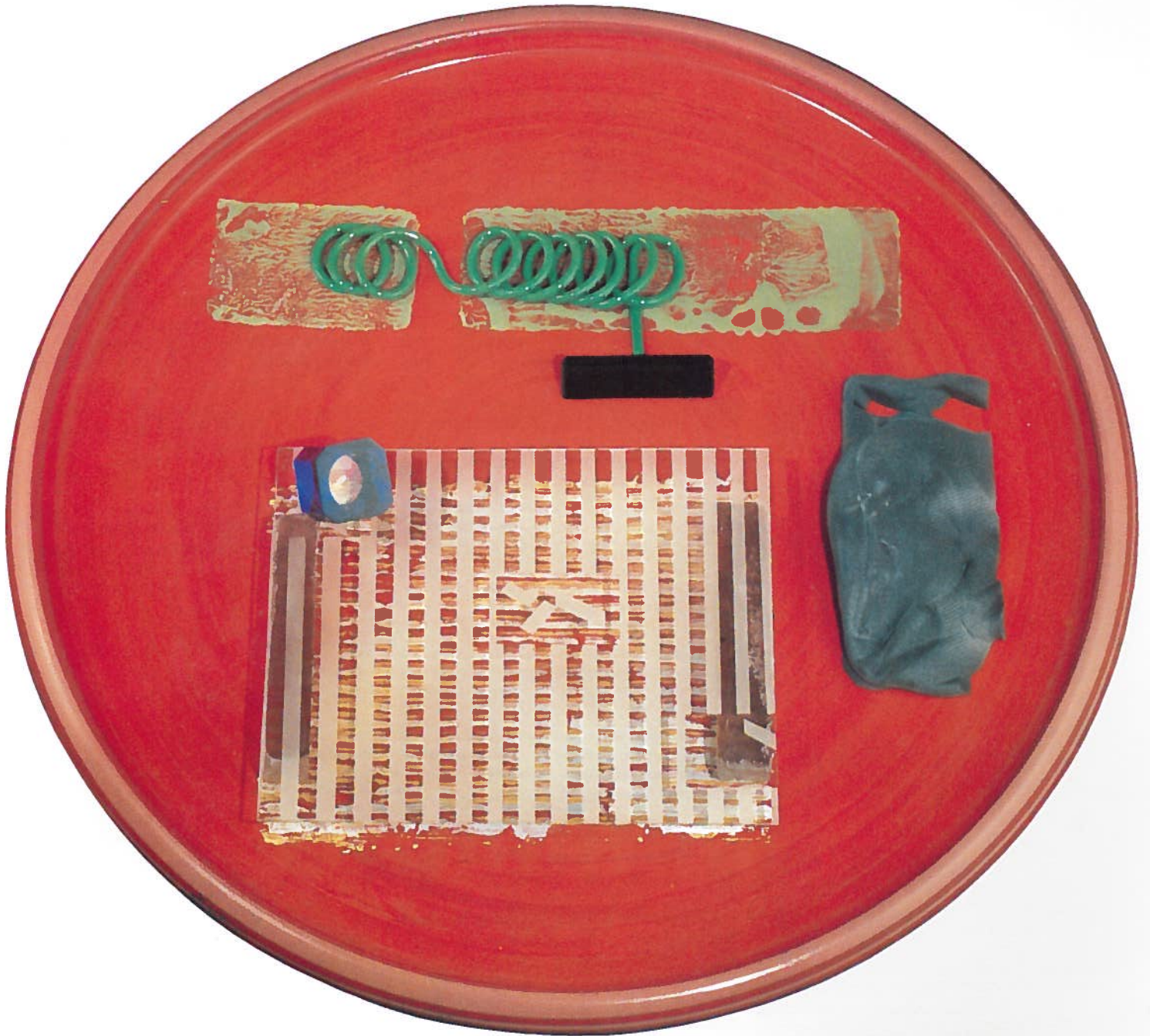


# ARTS-NEW JERSEY

AUTUMN 1985

---



# Statement from the Executive Director

A few days after the Council's annual meeting in July, a member of my staff made an observation that I would like to share with you. He said that as he'd listened to my report which outlined the many initiatives the Council had taken in FY 1985, he'd wondered if other members of the audience could appreciate the significance of these successes. Not only had we implemented new projects such as the Presenter's Roundtable, the New Jersey Arts An-

nual, the New Jersey chapter of Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, the co-production by the Arts Council and New Jersey Network of the new "State of the Arts" series, the Artistic Focus Survey, the Touring Arts program, eleven public hearings, and the start of our own Five-year Planning Process, but despite a reduced staff, we'd also continued to maintain and had in many instances improved our existing programs.

