



CACS 
Winter
Symposium

SATURDAY,
JANUARY 21ST, 2023, 4PM
Zoom Conference

We will hold our
CACs Winter Symposium and annual meeting
virtually again this year via Zoom.
We will have more information coming soon.

Final FLLW Lecture at the Kirkland

By Dennis Barrett

Iridescent Light: Lampshades by Frank Lloyd Wright, by Julie Sloan, was the last of three lectures the Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art put on to support its show, *Frank Lloyd Wright Inside the Walls*, which runs through next January 8th. In introducing Ms. Sloan, Founding Director and Curator of the museum, Hugh Grant noted that mounting the show “took a village”; he drew particular attention to Becca Gudrum, Renée Albiston and Maya Wright, as well as the curator, Chris Herron.

If, like me, you knew the story of the provenance of the lamp that occasioned the Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) show, and wondered how Ms. Sloan was going to talk for an hour – the question was soon answered. Hugh Grant recounted the story: Bertie Slutzky found the two pieces of art glass in an antique store in Chicago in 1964, had them married into one lamp, and



Fig. 1. Julie Sloan, who gave the final expert lecture on Frank Lloyd Wright on October 13th

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FLLW (cont.)

presented it to her son, Louis Newman, as a high school graduation gift. Newman and his husband, Justin Ferate, after years of enjoying the assembled lamp, donated it to the Kirkland, in recognition of its unparalleled collection and exhibiting of decorative art. The Kirkland staff assumed it was a copy, but asked the opinions of several experts, who couldn't identify it. They then sent photos to Julie Sloan, who quickly identified it as original Frank Lloyd Wright, and provided evidence. It was one of three glass works newly identified as Wright's in the past 100 years. How much more could there be to tell?

Trust the Kirkland staff! Ms. Sloan is a consummate professional, and delivered an hour of thoroughly absorbing detail!

She began: "I was really excited when Kirkland sent me this little lamp." She went on to tout Wright's genius as a designer of art glass: he is well acknowledged as the foremost American architect, with eight works recognized as UNESCO World Heritage sites (I looked them up: Fallingwater, Guggenheim Museum, Hollyhock House, Jacobs House, Robie House, Taliesin, Taliesin West, Unity Temple - how many have you seen?). But in stained glass he is often neglected, behind Louis Comfort Tiffany. Yet between 1886 and 1923 Wright put glass in

most of his buildings, and designed more than 4500 windows!



Fig.3. Cross section of lead caming; glass inserts in the groove. Zinc caming is hollow instead of solid, and lighter and more rigid.

These windows generally show abstractions of nature rather than copies, and are generally rectilinear in composition. Ms. Sloan explained in some detail how zinc, rather than lead, caming (the metal that holds the glass pieces in place) was compatible with Wright's rectilinear designs. How clear glass in a leaded-glass situation was a permeable barrier, separating the inside from outside, but not allowing those outside to focus on who was inside (hence no curtains needed or used.) How iridized glass (with various metal salts sprayed onto hot glass) was first used by Tiffany, but was commercially available, so that Wright could use iridescent glass that was interesting by reflected as well as by transmitted light.

But then, having delved into the mechanics of making leaded glass (and explained that it's still "leaded," even if the caming metal isn't lead), Ms. Sloan went on to the history of the "Kirkland lamp." The lamp designs for both the Susan Lawrence Dana house in Springfield, IL and the Darwin Martin house in Buffalo, NY were considered, because they are the two projects, finished in 1904 and 1905 respectively, which have pieces that most closely resemble the Kirkland lamp.

But more crucial to the sleuthing was the annual exhibit of the Architectural Club at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1907. Wright was given a whole room, and in it Ms. Sloan found in photos the *exact* pieces that were assembled into the Kirkland lamp. The bottom portion, box-shaped, stands alone as a lamp. The top portion, pyramidal, sits atop one of the tower lamps that



Fig. 2. Left, the assembled "Kirkland lamp"; right, the two pieces from which it was assembled, each in its original orientation.

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FLLW (cont.)

Wright intended to sit at each corner of the dining table. Each portion is inverted in the Kirkland lamp from its original orientation (see Fig. 2).

