

THE ARTS & CRAFTS MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
COLORADO ARTS & CRAFTS SOCIETY

www.coloarts-crafts.org

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GROUND BREAKING FOR THE NEW KIRKLAND

BY DENNIS BARRETT

On September 10th, under a huge white tent, Hugh Grant, faithful friend of CACS through the years, presided over the groundbreaking ceremonies at the 12th and Bannock site where the new Kirkland Museum will rise (and whither Vance Kirkland's old studio will be moved.)

The event had style! From the large colorful renderings of the new building on easels at each side of the podium, to the short elegant speeches, to the souvenir dowels given to each guest to dip into paint to create one dot in a painting in the style of Vance Kirkland (and the plastic bag thoughtfully provided to carry the paint-dripping souvenir home) – right down to the cookies, each one bearing the Kirkland Museum KM logo! One expects no less of Hugh Grant and Merle Chambers, the husband-wife team who have so faithfully and creatively preserved the legacy of Vance Kirkland – and built the museum into a world-class repository of Arts and Crafts Era objects.

And it had warmth, as if all the 450 guests were family members.



Merle Chambers & Hugh Grant & at the new Kirkland Museum groundbreaking ceremony.

There was about the festivities a faint aroma of building rubble, but that was because, a little behind schedule, the old building on the site had been demolished only hours before. So there was a completely new clear view of the neighbors to the Northeast, the Clyfford Still Museum and the Denver Art Museum.

Most of the speeches emphasized the Kirkland's efforts to collect, exhibit and popularize Colorado artists, often "exhuming their careers," in Hugh Grant's phrase. But there was reference too to the collection of Arts & Crafts and later decorative arts, started by Kirkland himself and supplemented by later purchases, especially by the Chambers Family Fund. The new facility will provide 80% more display space, to relieve the rather intense crowding in the current museum at 1311 Pearl Street. Grant kidded that he had considered an ad "At the Kirkland, walk less, see more."

In her brief remarks Merle Chambers claimed credit for the idea of moving Vance Kirkland's 1911 studio from Pearl Street to the new site. When she



The new Kirkland museum looking southwest on Bannock Street by Olson Kundig.

was five years old her parents had moved their house three blocks to a new place, so she knew it could be done. After congenial comments by Denver Mayor Michael Hancock and UCD Professor Tom Noel, architect Jim Olson, of Olson Kundig in Seattle, introduced his design for the new building with infectious enthusiasm.

A promenade will run all the way from the main entrance at the south end, through the café, and the augmented museum shop, to the display galleries in the central “jewel box,” and on to the transplanted Kirkland studio at the north end – thus tying together all the parts of the block-long complex. The “jewel box” is to be clad in glazed tiles and glass panels, in another reference to Vance Kirkland’s dot paintings. The sidewalk on Bannock Street will act as another gallery, with windows and other glimpses of the inside, as well as the outdoor sculptures which are pretty well hidden at the Pearl Street site.

We have a few more months in which to enjoy the holdings in their accustomed positions, in the intimacy of 1311 Pearl Street. The old building will then close in the spring of 2016, and the new one not open till mid-2017.

Acres of Diamonds: the Kirkland in the World

Early in my passion for the Arts & Crafts Movement, I was in England, and reflected that that was where the A&C Movement had started, so I went online to find out what shrines I might visit. I was astonished to read that one of the five top A&C sites in the world, in that author’s opinion, was in Denver, Colorado! A museum called the Kirkland, of which I’d never heard. That was before I hooked up with CACS, so my ignorance was understandable, and soon remedied when I returned home. The Kirkland has meanwhile become ever better known. Now whenever we bring in a speaker for CACS from out of town, the first request is always to visit the Kirkland. “Acres of Diamonds,” as Russell Conwell put it, “in your own back yard.”



Jim Olson & Kristen R. Murray from Olson Kundig



Museum members helping to create a new dot painting for the groundbreaking.

WOMEN JEWELERS OF THE BRITISH ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT

ARTICLE BY BETH BRADFORD

Artistic jewelry design did not flourish until the second generation of the Arts and Crafts movement with it first becoming popular in the 1880s. Arts and Crafts era design is noted for its use of stylized natural forms and a reliance upon artistry and craftsmanship without relying on the use of precious stones to give value to the piece. Additionally, the revival of the art of enameling was instrumental in the development of the artistic style.