The impact of his observation was not lost on me. I continue to be impressed with and proud of the Council's ability to use its resources to the fullest and to develop new and exciting ways to promote and support the arts in New Jersey. I also look with pride to my staff who have worked so hard to meet every challenge. Each and every one of them is to be commended.

Many of the articles in this issue of *Arts-New Jersey* focus on projects that have absorbed staff and Council members' time over the past year. The exciting progress that has been made in the field of crafts through the efforts of the Council, our crafts coordinator Hortense Green, and the many crafts organizations and craftspeople in the state is the subject of "All Join Hands!" which appears on page 2. The productive partnership that arose out of a shared concern for crafts among the Council and six New Jersey museums and resulted in a new series of Art Annuals, is described in "The

Morris Museum: Clay and Glass," on page 5. In keeping with our celebration of crafts in the state and in this issue of *Arts-New Jersey*, we have also included an article on the history of crafts, which first appeared in the catalog for the Noyes Museum exhibition, "Elements of Craft."

You will also find descriptions of our Artistic Focus program (page 9) and our efforts to develop a comprehensive five-year plan for the arts in New Jersey (page 12). We hope that as artists and arts administrators you will find these articles interesting.

In addition, we have highlighted the work of three New Jersey artists: our cover artist Terry Plasket of Wheaton Village; poet David Keller of Roosevelt, recipient of a 1986 Artistic Merit Award in Poetry; and Marilyn Keating of Gloucester City, who has just received an Arts Inclusion commission.

Our winter issue of *Arts-New Jersey* will have an all-new design and will be increased in size to 24 pages. It will include a "Letters to the Editor" column as a regular feature. We welcome your opinions, suggestions, and reactions to *Arts-New Jersey*. Please let us hear from you. ■

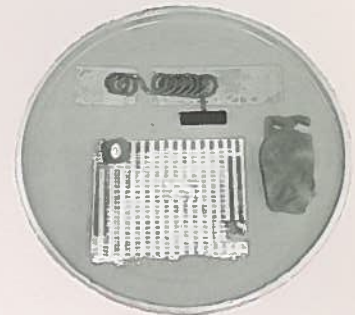



Jeffrey A. Kesper  
NJSCA Executive Director

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement from the Executive Director .....	1
On the Cover .....	1
All Join Hands! .....	2
Morris Museum: Clay and Glass .....	5
Coming of Age: The American Crafts Boom .....	8
Focus on Excellence .....	9
Planning for the Arts .....	10
Art in Public Places .....	12
NJ Poet: David Keller .....	13

## On The Cover



**Plate**  
21" in diameter  
Porcelain and glass  
Terry Plasket

**M**aking a living as an artist is not an easy feat, but Terry Plasket of Elmer has found a way. Plasket is a resident potter at Wheaton Village in Millville, and for the past six years, he has developed his skills  
*(continued on page 11)*



# All Join Hands!

**A**h October . . . leaves ablaze with color, pumpkins waiting to be carved, apples ready for the picking, and crafts. Crafts? This October, New Jersey harvested a cornucopia of crafts activity that dazzled the eye.

Governor Thomas H. Kean declared October 1985 State Craft Month in honor of the month-long jubilee ALL JOIN HANDS! A CELEBRATION OF CRAFTS IN NEW JERSEY, when museums, galleries, retail stores, colleges, corporations, and community centers throughout the state spotlighted the achievements of New Jersey's professional craftspeople.

More than seventy major events were scheduled, with workshops, demonstrations/lectures, studio tours, business conferences, and exhibitions focusing on every medium imaginable—fiber, metal, clay, glass, wood, paper, and plastic.

The proliferation of crafts events, sponsored under the auspices of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, represented the culmination of many years of hard work and the efforts of countless individuals to educate the public about quality crafts, to place crafts in the realm of fine art, and to convince federal, state, and private sectors that craftspeople merit funding and recognition.

## The National Scene

One of the major events that moved the professional crafts field along in its maturing process occurred in 1980 when the National Endowment for the Arts established a National Crafts Planning Project to survey the needs of craftspeople in the United States. Cosponsored by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, the project was also intended to encourage cooperation between crafts-oriented federal, state, and private agencies.