The lecturer considered the possibility that the lamps exhibited in 1907 were extras, intended but not used for the Dana or Martin house. But she favored instead the hypothesis that they were newly commissioned for the 1907 show, albeit based on designs used a few years earlier. The show was important to Wright, leading to the *Architectural Record's* commissioning him to write *In the Cause of Architecture*, a series published from 1908 to 1920 that brought his ideas and his work his first national and international attention, beyond Chicago. So it fits that the pieces were newly made, by the glass company he generally used, Linden Glass Co.

But as usual, Wright could not pay his bills! So after the 1907 show, all the new pieces of stained glass went back to Linden. There they remained, with the company's vice-president, Nels Johnsson, for three decades, until the collection was dispersed in the 1940's, and the two pieces of interest again disappeared until showing up in the antique store in 1964 for the astute Mrs. Slutzky to recognize as Frank Lloyd Wright and buy for a graduation present.

With another perfectly chosen slide (of Wright applauding, Fig.1), Ms. Sloan finished her talk by saying: "The Kirkland was smart enough to realize that their quirky little lamp was something special. Frank Lloyd Wright himself would be pleased." If you want to experience the lecture,



Fig. 4. A part of the chandelier from the Usonian Adelman house, to be unveiled at the Kirkland on November 8th

which was perfectly recorded by the Denver Art Museum staff, it is not too late to purchase viewing rights; email rsvp@kirklandmuseum.org.

The Kirkland's year of celebrating Frank Lloyd Wright started with much fanfare over the return of two art glass windows from the Kirkland's collection to the Darwin Martin house for which they were created. It continued with the mounting of the Wright show and the three lectures by distinguished guests. And on November 8th at 11 a.m. the Museum will unveil a newly purchased chandelier from the Benjamin Adelman house, thought to be the only chandelier extant from a Usonian home (Fig. 4)!



The Ubiquitous Acanthus ...what's that acanthus doing here?

Down another rabbit hole... with Jeff Icenhower



Acanthus mollis

Why does an herbaceous perennial with flower spikes and spiny leaves (Genus Acanthus) keep showing up in different places?

This plant and designs based on it are found in or on:

- The walls of an elevator lobby of a dentist's office
- The wallpaper designs of a leading British Arts and Crafts influencer (none other than William Morris)
- American West (think cowboy) leatherwork
- Spanish saddles
- The top of ancient Greek architectural columns (also called the 'capital')
- And of course, growing wild in the Mediterranean Basin

Like any respectable rabbit hole, this one appeared innocuously. While exploring leatherwork of the American West, a particular pattern of curling leaves showed up regularly. These leaves filled in spaces, were squashed onto belts, decorated holsters and saddles. Finding one belt pattern titled 'Acanthus' and having no idea what an acanthus was, the pathway was laid down, stretching out to who-knows-where. A quick search revealed the acanthus to be a Mediterranean plant. Clearly there was more to this story. Why was a Mediterranean plant a common theme on cowboy saddles?

Looking into the decoration of saddles, an etching of no less than General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna (1794-1896) on horseback was found, and his saddle was decorated with the swirling pattern of acanthus leaves. As American cowboy culture was heavily influenced by Mexican Vaqueros, this connection made sense. American cowboys adopted the acanthus pattern from Mexican Vaqueros, who took it from their Spanish overlords.



Traveling further back in time, how did the acanthus make its way to Mexico? It travelled with the Spanish colonizers. As the Spanish subdued what would become Mexico, they established themselves in positions at the top of the hierarchy. As such, the Spanish had the influence and money to import their favorite design styles. Among the architectural influences in Spain were Greek column designs. Specifically, Spanish columns used acanthus designs on

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Acanthus (cont.)



would thrive. Corinthian columns with acanthus capitals began appearing around 450 B.C.E. Their first known use on the Temple of Apollo Epicurius, at Bassae in Arcadia. Around 2470 years ago, some Greek architect, or maybe a stone carver, decided the top of their columns were too drab. Because of this, now cowboys have acanthus designs on their saddles.



published in 1875. Creating this wallpaper required 30 blocks to finish the pattern, making it relatively expensive for its day. Where did his inspiration come from?

