

THE ARTS & CRAFTS MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COLORADO ARTS & CRAFTS SOCIETY
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The Causey-Sterne house at 1190 S. Franklin, a Tudor-influenced Craftsman house the CACS Tour in October admired for its roof and many other features

TOUR OF WASHINGTON PARK

By Dennis Barrett

On a picture-perfect fall Saturday, October 9th, Robert Rust led an enthusiastic crowd of two dozen on a walking tour of Washington Park, and the houses in the two streets East of the park. We had the benefit of Robert's insights as a two-decade resident of Wash Park, as well as his expertise (he has lectured on Arts & Crafts matters at such iconic venues as the Swedenborgian Church in San Francisco, Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple in Chicago and the Hollyhock House in L.A., the Roycroft campus in East Aurora, NY, and the Grove Park Inn).

Long-time CACS members renewed acquaintances, and encouraging numbers of younger people showed up.

The tour started at the pavilion and boathouse, erected on the shore of Smith Lake in 1913, soon after Denver acquired the land around Smith Lake (at the north end of the current Park) and Grasmere Lake (to the south) and the great greensward between them.

We dutifully admired the pavilion, and then passed Smith Ditch, the stream that meanders through the park, on the way to the celebrated sculpture *Wynken, Blynken and Nod*, adjacent to the Eugene Field House at the northeast corner of the Park. The sculpture illustrates the famous nursery rhyme by Field, who was called "the children's poet." Eugene Field and his wife lived in the house on Colfax Avenue, where it was built. Molly Brown raised the funds to transport it to the present site, at 715 S. Franklin St., where it served first as the Eugene Field public library, and now is the headquarters of the Park Rangers. As we

continued on next page



The CACS crew of October 9th, in front of the pavilion in Wash Park (some seizing a last opportunity to sit, before the long walk.)

WASHINGTON PARK (CONT)

viewed the exterior, a Park Ranger, Tatiana Klein, emerged, and, hearing who we were, invited us to come in and see the interior! Red velveteen wallpaper with a very William Morris-looking border made reference to the Arts & Crafts era when the house was moved. With a single living-dining room, perhaps a kitchen and bathroom to the rear, there was no bedroom in sight, and we were reminded of the modest space allotments of the early 20th century.

The simplicity of this house contrasted starkly with the McMansions on the next block, the 600 block of South Franklin, with only one Dutch colonial original to the neighborhood, and 12 other houses of such diversity that the only possible commonality I could discern among them was the ambition to occupy as much of the lot as was legal --- and maybe a little more.

We then proceeded to a variety of houses on South Franklin and South Gilpin streets, working our way southwards through the neighborhood constructed at the same time as the Park. The neighborhood developed in the early years of the 20th century, largely under the influence of Mayor Robert Speer's City Beautiful movement, which turned away from Victorian ornament toward the classical revival, the monumental, and Craftsman styles.

When I asked Robert whether "Historic Neighborhood in Transition" might be an apt title, he was dismissive. "More like 'Historic Neighborhood Destroyed,'" quoth he! Indeed we encountered more than one vintage house fenced and scheduled for destruction, and one that had been demolished in just the previous week.

But we also found some beautiful houses, and some of great Arts & Crafts interest, as well as some poignant contrasts.

Early on, in the space of one block, I was impressed by the contrasts: 511 S. Gilpin, an unassuming bungalow, fenced and soon to be demolished; 539 a huge new edifice; 570, an original bungalow with open front porch; and 624, a Denver foursquare that looked original, but was in fact constructed after 2005 in venerable Craftsman style (looking



The Denver foursquare at 639 S. Gilpin, built recently but fitting in with the style of a century earlier.

very similar to 1130 S. Franklin, a foursquare that was built in 1909.)