In an interview with the *New York Times* in August 1980, John McClean, director of the project, said, "Craftspeople perform an aesthetic function, but have nonetheless been missing out on opportunities generally available to those in the performing arts because of a lack of organization and a national focus. This project is an attempt to broaden our understanding of the whole crafts field."

The 32-member, government-appointed study group conducted open hearings throughout the country, meeting with professional craftspeople and collecting information which served as the basis for a national congress of crafts administrators in May 1981.

Michael Scott, editor of the national publication *The Crafts Report* and a member of the task force, recalled his experience with the project.

"The purpose of the hearings was to talk

with craftspeople and determine what the problems confronting the crafts field were, and then to come up with possible solutions. The study group initially met together in North Carolina to be trained how to listen and how to facilitate the process of these hearings. We divided into small groups and visited four or five cities.

"Interestingly enough, when all the material was consolidated and brought back to be analyzed and digested at the national congress, the problems that were cited as unique to particular areas proved to be universal."

Scott attended the task force meeting for the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area, held in Newark, and remembers a lively session with 100 or more people attending. The four main areas of discussion, which served as an outline for every session, were education, communications, money concerns, and advocacy.

When asked to characterize the crafts movement in New Jersey, Scott said, "New Jersey is among a half dozen states where things are really happening." He attributed this phenomena to active crafts organizations and a supportive state arts council which has promoted and nurtured crafts as a state activity.

## The New Jersey Scene

Individual craftspeople in New Jersey began joining forces as early as 1950 with the establishment of New Jersey Designer Craftsmen (NJDC).

"NJDC was the brainchild of Stanley Buchner," explained Roena McPheil, one of the group's early members. "A nucleus of eight to ten people—jewelers, textile printers, woodworkers, potters—got together to promote good design and to add to our earnings by selling and displaying our work as a group. Stan would clear out his wood-working shop in Whippany once or twice a year to make room for exhibitions of our work, and it was quite successful. Other organizations became interested in exhibiting or selling our work, and the whole thing sort of exploded."

These days NJDC organizes major exhibitions in retail stores, galleries, and museums, and for the past four years has sponsored an annual winter crafts weekend. NJDC was incorporated in 1967, and received its first matching grant from the State Arts Council in 1978. Its membership covers every region of the state and includes more than 1,000 individuals.

First Mountain Crafters of New Jersey has also experienced tremendous growth since its inception in 1956. Established originally to encourage the beginning crafter and provide opportunity for expansion to the

(continued on page 3)



The official logo of the "All Join Hands" Celebration.



## All Join Hands!

*(continued from page 2)*

more experienced craftsman, First Mountain Crafters, with membership of 140, continues to uphold these goals, sponsoring exhibitions, workshops and lectures/demonstrations for the public and for members, and much more. One of the group's most notable achievements is the cooperative gallery it operates at the Essex Green Shopping Mall in West Orange.

According to Charlotte Seymour, a member of First Mountain Crafters, the group was looking for an alternative to the weekend crafts show they held each year. They felt that a cooperative gallery would enable

craftspeople to exhibit their work on a regular basis and increase their visibility.

"The first cooperative opened in Short Hills in 1980. We rented a former real-estate office which proved very quickly to be too small, so we moved six months later to a former candy store in Maplewood. With very little capital and a lot of hard work from dedicated volunteers, we renovated the space and operated there for three years." When an empty store in Essex Green Shopping Mall became available, the group decided to move.

Cooperative members must belong to First Mountain Crafters and be juried in. Currently 32 co-op members share the rent and volunteer the equivalent of two full days per

month manning the store.

"Spending time in the store is wonderful for professional growth," Seymour pointed out. "Co-op members get a lot of feedback from the public and can respond to the market." Works range in price from \$1.50 for handmade cards with pressed flowers to \$2,000 for a sculptural piece. "Most of the stock sells for under \$100 because that's what sells best. Since we first opened at the mall, we have doubled sales," added Seymour proudly.

Co-op members pay a 15% commission to the store for any work sold. This money is used to pay for advertising.

First Mountain Crafters began receiving funding from the Arts Council in 1982 and has used its grant to further its educational programming.