Tracking down Morris's first exposure to the acanthus is beyond the scope of the article. Certainly, though, one connection is through his relationship with another Arts and Crafts giant – John Ruskin. Between 1851 and 1853 Ruskin published the three volumes of his survey of Venetian architecture in *The Stones of Venice*. Ruskin commented on the use of Corinthian-influenced column capitals (the section at the top of a column) in *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. II, Chapter II, Torcello, indicating “every one of

capitals (a capital is the topmost portion of a column) that echoed those that developed in Corinth. This, then, begins to point to the origin of the acanthus' long travels. For Corinth lies in a part of the Mediterranean where the acanthus

them is different in design, and their variations are as graceful as they are fanciful.” This foreshadows his belief stated in Chapter VI that “no good work whatever can be perfect, and the demand for perfection is always a sign of a misunderstanding of the ends of art.”

And that dentist's elevator lobby? Where does it fit in? It was papered in Morris's Acanthus design. Just another example of the widespread influence of that first Corinthian column capital, and of the Arts and Crafts movement.



The Colorado Arts and Crafts Society Presents

A GATHERING OF THE GUILDS



SAVE THE DATE

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 2023

AMERICAN MOUNTAINEERING CENTER

710 10TH STREET, GOLDEN, COLORADO
10 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS- ARTS AND CRAFTS STYLE

By Mark Davidson

Passing through central Pennsylvania on Route 15 on a late-Spring drive from Western New York to Annapolis, Maryland, we came upon the town of Selinsgrove. Sprinkled with numerous stoplights and various fast-food restaurants and strip malls, the highway narrows to two lanes in each direction. A quick glance to the north side of the road revealed a sign too easy to miss, on the front of an apparent single-family residence that read, "Antique Stickley Mission Furniture". Needless to say, I was intrigued by the sign but we were on a schedule to get to a family event and continued on to Annapolis, with the possibility of a visit to this combination of house and store on our return trip.

Two days later, on our return trip, we reached Selinsgrove in the mid-afternoon and decided to try to visit what appeared to be an abandoned Stickley/Mission store. The front door was locked but a handwritten note on the door instructed prospective customers to call a certain phone number to request admittance to the store. The phone was answered on the second ring and after explaining that we were interested in entering the store, we were told to wait and the door would be unlocked. The next five minutes were a revelation! The door was unlocked by a small, somewhat stooped, man who introduced himself as Joe Nevo, owner and proprietor of the shop. Arrayed before us was a treasure trove of Stickley, both Gus and L & JG, Roycroft, Limbert, Eastlake and other Arts and Crafts furnishings in a maze-like presentation softly lit only by a variety of Arts and Crafts lighting.

We spent the next two hours meandering through the various rooms of the store which resembled a disarrayed museum collection, marveling at the offerings and wishing that we had unlimited financial resources and a delivery

truck large enough to accommodate a house full of Arts and Craft furnishings! We claimed a pair of hammered copper ewers and a small chair with a carved leather relief on the back. Two spectacular lighting fixtures spoke to our hearts and were added to our wish list.

Mr. Nevo explained that he had started his business as a collector and purveyor of oriental rugs and he indeed has a multitude of rugs in various states of repair. In the storage facility behind the house, workers were busily repairing various oriental rugs where there were huge piles of rugs available for sale. Joe began attending various sales and auctions looking for antique rugs and began collecting Arts and Crafts furniture, lighting, metalwork and pottery as time went on. He has filled the first floor of his shop (Joe lives upstairs over the store) with furniture that is mostly Arts and Crafts in style but also includes other antiques available for sale.



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LOOKING GLASS (cont.)

Below are a few photos of pieces from the store. One can view many of the objects available for sale at Joe's website: www.joenevo.net.



Various treasures found at Mr. Nevo's shop in Selinsgrove, PA.

Joe's place is well worth the visit if you are ever in the area. Selinsgrove is about 10 miles south of Lewisburg, PA., home of Bucknell University. Walking through the "Looking Glass" into the store and the storage facility in this most unassuming and amazing location is ideal if you are in the market for Arts and Crafts treasures, oriental rugs or merely just wanting to step into the marvelous years of early 20th century furnishings.

The Arts & Crafts Messenger, the newsletter of the Colorado Arts & Crafts Society, is published quarterly for the society's members as part of their membership contribution.

Send comments to julie.leidel@gmail.com.

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Annual membership fees are below.

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

Checks can also be made out to the Colorado Arts & Crafts Society and mailed to: Beth Bradford at 413 S. Humboldt St. Denver, CO 80209.

Please contact our membership chair, Helene Arendt at CACSmembership@gmail.com with any questions.

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A Year's
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