Near the end of the tour, as we were tiring and beginning to feel the heat of the day, and the "1.5-hour walk" was already pushing 2 hours, we came to the gem of the day, the Causey-Sterne House at 1190 S. Franklin. Robert admitted this was his favorite, and didn't need to say much to elicit nods of agreement. Built in 1913, and described as 'Craftsman with Tudor influence,' this house has a cedar roof which Robert characterized as Storybook style. And I didn't know you could fall in love with a *roof* - but I instantly did! The weathered cedar shingles mass to form long waves (see image below) and the cumulative effect is of great elegance. I didn't want to leave the site, but then we found the same cedar roof on the next several houses. Robert explained that installing

continued on next page



The aforementioned undulating cedar roof

WASHINGTON PARK (CONT)

such a roof requires an expensive steam tank on site; presumably the roofs were all put up at the same time, about 1999.

The Tudor at 1717 E. Arizona had its own charms, with some of the Storybook details that were popularized in Hollywood in the 1920's. Douglas Keister has described them in books and in his Grove Park Inn lecture of 2020: with stained-glass windows, asymmetric concave ('cat-slide') gable, and shake roof (here cedar shakes, to great effect) among other whimsical details.

After a brief look at South high school (built in 1926 following several Italian models), we started back for the pavilion. Along Smith Ditch, by the Lawn Bowling Organization's site with its many



An innocent century-old bungalow at 511 S. Gilpin, fenced and ready for destruction.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME!

Well folks, it's that time again, time to renew your membership to the CACS.

As you all know we normally ask for your renewal at the door during our Annual Winter Symposium in January, however this year we will again be enjoying the Symposium virtually from the comfort of our own homes, so we are asking that you take a minute to renew your membership now.

We have two easy ways to renew:

Send the form on the back of this mailing with a check made out to CACS to Beth Bradford, 413 S. Humboldt St. Denver, CO 80209.

Or take a minute to use our new PayPal online account by going to paypal.com/paypalme/CACSmembership. There you can use the fancy QR code, and follow the simple fast and easy steps!

Annual Dues remain the same as last year!

- \$25 - Student membership
- \$30 - Individual membership
- \$50 - Family membership (at same address)
- \$60 - Organization or Business membership

Remember - In addition to receiving our quarterly newsletter, members receive exclusive invitations and discounted admission to special events in and around the Denver metro area as well as our virtual events.

Please go to our website [Coloarts-crafts.org/membership.htm](https://coloarts-crafts.org/membership.htm) where you can join our email list to be notified about upcoming events.

During the pandemic we continue to thrive as a strong organization. As you see from this and our previous Newsletters, we continue to bring you events both virtual and in person.

In January of this year, we had two videos to zoom for our annual symposium, by Beth Bradford & Cynthia Shaw, and Julie Leidel.

In April, a Spring Symposium featured Robert Rust's video " The Arts and Crafts Movement in Colorado - Then and Now." In July we held a picnic in Chautauqua Park, Boulder. In August, again by Zoom, Brian Brace and Julie Leidel, Roycroft Artisans both, led tours of their work spaces.

October saw the well-attended Washington Park tour (see article in this issue).

And in January, Ted Ellison will present his work in *From Hand to Heart: the Untold Story of American Glass Mosaic Fireplaces*.

Please do not forget that much of what we do depends on you, our wonderful members. Many of our events, particularly the annual Show, Sale & Workshops, require extra help. If you'd like to volunteer your assistance, please let us know. We welcome your help!

by Julie Leidel

THEODORE ELLISON

If I could devote my whole self to another medium, it would be glass. I have long desired a glass studio but it's not in the cards for me, which is why I was so thrilled that Theodore Ellison agreed to my interview with him for our latest installment of our Artist's Corner. He will be our keynote speaker at our 2022 virtual CACS Winter Symposium. His presentation on A&C stained glass and mosaic is not to be missed. Ted is a legend among Arts & Crafts Revival artisans, and his talent, expertise, and precision would have impressed the Greene brothers, Tiffany, Hubbard, and the Glasgow Four. He has created heirloom art for the ages, and he's the most grounded, calming artistic force you could ever hope to meet..

When and where did your love for art glass begin? Was it through the historical context of the Arts and Crafts Movement?