New Jersey has provided the right cultural climate for craftspeople to thrive, for three other major crafts organizations exist, serving the needs of individual artists: Northwest Bergen Craft Guild; Montclair Crafts Guild; and the newly established Southern New Jersey Artists and Craftsmen. The Council also funds Peters Valley Crafts Center, a year-round, residential, contemporary crafts community, established in 1970.

Other factors have contributed to the growth of crafts in the state. As far back as the mid-1970s, New Jersey's major museums, such as The Newark Museum, the New Jersey State Museum, and the Morris Museum of Arts and Sciences, have exhibited the work of prominent craftspeople.

The Morristown CraftMarket, which now ranks as one of the very best annual craft shows in the country, attracting over 17,000 visitors last year, first opened in 1976 and has generated interest in crafts among the public. One organization, however, that has been a major catalyst in advancing the state's crafts movement is the New Jersey State Council on the Arts itself.

### The Role of the State Arts Council

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts watched the steady evolution of crafts in the state and in 1980 assumed a major role in helping the evolutionary process advance. It was in 1980 when the Council created the office of craft coordinator, the first of its kind among all the state arts agencies. This appointment was especially significant because it was the first official recognition of crafts as a valid art form deemed worthy of state support.

"There was so much going on at that time," explained Hortense Green, NJSCA's first and current crafts coordinator. "The crafts exhibits in Bloomingdale's and Hahnes' department stores, the fashion show at Nabisco's corporate headquarters featuring hand-made wearables, and expanded crafts shows held at Hunterdon Arts Center and other sites revealed a new constituency for the Council to serve: craftspeople and viewers and collectors of crafts."



*Master potter Albert Green at work in his Westfield Studio.*

*(continued on page 4)*



The Council's crafts program was designed from the start to respond to the needs voiced at the 1980 NEA task force meeting. The program serves as a clearinghouse for information that is crafts-related; maintains a slide registry of craftspeople for use by galleries, decorators, corporations, and private citizens interested in collecting crafts; promotes museum-quality crafts exhibits at traditional and non-traditional exhibition sites; works with the media to increase visibility of craftspeople and their work; and encourages grant and fellowship applications by professional craftspeople. In addition, it is the goal of the NJSCA crafts program to encourage the development of a strong crafts network that could eventually result in the formation of a statewide service organization devoted solely to crafts.

Financial assistance is also critical, for it enables crafts organizations to serve their members, and craftspeople to pursue their work and experiment in various modes. In 1971, the Council awarded its first crafts fellowship to a fiber artist, and each year thereafter, one or two artists received this honor.

Since 1971, the amount of craft fellowships has increased steadily; in FY 1986 a total of \$26,000 was awarded to New Jersey craftspeople.

"The Council awards fellowships to those individuals who demonstrate artistic excellence," Jeffrey A. Kesper, NJSCA executive director, explained. "The increase in the number of awards through the years clearly indicates the professional development of the state's craftspeople. I believe that growth is due in part to the Council's commitment through its grant and crafts programs and to the crafts organizations around the state that have nurtured individual artists and provided a vital support system." The Council also demonstrates its support and encouragement of individual artists through Council-sponsored fellowship exhibitions. These exhibitions serve both the arts community and the general public, for they provide a public forum for the artists and offer New Jersey residents the finest in cultural programming. Fellowship shows have been held at Whichcraft Gallery, Nabisco Brands USA Gallery, and Montclair State College. An exhibit featuring selected works by the 18 NJSCA 1985 craft fellowship recipients was on exhibit at the Summit Art Center through October 20.

The most recent cause for celebration among craftspeople is the inclusion of crafts in the New Jersey Arts Annual. (See page 5 in this issue.)

A plethora of other Council-sponsored projects have helped crafts organizations and individual craftspeople develop as artists and, perhaps as important, as businesspeople. Statewide conferences such as "Getting Your Act Together," held at Georgian Court College in 1982, and "Making Connections" held at Montclair State College in 1984, presented workshops on pub-

lic relations and marketing, corporate collections, copyright laws and more, in order to provide craftspeople with the tools needed to bridge the gap between art and business.

### Future Projects

Future projects are being planned to increase opportunities for craftspeople and to

crafts in New Jersey; that much time was needed to appreciate the rich resources available in this state. Hortense Green summed it up when she said, "ALL JOIN HANDS highlighted the energy and productivity that is taking place in the crafts community in New Jersey and served as an incentive to many groups and individuals to



*Eric Halvorsen, glass artist at Wheaton Village.*

generate even greater interest among the general public.