Historically, the metalworking guilds would rarely admit women as apprentices. Opportunities were limited for women to learn the skills required to become jewelers. Most women who became involved in jewelry making prior to the nineteenth century were related to guild members and learned from their male relatives. During the Arts and Crafts era, art schools offered training in metalworking providing opportunities to many more women than in previous times.

To view this collection as it should be seen--in color--please visit our Facebook page "Colorado Arts & Crafts Society"



N & E Dawson Paradise Buckle silver, enamel

Nelson (1859-1942) and Edith (1862-1928) Dawson
The English husband and wife team of Nelson and Edith Dawson designed and produced jewelry with various types of enameling. Edith Robinson, a talented watercolorist, married Nelson Dawson in 1893. They established a jewelry workshop together - the Mulberry House studio located in the Chelsea neighborhood of London. Nelson learned enameling techniques from Alexander Fisher who was the English expert on the subject, having studied in Italy and France. Nelson imparted his knowledge to Edith and, with her watercolorist's eye, she became the artist and expert in applying the enameling.



N & E Dawson rose & moon necklace detail



N & E Dawson (attrib) rose brooch copper, enamel 1900



N & E Dawson waist ornament silver, turquoise, enamel, 1905



N & E Dawson (attrib) copper, silver, enamel brooch 1900

They experimented with different types of enameling: cloisonné (soldering wire to the base material and applying enamel between the wires), champlevé (applying enamel to hollowed out areas of the base material), and limoges (applying paste enamel with a knife). They used a combination of transparent and opaque enamels. In the champlevé technique, the transparent enamels would reveal the faceted preparation of the base metal surface adding to the light-reflective quality of the piece.

It is difficult to separate the contributions of Nelson and Edith. Nelson maintained his design studio on the first floor of their house while Edith's enameling studio was on the second floor. Two articles about their work appeared in *The Studio*, one in 1896 and the second in 1901. Unfortunately, the impression given in the articles is that Edith contributed labor while Nelson was the artist. However,

by 1897, Edith was in charge of the enameling work which employed several men.

They kept the workshop small in order to control the quality of the work. Their jewelry was too popular for the number of people that they employed and they had to refuse work. Even so, Edith eventually collapsed through a combination of overwork and the fumes from the enameling.



N & E Dawson silver & enamel brooch & clasp

Arthur (1862-1928) and Georgie (1866-1934) Gaskin
Another husband and wife team, Arthur and Georgie Gaskin, were two of the original members of the Birmingham Group of Artist-Craftsmen which formed at the Birmingham School of Art in the 1890s. Georgina Evelyn Cave France married fellow student Arthur Gaskin in 1899. They worked together on creating jewelry with an inspiration gleaned from Eastern jewelry. Georgie specialized in the enameling and she too suffered ill health from the effects of the enameling fumes.



Top Left: A & G Gaskin Necklace silver, chalcedony, pearl 1905 **Top right:** A & G Gaskin Necklace silver, chalcedony, blister pearl 1907 **Right:** A & G Gaskin Silver Wings Brooch silver, opal doublet, green paste, pink tourmaline



May Morris (1862-1938)

Mary "May" Morris is the younger daughter of William and Jane Morris. She attended the National Art Training School where she studied embroidery and became the director of the Morris & Co. embroidery department at age 23. Although there is some evidence that she may have designed and made jewelry at a younger age, she was friends with the Gaskins and may have been inspired by them to return to jewelry design at the turn of the century.



Top & Bottom Left: May Morris girdle, pendant & hat pins 1906



May Morris pendant silver, amazonite, williamsite, seed pearls, lapis lazuli 1903

Frances McNair (1873-1921)

This series has already mentioned Frances (see CACS Newsletter, Volume 16, No. 4, Winter 2014). Her work is characterized by an interest in symbolism, mythology and fairy subjects. When Frances died, her husband Herbert McNair destroyed most of her work.



Frances McNair Brooch silver, enamel 1900



Frances McNair Brooch silver, amethyst 1900



Frances McNair Necklace silver, fire opal 1900

Lily Day (unknown)

Lily Day was an instructor of enameling at the School of Architecture and Applied Art, Liverpool University. Her work was exhibited with Herbert and Frances McNair.