My first contact with anything related to Arts & Crafts was Hollyhock House when I was in High School. Having grown up in suburban homes, I'd never experienced anything like it. There was a thoughtfulness applied throughout that really attracted me. Seeing ideas as they were expressed in concrete, art glass, wood, metal - it resonated because I was primarily interested in shop classes in high school, and here was a complete environment that answered the question 'when am I ever going to use this?'.

My interest in glass happened 10 years later when I was getting an art degree at San Francisco State - I had started as a Ceramicist but changed to a focus on glass after my first exposure to it. Something about the technical challenge, and the precision required combined with the creativity to compose with line and color - it was a perfect fit for me. Plus, there weren't many people practicing it at the time, so it seemed open to me.

Where did you study, and at what point did you know that being an artist full-time was your passion?

As a teenager I knew I wanted to work with my hands, but I had no direction. It took me a while to find my path and return to college. I worked a broad range of jobs before, during and after graduating. While at school, there was a general feeling that not all of us are going to be able to make a career with our creativity - and I wasn't confident I'd make it either. With my degree I thought I'd become a teacher, so I started substituting. And after a few years of that I made my decision that I had to give an artistic career a shot. At that time, I had completed an apprenticeship and was making windows on the side, and the thought of working for someone else just wasn't something I wanted to do. That was in 1998.

How has the Arts and Crafts Movement influenced and inspired your work?

As a designer of domestic windows, I appreciate that the home was the focus of the American Arts & Crafts Movement. This emphasis on creating an



Stained Glass by Theodore Ellison



Mosaic fireplace by Theodore Ellison

artful environment to live in, where nature is integral, has always resonated with me. The designers and artists of that time were incredibly inventive in their approach to decorative arts, and that's probably the most important influence on my work; this questioning of 'what can I create with my skill set that will be in concert with this setting?'. It's easy to fall in love with the objects this process produces, but it's the process itself that is timeless and essential to keeping decorative art traditions alive. And surprisingly, this process applies to all types of design and architecture. More often these days I'm working in modern spaces and I'm bringing these handmade materials to meetings with architects and designers who haven't used them before. For so long, all glass that went into buildings has been machine made - but when they see the possibilities that hand-made glass and craft traditions can bring to their work, there is an excitement at what's possible!

Leaded Glass vs. Mosaic: Tell us about the ways in which your creativity shifts between the two art expressions. Which do you enjoy more, and which makes up the larger portion of your work for clients?

I'm currently deep into experimentation with mosaic work because it's a newer medium for me. When I see a new glass or find a combination of materials I'm excited about, my first thought is

'how can I use this in a mosaic?'. A lot of that has to do with the number of windows I've made over 25 years. I've had many opportunities to explore the possibilities of glass, light and lead, and there's so much more I want to do, but the challenges of working with leaded glass are significant. There's the fragility to engineer, the building codes that complicate every installation and the balance of all the practical and aesthetic elements to make a window - that's a lot to keep in mind when creating. 'Will this glass get enough light where the eaves obscure the sunlight most of the year? Will this glass bring enough privacy to the bathroom?'. Seemingly every step brings a question, often

with an unclear answer.

With mosaic - many of those questions don't come into play, so I'm able to engage in pure exploration. Since these are mounted like tile, lighting issues are simplified. And there is little to engineer. As long as the bond between the surface materials and the backing board is sound, there isn't much to worry about. And shipping and installing these is much easier since the glass is already broken up into small pieces!

Most of your glass is specifically made for your studio. Have you been involved in the glass-making process itself, and how did you come to find your custom-glass producers?

I wouldn't say most of it, but a significant portion is. All glass makers create a standard production line they send to distributors, and sometimes they'll send uncategorized glasses - these are sheets that for one reason or another are different than the rest. Often, these sheets were of more interest to me than the standard line; the colors were more muted and earthy, or there was an unexpected mix of color and texture, and I would buy these one-offs for use in my work. I once took a sample of this glass to a presentation for a large project I was certain I wouldn't get, which meant that sourcing more of this same glass wouldn't be an issue. Turns out I got the project so I had to reach out to the manufacturer to see if they would make more. Once we agreed on

THEODORE ELLISON (CONT)

the terms, I booked a flight to be there on the scheduled day and they let me watch the process of making the glass. Ever since then I've been repeating that pattern - finding or thinking of a material that's not available and arranging to have it made. It aligns my work toward what I want to see rather than what I'm able to find.