ART AT NOON, a series of lunch-hour craft demonstrations to be held at various corporations throughout the state, has already met with great success at AT&T in Basking Ridge. Close to 100 people did without lunch to watch NJSCA fellowship recipient Joseph Sulzberg demonstrate stained-glass technique.

An invitational retrospective featuring the work of all those individuals who have received crafts fellowships since 1971 is scheduled to open at Montclair Art Museum on January 27, 1986 and continue through March 27, 1986.

It's no wonder a month was devoted to

go one step beyond, to use their imagination and facilities to create something very special."

For one spectacular month, weavers and potters, jewelry makers and papermakers, woodworkers and glass blowers all joined hands with museum and gallery directors, university professors and department store managers, arts administrators at the State Arts Council and local arts agencies to share their work with the public, to learn from each other, and to celebrate their art. ■

*by Ronnie Weyl*

Ronnie Weyl is a contributing editor of *Arts-New Jersey*.

## Morris Museum: Clay and Glass

**I**t's been referred to as a landmark exhibition, ushering in a new and important partnership in the state.

The New Jersey Arts Annual: CLAY AND GLASS opened at the Morris Museum of Arts and Sciences on October 6, 1985 and marks the first time that crafts is a featured component in a major, juried exhibition series of works by New Jersey artists. The New Jersey Arts Annual, a twice-yearly series of exhibitions which has replaced the former New Jersey Arts Biennial, will present four categories that enable the state's visual artists working in all mediums to participate. Shows featuring painting, sculpture, and works on paper; fiber, metal, and wood; and printmaking, photography, and works of art created in multiples are scheduled for Spring 1986, Fall 1986, and Spring 1987 respectively. Then the cycle will begin again. The New Jersey State Council on the Arts initiated this new series, and is providing funds for the exhibits which will rotate among six museums: the Newark Museum; the Noyes Museum; the Montclair Arts Mu-

seum; the Morris Museum; the New Jersey State Museum; and the Jersey City Museum.

"The restructuring, not only of the New Jersey Arts Biennial Series, but of long-held notions about the distinction between crafts and fine art is the result of an important new partnership in the state," commented Jeffrey A. Kesper, NJSCA executive director. "The series will provide all New Jersey artists with the opportunity to show their work at the state's finest museums and has forged a new network with the participating museums and the Council," he continued.

One hundred and twenty-nine artists living or working in New Jersey submitted slides of 350 works to be considered for the CLAY AND GLASS exhibition; the jurors made a preliminary selection from the slides and invited 49 artists to submit a total of 59 pieces for review. The jurors included Ferdinand Hampson, co-founder of Michigan Glass Month and president of Habitat Galleries, Lathrop Village, Michigan; John D. Peterson, director of the Morris Museum, who has served as judge in national exhibi-

