



Tiffany dragonfly lamp by Clara Driscoll on display at the Kirkland Museum.

CACS Members Tour New Kirkland Museum

By Dennis Barrett

On August 30th, Robert Rust of our Board of Directors led a tour, for twelve CACS members, of the new Kirkland Museum, emphasizing its strong holdings from the Arts & Crafts Movement. As he drew our attention to pieces, both old friends from the old museum at 13th and Pearl, and many items newly exhibited or newly acquired, Robert drew on his wide and deep knowledge of the period.

We gathered in Gallery 1, the Vance Kirkland gallery, with representative paintings from the artist's six distinct styles/periods. Hugh Grant, founder and curator of the museum, came to welcome us. He then surprised us with the comment that he was always eager to learn and would accompany us on the tour! Robert was undaunted, and as we toured Hugh offered frequent insider insights.

The Grand Promenade extends the length of the building, from the welcoming lobby on the south end, to the original 1910 building, which was Vance Kirkland's studio from 1932, on the north end. (The

studio was safely transported, all 150 tons of brick, eight blocks from Pearl Street to its current location.) From the Grand Promenade there extend three large galleries on each side.

We concentrated on the Arts and Crafts Gallery, and the Art Nouveau Gallery (including Glasgow Style and Wiener Werkstätte), as Robert emphasized the close relations between Arts & Crafts and Art Nouveau. And then after surveying the three rooms of Vance Kirkland's original studio, we were free to spend what time we wanted in the four other major galleries, Bauhaus, deStijl & International Style; Art Deco; Modern American, Italian & Scandinavian; and Modern and Post-Modern.

One of the great strengths of the new museum is the displays throughout, of objects in salon style, that is, with furniture, rugs, decorative arts and fine arts, all grouped together as they might have appeared

(continued on next page)

Kirkland Tour (cont.)

in the period. Hugh Grant pointed out that few museums are able to do that. He was also able to boast that the Kirkland has more Wiener Werkstätte than is held anywhere else in the U.S.; the bed “Aux Orchides” (“Books describe it as the best Art Nouveau ever done”); and the best Glasgow Style holdings in the U.S. We were impressed anew with what a treasure we have in Denver particularly for Arts & Crafts enthusiasts!

Other pieces that evoked gasps or “Aha”s: an Eliel Saarinen chair from the Helsinki railway station, done in 1905 before he emigrated to the United States; a William Morris rug under a Frank Lloyd Wright table; a silver clock by Frances and Margaret Macdonald, which languished with the British authorities as a ‘national treasure’ for two years after the museum bought it at auction, before they let it travel; a Tiffany lamp, correctly attributed to Clara Driscoll; a Josef Hoffman chair from 1932, put on display just a week ago (which was a surprise even to Robert); and a sugar bowl and ewer by Artus vanBriggle for Rookwood, before he came to Colorado. My own favorite was the drop-front desk designed by Harvey Ellis for Stickley, with some of the first decorative in-



Important, possibly unique, lamp and copper shade from the Colorado Arts & Crafts period, identified and donated by Pam McClary and Robert Rust.

lays Stickley ever produced, possibly while Ellis was still alive.

We learned more of the close relationships between Robert Rust, Hugh Grant, and the Kirkland Museum as the afternoon progressed. We saw the metalwork from Craftwood Shops in Manitou Springs donated by Robert and his wife Pam McClary, in prominent position at eye level in one of the glass cases, and appreciated Robert’s thorough knowledge of the period and of the collection, as he patiently answered every question that arose. We heard that Hugh had, at the age of 12, cleaned the floors and the outhouse of the studio for his mother’s friend Vance Kirkland; then he graduated to applying gesso to canvases on weekends, and then to moving dot paintings around under the straps from which Kirkland was suspended.

After a short hiatus in the story Hugh inherited Kirkland’s estate, and founded the museum with his then wife Merle Chambers.

After touring and standing for about two hours most of us were ready to sit down! I note that the museum really is a welcoming place – each gallery is equipped with plainly marked visitor seating, and there are stocks of light, easily-carried folding chairs at each end of the Grand Promenade (they are unobtrusive – look for them). After two hours of standing and reading and listening, I vowed that next time I *will* carry one of those folding chairs.



Bedstead “Aux Orchides” with extensive wood inlays.

Kirkland Tour (cont.)

But no one regretted the time we had spent. As we ended up at the gift shop (well supplied with a great selection of decorative arts by contemporary artists, as well as souvenirs reflecting the work of heroes like Vance Kirkland and Frank Lloyd Wright, and museum souvenirs like tumblers and cuff links portraying the distinctive golden exterior design of the museum), one guest expressed his surprise at how many Colorado connections there were to the Arts & Crafts movement, and how well Robert's commentaries had kept his interest up throughout.

Robert has offered to reprise the tour, for those who missed it the first time. Let him know of your interest at <rust2r@me.com>.