You are a member of Artistic License, a guild of professional revival artisans serving the San Francisco Bay Area. Tell us how this guild membership started for you, and how it's helped your business grow.

When I first became aware of the guild, I was so hungry for contact with others on the creative end of the building trades. I spent all my time in the studio and was feeling truly worn-out. My thought was that I'd last maybe 5 more years before having to get a real job. So I started trying to contact others so people knew I was out there making this work. In the back of Paul Duchscherer's first bungalow book there was a list of resources, many of which were in the Bay Area. One of these was a P.O. box for a guild called Artistic License. I wrote them a letter and was invited to attend a meeting. My very first thought the moment I stepped into the room was, 'these people all seem less over-worked than I am!' Some were much older, and I was surprised to see that people had figured out a way to not

completely burn out by their mid-thirties. Whatever it was this group of people had, I desperately wanted to learn from it. Eventually I was asked to join, and it's been a source of inspiration and friendship for 20+ years (the guild itself is coming up on its 40th birthday).

One of the people I met was an old-school tile setter named Riley Doty. When I became interested in mosaic, he was quick to share what he knew and has always been a sounding board for questions I've had as I've found my way into this new medium. I think without his mentorship, I wouldn't have gotten as far as I have with my mosaic work.

Tell us more about your philosophy on creating original and one-of-a-kind glass?

My first teacher in glass wouldn't allow outside patterns to be used- so my practice has always had a tandem focus on design and technique. What I've learned over the years is that the process of discovery that happens with every creative project is what keeps me going. When I first started, I had this idea that I'd create a line of designs that I'd sell and resell. I created the whole suite of designs and as soon as they were done, I kept moving on from those lessons, as I applied what was learned from the last project to the next one. This means two things - that my process is incredibly labor intensive, since just about everything I've made is one-of-a-kind, and that through this engagement, I've developed several offshoot design directions. And it's this variability that keeps me creatively engaged - I get bored easily!

Where does your greatest source of happiness come from within your work?

Growing. One of the challenges with creating a body of work that people recognize is keeping the work moving forward. I think people sense the engagement between myself and the work and when I'm not feeling inspired. In those instances, it's my job to look at things differently, or try to pull in different



*Greene & Greene inspired stained glass entry door
by Theodore Ellison*

inspirations so I'm creating a scenario where I'm able to find something that's engaging to me and be well suited to a project. But finding that toehold on a project can be challenging - like looking at a piece of blank paper and wondering where to start. But somehow, I've found a creative process that I can keep going back to and find something each time. And that's the joy in what I do - somehow surprising myself and finding something that I didn't know I could do or haven't imagined before.

What has been your biggest, or your favorite project to date?

There was one project that radically transformed my relationship with my work. About 5 years ago I was brought in on a large project to make hundreds of rondel windows. At that time, I had never worked with rondels, but I knew about their history within the trade. Early windows were made from the glass spun on the end of a pipe, before methods to make sheet glass had been developed. This project required that I source a new material because the rondels widely available were not that interesting. So, I found a glass blower in Kansas City that made the most beautiful rondels I'd ever seen, and we started to work together on this project. Through this experience I was introduced to areas of glass design I had been ignoring for years. Up until that time I was focused on my Arts & Crafts work which meant using glass of muted colors and creating nature-inspired forms. The rondels were a revelation. I was captivated by what happened to light as it passed through them. Most glass I had been using was much denser; when backlit it would illuminate and play its part within the design, but that was it. With these more transparent glasses, the light would pass through the glass and create amazing light casts within the space, full of color and refracted energy. This made me look at color in a completely new way - not in direct relation to a historical tradition, but in relation to itself. The result has been the development of my skills as a colorist. And the technical requirements to create tight, repetitive geometric patterns had reignited my interest in pure geometry as a source of inspiration.