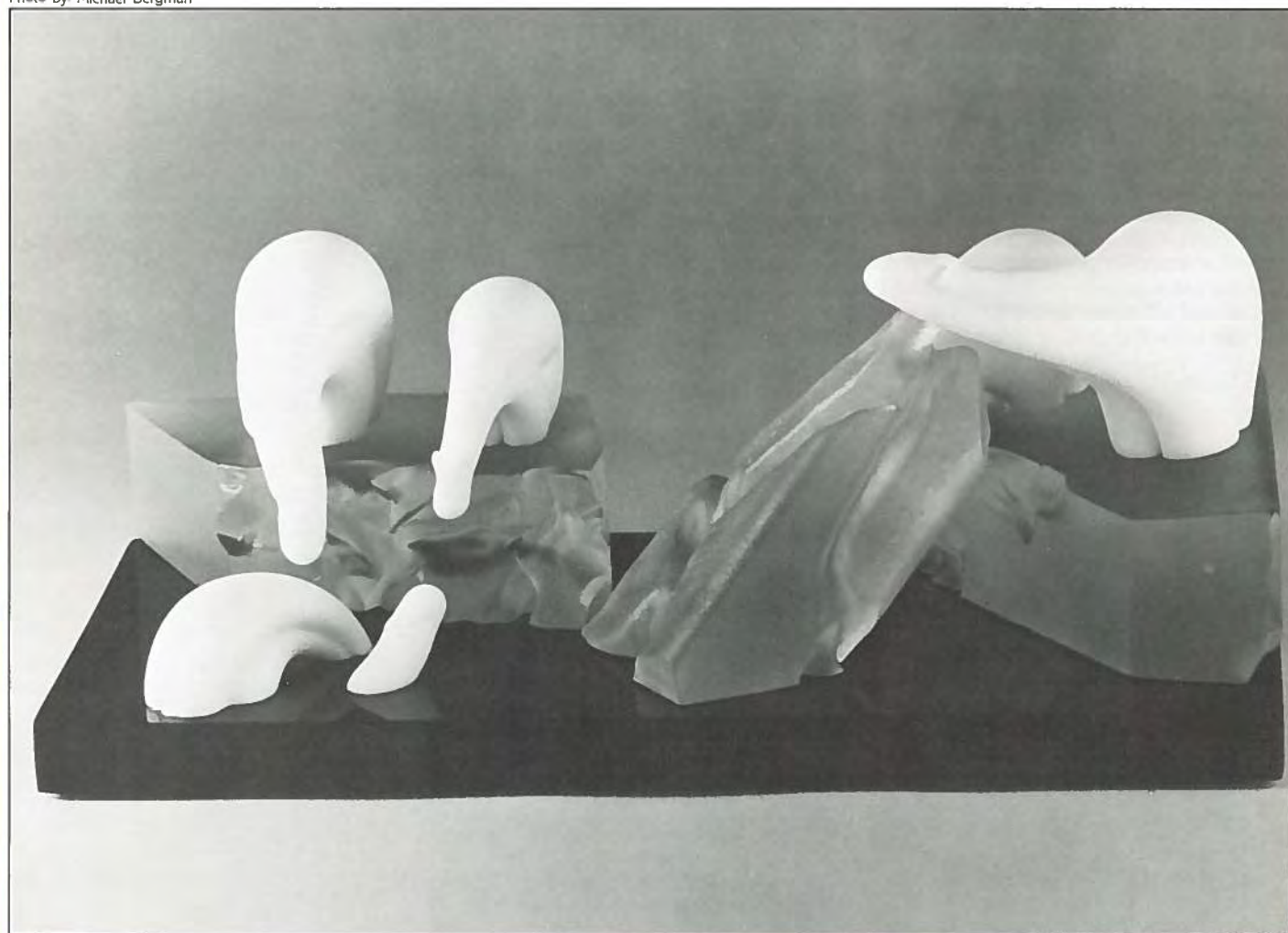
tions and as a grant evaluator for state and federal arts agencies; Robert L. Pfannebecker, noted collector and vice-president of the Board of Trustees of Haystack Mountain School of Crafts; and internationally known ceramic artist Paula Colton Winokur, teacher of ceramics at Beaver College, Glenside, Pennsylvania.

"When all the museums met at the Council to discuss the series," explained John D. Peterson, "one of the agreements we made was to have at least two people from out of state serve as jurors; this would provide another perspective in addition to a New Jersey perspective. In selecting these jurors for the Clay and Glass exhibit, I found three individuals who were prominent figures in the field and who would offer their unique points of view as a collector, a potter, and a gallery director. I brought to the jurying process a museum perspective.

"Because this was the first open competition craft exhibition, we had no idea what to expect in terms of the quantity of work we'd

*(continued on page 7)*

Photo by: Michael Bergman



Above: "Polar Bear Sculpture" by Jeffry Sammartino. Left: "Flying Lizard" by David Lewin.





Photo by: Michael Bergman



## Clay and Glass

(continued from page 5)

receive and the quality."

Thirty-four artists were finally chosen and are exhibiting 45 pieces.

"Our intent was to stage a good, professional, high-quality show, not simply to fill the museum. The show accomplishes that; it expresses quality and diversity and represents the major movements. We have functional stained-glass pieces and high-fired porcelain and stoneware, as well as sculptural clay pieces and a stained-glass panel. It runs the gamut from the calm and austere to the loud and funky."

How do the artists in the show feel about the exhibit? Coco Schoenberg waxed eloquent. "It's an extraordinarily wonderful thing to have crafts recognized as authentic art, if you will. Other cultures, such as Japan's, have always considered crafts an art form; I'm delighted that New Jersey is such an enlightened state and that our museums have recognized us as artists."

Schoenberg herself is unsure whether a line can be drawn between crafts and fine art. "I came to pottery as a former sculptor, so I utilize the vessel as a sculptural object. I want the viewers to put their eyes in it as well as their hands."