Lily Day silver, gold & enamel necklace 1910

Rhoda Wager (1875-1953)

Rhoda Wager was born in London. She studied art in Bristol and attended the Glasgow School of Art from 1897 to 1903. From 1903, she was a member of the Glasgow Society of Lady Artists. She taught jewelry making at the St Mary's girls' school in Bristol and at the GSA for some time before emigrating to Fiji in 1913 where she lived on her brother's sugar plantation. She settled in Sydney, Australia in 1918 where she resumed jewelry making. Rhoda became a member of the Society of Arts and Crafts of New South Wales and later joined the Melbourne and Brisbane societies, showing annually in their exhibitions.

In 1920, she married Percival George Ashton but Rhoda continued to work under her maiden name. Rhoda employed an assistant, Walter Clarence Clapham and in 1928, she apprenticed her 16-year-old niece, Dorothy Wager. Dorothy continued working with Rhoda until 1939 when she opened her own workshop. During Rhoda's career, she produced twelve thousand pieces of jewelry. She retired in 1946.



Rhoda Wager Ring silver, jadeite



Rhoda Wager (attrib) Brooch silver, opal doublet 1925



Rhoda Wager Ring silver, lapis 1925



Rhoda Wager Brooch silver, mother of pearl



Rhoda Wager Brooch & Bracelet silver, opal,agate



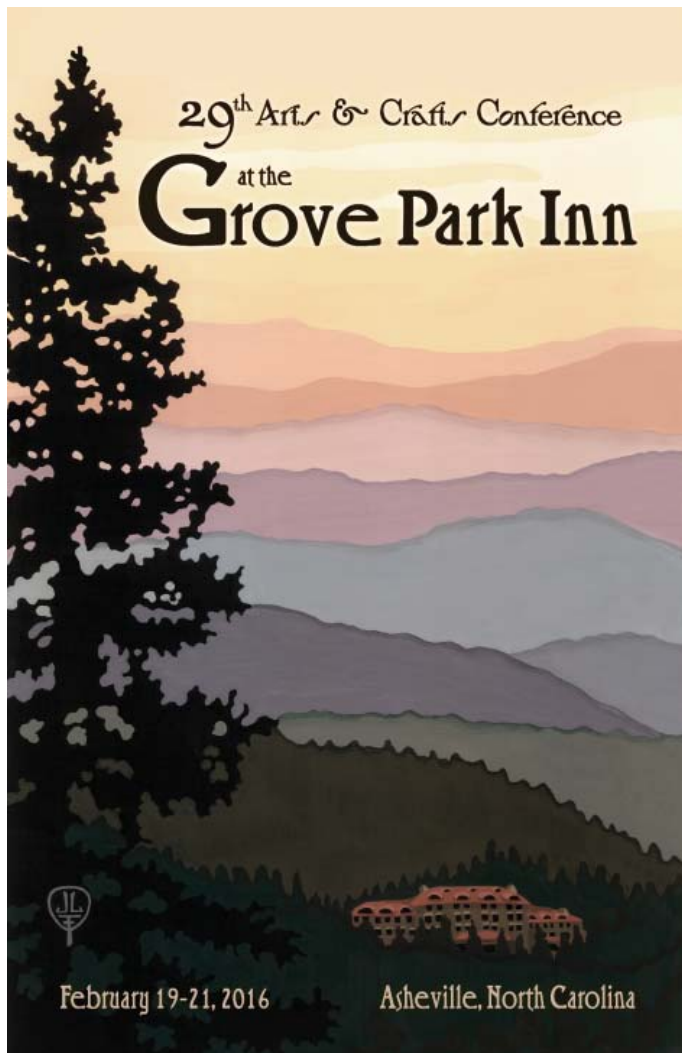
Rhoda Wager Bracelet & Brooch silver

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CACS's very own Julie Leidel is the artist for the 2015 and 2016 G.P.I. posters. She's currently working on the 30th anniversary poster for the conference in 2017. To see more of her Arts & Crafts, and WPA era inspired artwork, please visit her website at www.thebungalowcraft.com.

STAYING CONNECTED

The Colorado Arts and Crafts Society is here for your networking, lifestyle, and enjoyment. We are always looking to enhance our offerings, and suggestions from you are the key to making CACS the best it can be. We want you to get the most out of your membership and here are a few ways you can get involved.