Photos by Cynthia Shaw and Helene Arendt

See additional photos on pages 6-7.



View from Art Nouveau gallery past "Aux Orchides" to the Arts & Crafts gallery; note the groupings of fine art and decorative art in salon style.



CACS members at the Kirkland Museum tour in late August: from left, Mark Davidson, Robert Rust, Julie Fletcher, and Hugh Grant.

Washington Irving's Sunnyside: Whimsy Along the Waterfront

By Cynthia Shaw

Dubbed “the first man of letters” after publishing his 1809 book, *A History of New York* (penned under the alias Dietrich Knickerbocker), Washington Irving went on to write *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent* (1819-20). This popular collection of short stories and essays included *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Rip Van Winkle*, inspired by both Dutch and German folk tales and his boyhood visits to the Hudson River Valley.

In 1835, Irving purchased a neglected 2-room farmhouse built c. 1783 on the banks of the Hudson in Tarrytown, NY. Naming it “Sunnyside”, his dream was to remodel it as “a little nookery somewhat in the Dutch style, quaint, but unpretending”. After embellishing it with stepped gables and clustered chimneys (and a fabricated 1656 date) he exulted that he had “repaired and renovated it with religious care, in the genuine Dutch style and...adorned and illustrated it with sundry relics of the glorious days of the New Netherlands.”

Later adding a Spanish-influenced tower in 1847, Irving acknowledged his penchant for embellishing traditional designs with “imaginative and whimsical associations.” Widely admired and often visited,



Sunnyside was not only featured in Andrew Jackson Downing’s architectural guidebook but also described in Harper’s as “a wonderfully unique little edifice, totally unlike any thing else in our land, but always calling up our remembrances or our fancies of merrie (sic) rural England, with a hint here or there of its old Dutch leaven.”

With its hodgepodge of Dutch, Gothic and Tudor Revival elements, Sunnyside still shines as the first example of Colonial Revival architecture in America. Not even the noisy intrusion of railroad tracks – laid by Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1849 just below the idyllic waterfront setting – could ruin Irving’s devotion to his dream home, once touted as “next to Mount Vernon, the best known and most cherished of all the dwellings in our land” (Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr.). At age 76, Irving died peacefully in his bedroom after uttering: “Well, I must arrange my pillows for another night. When will this end?” He was buried under a simple headstone at the nearby Sleepy Hollow cemetery on December 1, 1859.

Irving and his grave were commemorated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in his 1876 poem “In The Churchyard at Tarrytown”, which concludes with:

*How sweet a life was his; how sweet a death!
Living, to wing with mirth the weary hours,
Or with romantic tales the heart to cheer;
Dying, to leave a memory like the breath
Of summers full of sunshine and of showers,
A grief and gladness in the atmosphere.*

In *Rip Van Winkle*, the legendary Dutch-American villager who falls asleep in the Catskill Mountains wakes up 20 years in the future only to learn he missed the entire Revolutionary War. Today, the experience of visiting Sunnyside – a well preserved landmark and living history museum – is just the opposite, a virtual trip back in time to appreciate the Colonial proverb that, “A man’s house is his castle.”



Modern Bungalow's Maker Series presents Julie Leidel's Artwork

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Please join the Colorado Arts & Crafts Society for an afternoon with Roycroft Renaissance Artisan Julie Leidel as part of Modern Bungalow's Makers Series. Julie will tell us of her inspiration and her process. She will have a slideshow presentation about the influential artists that came before her, and how she is innovating from the past.

Julie Leidel has been a Colorado resident since she was four. Her love of the Colorado high country has lead her on a path to capture the natural beauty all around us.

In a recent interview, Julie shares more about her work.

What was your inspiration for your Colorado series of gouache paintings?

I really want my artwork to allow people to fall deeply in love with Colorado. Colorado is full of amazing vistas that take our breath away. As an artist, I love to remind people of the beauty we have right in our own backyard and to capture the essence of falling in love with this incredible state.

How do Colorado's landscapes inspire your work?

The vast beauty and variety of the Colorado landscape is a wellspring of inspiration for me. I joke with my clients that I'll never run out of ideas for paintings, but it's true. From our farmlands and meadows, to our mountain streams and 14er summits, there's enough beauty in our state to keep me more than busy for the rest of my life.



Julie Leidel

What inspired your painting style specifically?

The Arts & Crafts Movement (1880 -1920) and the WPA of National Park posters from the 30s and 40s has been a huge point of inspiration for me as an artist. With simplistic and flat shapes of color, my work is a representation of how your memory perceives a time, or a place. Our memories don't capture every detail, like a camera would. Instead, we get a warm glow of recognition when we have found a connection to nature and a specific chapter of our past. This interpretation allows our own personal experiences to fill in the gaps visually, and that leaves room for our own story to be told. I enjoy watching people look through my work with a spark of remembrance, a flood of memories, a desire to rediscover, or go explore someplace new.