Schoenberg concentrates on space, form, and texture. Her work ranges in size from small one-inch pieces to large wall pieces and pieces standing two feet tall.

"I'm limited by the size of the kiln. Recently I have begun working with cutter pieces, placing one piece on top of another. One of the joys of my art is having the autonomy to work through the problem from beginning to end, unlike a sculptor who renders a small piece and has someone else enlarge it. There's always my handprint on my work."

Glass artist Don Gonzales, whose work is included in the show, creates sand-cast vessels, sculpting a negative design in wet sand, either free hand or through transfer of a plaster positive. The completed wet sand carving is then coated with carbon black and filled with hot glass, blown or cast solid. The cooled pieces are further developed by sandblasting the sand-textured surfaces, and faceting and polishing areas of the carved designs of the glass object.

"The sand-casting technique provides a variety of surface textures which emphasize the optical properties unique to glass," he explained. "The process of preparing the negative and casting the glass facilitates a sculptural approach to my glass design. The sand cast method also demonstrates the viability of glass as a medium for communicating artistic expression."

The CLAY AND GLASS exhibit will remain on view through December 1, 1985. The Morris Museum of Arts and Sciences is located at 6 Normandy Heights Road, Morristown. For further information, call (201) 538-0454. ■

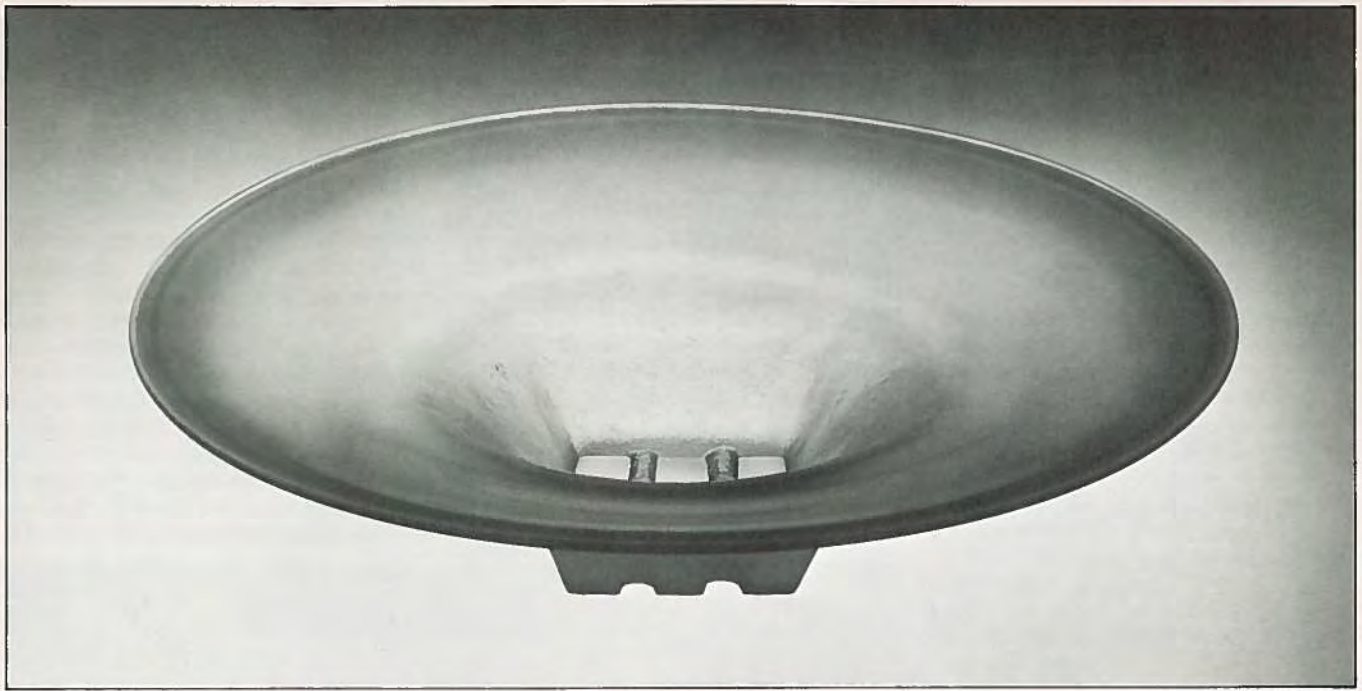
by Ronnie Weyl



"Ritual Vessel" by Mark Abildgaard.