Exploring www.meetup.com

In keeping up with the ever-changing times and the role technology plays in finding local people with similar interests, CACS would like your feedback on a new way to create community and grow our society. www.meetup.com is a website that would help people in the Denver metro area with an interest in the Arts & Crafts Movement find each other, and find CACS. We are looking to create a meet-up group and host small get-togethers where people can come and share their interest. Have you used [meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com) before? Would you be interested to learn more? Email Julie Leidel with your thoughts and suggestions at julie.leidel@gmail.com

Do we have your email address?

In addition to our newsletter and event postcards, we'd like to send electronic correspondence about upcoming events and get your suggestions. To make sure we have your current email, please contact Rachel Yates at Rachel.Yates@pcusa.org with the subject line "CACS email list"

Have you liked our Facebook page?

CACS is on Facebook! We are posting information about local and national Arts and Crafts related events, history, and articles. We also welcome member posts, pictures and stories. It's a great way to keep in touch and you can always find the latest information about all things Arts & Crafts here at www.facebook.com/groups/148492735007. You can also search Facebook for "Colorado Arts and Crafts Society" and find us that way.

Facebook Groups You Might Like

There are so many people all over the U.S., and the world that share your love of the Arts & Crafts Movement. Facebook has a growing collection of amazing people sharing their knowledge, photos, stories and expertise on everything from Ashbee to Zanesville. Here are just a few key-word searches to help you use Facebook as a resource for learning and inspiration:

Colorado Arts & Crafts Society
Revival of the Arts & Crafts Movement
The Arts & Crafts Movement
Van Briggles Pottery Show & Tell
Historical Arts & Crafts Movement, Cotswolds
Bring Back the Bungalow
American Arts & Crafts
Arts & Crafts Movement in the Western US
Pottery Collector

UPCOMING CACCS EVENTS

Potluck & Louis Comfort Tiffany

Friday, November 13, 2015 from 5-8pm

Bring a fall dish to share, a favorite piece of art glass for show-and-tell, and come up to the Boettcher Mansion for our potluck and movie night. CACCS will provide light appetizers and beverages.

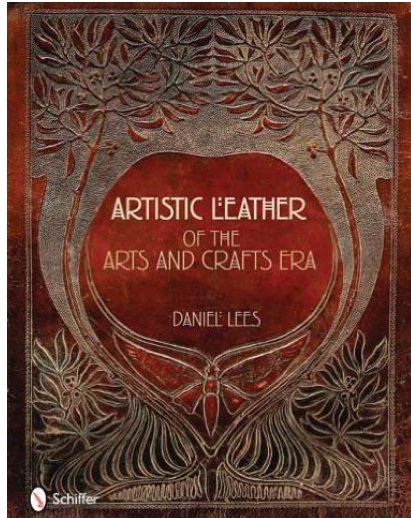
We'll begin the potluck at 5pm. Members are encouraged to bring Tiffany or art glass items, books, or photos from your collection to show and talk about during the dinner hour. New or old, sharing our treasures with those that appreciate our obsessions is always fun. If you are looking for a good historical fiction read before our event *Clara and Mr. Tiffany* by Susan Vreeland is a great place to start.

Our documentary movie of the evening will focus on Louis Comfort Tiffany's life as told by a close friend, Hugh F. McKean. Robert Rust will also share a few early 1900s short films in the Fireside room after the movie. Please feel free to bring a friend and share some great food and conversation. The evening is free to anyone who brings a dish to share. RSVP to Cynthia at 720-497-7632 by Nov. 12th.

CACCS Annual Winter Symposium & Leather Workshop

January 16, 2015

Join us at the Boettcher Mansion on Lookout Mountain for our annual meeting and symposium. We will have a leather presentation & workshop for interested members taught by Jeff Icenhower that will begin at 1:00pm. Class space is limited to 24, so RSVP to Cynthia at 720-497-7632 to reserve your space.



Dinner for our membership will be catered, and appetizers will begin at 4pm. You'll have the opportunity to listen to our keynote speaker, Daniel Lees, author of *Artistic Leather of the Arts and Crafts Era*. He will speak on the history of Arts and Crafts leather from the late 1800s through the 1920s. Signed copies of his book will be available for purchase.

Have an activity you'd love to do?

We are always looking to broaden our experiences, and one of the best ways is to get new ideas from you! We'd love to learn what you'd like to see in the upcoming events section. We welcome your ideas and input. Feel free to email Julie Leidel at julie.leidel@gmail.com with suggestions.



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