What's the best thing about living and working in Evergreen?

My husband Brian and I with our two children Abby and Brady moved to Evergreen two years ago and it's heaven on earth to us. The crisp mountain air, forests teeming with wildlife, stunning views of the Rocky Mountains, and the stars at night continue to take our breath away. The work-life balance makes more sense when you just look out every window for inspiration and relaxation. Currently, we are extending my studio to include a 700 square foot outdoor patio which includes covered and uncovered portions for more plein air painting opportunities. We are also creating a nature trail around the property and it's already been adopted by much of the local wildlife. I love that they share their forest setting with us so graciously.

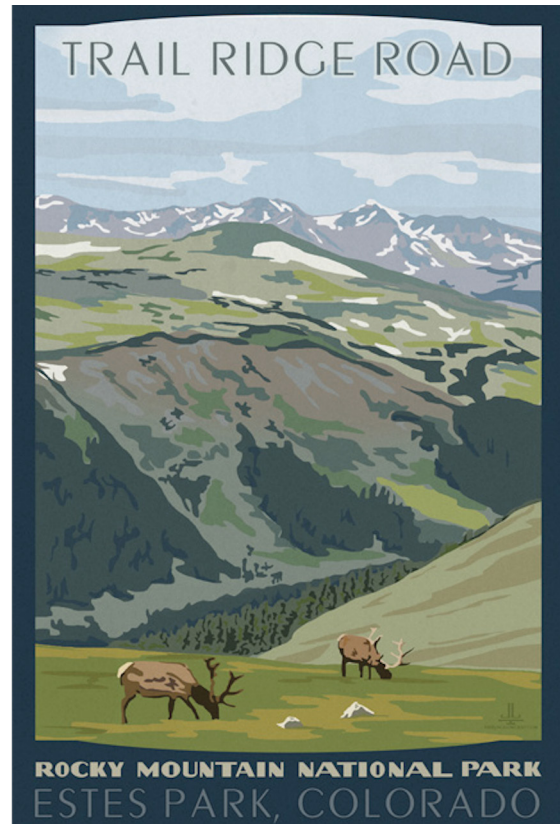
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Julie Leidel (cont.)

You were accepted as a Roycroft Renaissance Artisan in 2016. Tell us about what that means to you?

The Roycroft of East Aurora, NY began as a community of artisans and craft workers founded in 1885. Roycroft meant “Kings Craft” and this community functioned in the same way many of the guilds did across Europe. The work of the Roycrofters had a strong influence on the development of American architecture and design in the early 20th century. In 1976 community members wanted to revive the Roycroft campus and the philosophy of Elbert Hubbard and the Roycrofters and create the Roycrofters-at-Large Association (RALA). In order to be accepted as a Roycrofter, the following five criteria are at the core of how each artist is measured: High quality hand craftsmanship, excellence of design, originality of expression, professional recognition, and artistic growth.

I’m honored to currently be one of about 72 artists around the nation that have been accepted to this prestigious group, continuing on in the same spirit of the Arts & Crafts Movement. The Roycroft Renaissance Double-R trademark can be found on my original paintings since my acceptance as a Roycroft Renaissance Artisan.



Print by Julie Leidel



More from the Kirkland tour:

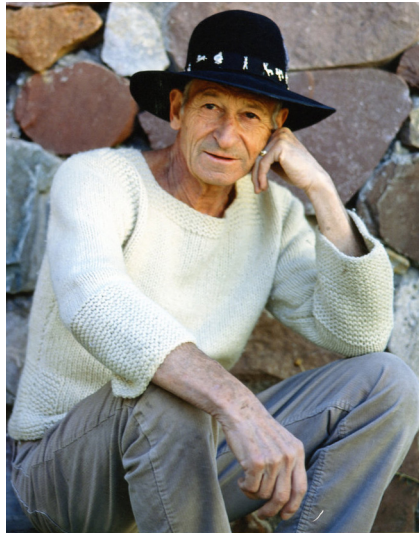
*Left: Early drop-front desk and chair designed by Harvey Ellis for Stickley in 1903, with inlays.
Below: Exterior of the museum in its new location at the corner of Bannock Street and 12th Avenue, Denver.*



**SAVE THE DATE: WINTER SYMPOSIUM
SATURDAY, JANUARY 26TH, 4-8PM**

Featuring Stephanie Soldner Sullivan

The daughter of late ceramic artist and teacher Paul Soldner (pictured at right) will talk about her father's legacy and the family compound in Aspen that she hopes to turn into the Soldner Center for the Arts & Innovation.



For more information, contact cshaw@jeffco.us

Last look from the Kirkland: Silver clock by Macdonald sisters. It is just past the picture of Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh in the frame by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, which was a favorite at the old Kirkland museum.



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