CACS WINTER SYMPOSIUM FEATURING THEODORE ELLISON JANUARY 15, 2022 5 PM

Join us January 15 to hear more from Theodore Ellison, our keynote speaker at our Virtual CACS Winter Symposium. He will be presenting his talk: *From Hand to Heart: The Untold Story of American Glass Mosaic Fireplaces*.



Our Winter Symposium is free for CACS members, \$15 for non-members. Mark your calendars now, because we know you won't want to miss out on this educational evening full of color, glass, and inspiration!

Zoom information:

Meeting ID: 844 5483 6105

Passcode: CACS

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84454836105?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84454836105?pwd=OTJ4Z1UrcVpRUWdGWDNYRG85NEZSQT09)

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NEXT GATHERING OF THE GUILDS PLANNED FOR APRIL 24, 2022

After a necessary pandemic pause, we are hoping to resume our Spring show & sale at the American Mountaineering Center in Golden on Sunday, April 24th. In addition to welcoming back our treasure trove of local artisans and artists, CACS will be selling its extensive and impressive collection of new and old books, periodicals and magazines devoted to the Arts and Crafts movement in an effort to raise funds for our 25-year-old non-profit volunteer organization.

We can't wait to see you all again in person! For more information, please contact Cynthia Shaw at cshaw8623@gmail.com.

OPENINGS:

Denver, ABQ, St. Pete's

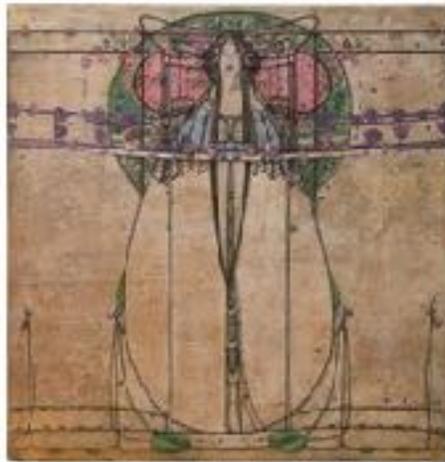
By Dennis Barrett

It's an exciting time in the Arts and Crafts world – especially if you're willing to travel.

Denver: Close to home, Kirkland Museum is still open, with *Christopher Dresser and the Aesthetic Movement* in its last month, only through 2 January. Then the staff will be hustling to ready the exciting *Josef Hoffmann's Vienna*, which runs from 21 January till 3 April, with representative works from the Vienna Secession Movement and the Wiener Werkstätte, including some new acquisitions to complement Kirkland's already strong holdings in this area.

Albuquerque: Further from home, a *major* Charles Rennie Mackintosh exhibit is on show at the Albuquerque Museum. It's called *Designing the New: Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Glasgow Style*. If Albuquerque seems a long way ... most of the 165 works have never been so close to us before, indeed they have never crossed the Atlantic. Mackintosh was at the center of the Glasgow Style, described as "the UK's response to Art Nouveau," but admittedly with considerable influence from Arts and Crafts too. And for almost everything you can see of his, you have to go to Glasgow or its environs (and that may not suffice: some of the artifacts in this show are from private collections and not usually on public view anywhere.) So Albuquerque is a bargain! The show has visited The Walters in Baltimore and the Frist in Nashville, and will end up next year in St. Petersburg. Again, Albuquerque is a bargain.

The description, "165 works of architectural drawings, books, ceramics, furniture, posters, textiles and watercolors, drawn from Glasgow's most significant public and private collections" certainly sets us Mackintosh enthusiasts (and there are several on the CACS Board) to salivating -- and planning pilgrimages. It remains to determine whether seeing the objects in isolation will evoke that involuntary gasp that happens when you



Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, *The May Queen*: exhibited in *Designing the New*.

walk in to a whole exquisite room designed by Mackintosh down to the last detail. It's worth a try!

