2007), 13–31.

4 Post, *Pursuing Excellence*, 13–31.

5 Ibid.

6 Melissa Post, “Pursuing Excellence,” *Pursuing Excellence* (Asheville: The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design, 2007), 3.

7 Janet Koplos and Bruce Metcalf, Eds. *Makers: A History of American Studio Craft* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 212–214.

8 Ceramics was previously taught at Western Carolina University in the Department of Fine and Industrial Arts. However, according to Byrd, ceramics was not taught by trained ceramist but rather was taught on rotation by other art faculty. Joan Falconer Byrd, e-mail correspondence to author, May 13, 2017.

9 See: Mary Savig, “Pillars of Penland,” in *Forging Futures: Studio Craft in Western North Carolina* (Asheville: The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design, 2017), 17.

10 Western Carolina University, “Craft Revival: Shaping Western North Carolina Past and Present,” accessed May 15, 2017, www.wcu.edu/library/DigitalCollections/CraftRevival/collection/southern_highland_craft_guild.html.

11 Andrew Hayes, e-mail message to author, April 17, 2017.

12 Josh Copus, e-mail message to author, May 1, 2017.

13 “2012 Craft Think Tank Report: The New Apprenticeship Project” (Asheville: The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design, 2012), 13.

14 Josh Copus, e-mail message to author, May 1, 2017.

15 Jessica Green, e-mail message to author, April 18, 2017.

16 Zack Noble, e-mail message to author, April 15, 2017.

17 Hayden Wilson, e-mail message to author, April 12, 2017.

18 Oral history interview with Harvey K. Littleton, 2001 March 15. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

19 More than 200 craft artists have been interviewed as part of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America. The initiative also supports an ongoing initiative to collect the papers of prominent artists working in clay, glass, fiber, metal, and wood. For details, see aaa.si.edu.

20 Brown succeeded Lucy Morgan, who founded Penland in 1920.

21 For more details on the William J. Brown and Jane Brown papers, see Mary Savig, “William and Jane Brown Papers,” in *Archives of American Art Journal* 54:2 (2015), 76–79.

22 Oral history interview with Cynthia Bringle, 1992 January 22, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Oral history interview with Paulus Berensohn, 2009, March 20–21. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

27 Ibid.

28 Skip Sensbach, *The Endless Mountains Spirit*. M. C. Richards and Paulus Berensohn, Suraci Gallery, Marywood University, 2015.

29 M.C. Richards, *Opening Our Moral Eye: Essays, Talks and Poems Embracing Creativity and Community*, 1996.

30 Oral history interview with Paulus Berensohn, 2009, March 20–21. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

31 Oral history interview with Harvey K. Littleton, 2001, March 15. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

32 Oral history interview with Harvey K. Littleton, 2001, March 15. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CCCD would like to thank John Cram for his ongoing support of fine art and craft in western North Carolina. His early vision to create New Morning Gallery and, later, BS1, among other ventures, has helped to make Asheville a viable place for craft artists to live and the destination for cultural tourists that it is today.

BS1 would like to thank the CCCD for their unwavering commitment to the appreciation and advancement of contemporary craft. We have long admired the work you do through educational programming and grant opportunities for professional artists, researchers, and curators.

CCCD and BS1 would like to thank the curators Jordan Ahlers and Marilyn Zapf. This exhibition would not be possible without their collaborative spirit and passion for the field of craft.

Marilyn and Jordan would like to thank all the artists in the show for sharing their creativity and making work that demands awe and contemplation, and provides inspiration. Thank you to the collectors that share our joy in the handmade.

We would also like to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of BS1 Assistant Director Michael Manes, CCCD Grants and Programs Coordinator Anna Helgeson, and CCCD Marketing and Development Coordinator Lauren Pelletier. Their organizational acumen, creative programming, and marketing wisdom helped make this exhibition not only a reality but also a success.

Special thanks to Mary Savig at the Archives of American Art and Deb Schillo and Nikki Josheff at the Southern Highland Craft Guild for bringing their expertise to bear in the catalog and for sharing their archival documents of the region. And a shout-out to 7 Ton Design & Letterpress Co. for making a beautiful and lasting publication that we can enjoy long after the exhibition comes down.

Finally, thank you to the mentors, teachers, and trailblazers who helped to make western North Carolina a place that craft can call home.

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Founded in 1996, The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design is a national 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the field of craft by fostering new ideas, funding craft scholarship, and backing the next generation of makers, curators, and critics. CCCD has developed a strong national reputation as a significant resource for artists, museums, academic researchers, university students, and arts organizations. Each year, CCCD administers more than a quarter million dollars in grants to those working in the craft field.
www.craftcreativitydesign.org

FJ