The other promise of this exhibition is to place Charles Rennie Mackintosh in relation to other practitioners of the Glasgow Style. And in contrast to the art world generally at the turn of the 20th century, many of those practitioners were women. In Scotland women artists were respected, starting with Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, Charles' wife and collaborator through the years.

I will visit this show, and rejoice at all that we have of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. But there will be sadness too. I am sure that it will never be far from my mind that the masterpiece, the true *chef d'oeuvre* of the great master as an architect, was the iconic Glasgow School of Art, which nurtured the free thinking that led to the Glasgow Style. That building was destroyed by a great fire in June 2018.

David Pratt, an alumnus of the School has said of his fellow alumni "Our own relationships and our relationship with the actual building, they are almost all intertwined. In some respects they are almost as one. The building itself, therefore, represents the people and the people still carry the building in their hearts." Rebuilding, following Mackintosh's original plans, is slowly being undertaken, and may be completed as early as 2027. But it won't be the historic place where Mackintosh was actually on site. I will rejoice in all that we can find in *Designing the New*... But I will be sad too.

Continued on next page

OPENINGS (CONT.)

The Museum is open daily except Monday. The drive from Denver is about seven hours. Flying Southwest it's possible to fly in and out the same (perhaps exhausting) day, leaving DEN at 8:30 am and arriving back at 8:30 pm, with plenty of time at the Museum.

St. Petersburg: In these pages we have been relaying the assurances that the Museum of the American Arts and Crafts Movement would open... "early next year," "soon," "in a few months now," etc etc, as building problems and then COVID occasioned delay after delay. Finally in September, they did it! It's open!

Now we can see that the unique nature of the design of the building posed problems never before encountered. No wonder it was so far behind schedule! Is it worth the long wait? Probably. In addition to the elegant building itself, the museum promises 40,000 square feet of gallery space, with furniture, pottery, tiles, lighting, textiles, photography, fine arts, woodblocks, and metalwork of the Arts and Crafts Movement. With "fine examples of Gustav Stickley, Charles Rohlfs, Frank Lloyd Wright, the Roycrofters, William Grueby, Newcomb Pottery, Margaret Patterson, Greene and Greene, Louis Sullivan, and many other gifted craftsmen and women." The mention of Margaret (Jordan) Patterson, rather than the better-known Arthur Wesley Dow from whom she learned, and of Newcomb Pottery rather than the more prolific Rookwood, suggests possibly some interesting biases of the philanthropist/collector Rudy Ciccarelli who is the founder and powerhouse of the operation.

It's theoretically possible to do the St. Petersburg run in a day, though more heroic. The flight to Tampa takes about 4 hours, and you can set off at DEN, again at about 8 am, returning near midnight. Interestingly, flying United this time, you will spend less than on the much shorter flights to and from Albuquerque. The drive from the airport in to St Petersburg takes about half an hour.



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Directors & Officers of the Colorado Arts & Crafts Society:

President: Mark Davidson mdavidson@fwlaw.com	303.355.8582
Vice President / Education Chair: Cynthia Shaw cshaw8623@gmail.com	303.324.1269
Treasurer: Beth Bradford bbradford6@gmail.com	303.778.0580
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Newsletter: Polly Washburn codyssia.com	303.669.6399
Directors-At-Large: Dennis Barrett Jeff Icenhower	303.744.8682 970.310.0756

All correspondence concerning the society or membership should be sent to Colorado Arts & Crafts Society, 8623 Garland Court, Arvada, CO 80005 | www.coloarts-crafts.org



www.coloarts-crafts.org
413 S. Humboldt St.
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A Year of CACS Membership

Annual membership fees are below. You can make your membership payment through PayPal to: [Paypal.me/CACSmembership](https://www.paypal.com/US/merchstore/CACSmembership).

Checks can also be made out to the Colorado Arts & Crafts Society and mailed to:
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Please contact our membership chair, Helene Arendt at CACSmembership@gmail.com with any questions.

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