Photo by: Michael Bergman





"Muse Crater" by Don Manuel Gonzalez.

Photo by: Michael Bergman

## Coming of Age: The American Crafts Boom

**Editor's Note:** This article first appeared (in a slightly different version) in the Noyes Museum's catalogue, *Elements of Craft*.

The exhibition of work by N.J. craft artists across the state occurs at a time when the interest in handcrafted designs, both functional and non-utilitarian, has reached unprecedented levels. The monthly calendar in *AMERICAN CRAFT* magazine lists more than three hundred museum exhibits, gallery shows, crafts fairs, and related activities throughout the United States.

The crafts movement has generated wide public interest and involvement. Attention focuses not only on the functional object, traditionally implied by the word "crafts," but on all types of aesthetically complex non-functional works such as unglazed soup tureens without lids; art wearables, including sculptured and twisted jewelry too massive to wear, and beautifully ornamented clothing requiring an entourage to handle and serviceable only as wall pieces. Both the viewing and collecting public, gallery directors, and curators of museums have participated in this movement. Contemporary crafts have, after a period of one hundred years, achieved museum recognition.

William Morris initiated the arts and crafts movement in England during the 1870s and 1880s as a reaction to the industrial revolution. The success of this development inspired the American crafts and arts pottery movements, 1901-1916, forerunners of our contemporary American crafts revival.

Contemporary with the English arts and crafts movement, the French Art Nouveau

style, derived from European medieval forms, was represented in America by the work of Louis Comfort Tiffany. Later, forms became simplified and more geometric in the crafted furniture and metal objects by makers such as Gustav Stickley. Although World War I curtailed these movements, new groups formed after 1918.

The German Bauhaus, Weimar, 1919, concentrated on expressing a total aesthetic philosophy for the twentieth century with the concomitant integration of the arts into all aspects of daily life. The clean, severe forms of this school influenced European architects, designers and craftspeople. This influence extended to the United States as a result of the political emigration of the Bauhaus adherents prior to 1941.

Another design movement was established at Cranbrook Academy in 1926. With Eliel Saarinen as its president, Cranbrook synthesized geometric and floral forms into a new curvilinear style called art deco. Today, Cranbrook is receiving great acclaim for the crafts tradition promulgated by its founding artists and fine teachers.

Although the Second World War obstructed the influence of these design movements, the postwar era and that of the Korean and Vietnam wars created a new stimulus to crafts in America. Young artists, both men and women, reacted with alienation from urban surroundings polluted by machines, smog, strife, and the new threat of nuclear annihilation. Craft artists retreated to the countryside where they could integrate life and art.

The general public sought the emotional security expressed in nostalgia for nine-

teenth century simplicity and an interest in folk art and antique handcrafts. They discovered that modern crafts relate well to the antique objects created with similar techniques and materials. Craft collecting expressed the purchaser's individuality and provided an alternative to mass-produced wares.

Artist-owned craft galleries burgeoned and the artists' cooperative workshops became forums for sharing ideas and exhibition opportunities. Important urban universities offered excellent programs in crafts, attracting and training woodworkers, glassblowers, jewelers, fiber artists and ceramists. In the intellectual university center craftspeople met fine artists and a dialogue developed.

Combining Egyptian, Oriental, pre-Columbian, Byzantine and African designs with art nouveau, arts and crafts and art deco styles, the modern craft artists borrowed minimalism, abstract expressionism and realism from painters and sculptures and integrated them in objects in every medium reflecting the socio-political and ecological concerns of the sixties, to separate the "fine arts" from "crafts" since they were intertwined by style and by similar aesthetics. Thus, they were judged by the same criteria. Fine arts galleries and major museums could no longer overlook the impact of craft objects in the contemporary cultural milieu.

Exhibitions of the fine art of crafts are now scheduled by major museums throughout the country and the Noyes Museum takes pride in sharing in the history of the crafts movement. ■

by Anne Wollman



## Focus on Excellence

**E**arly in his tenure, Governor Thomas Kean convened a meeting with members of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. The session was not to be just a matter of form, that is, a newly elected governor greeting his divisions, but rather the first opportunity for Tom Kean to share his personal vision for the arts in the Garden State. Few persons at that point grasped the importance with which the governor held the arts in his plan for New Jersey or knew beforehand his agenda for the meeting—to ignite a spark, issue a challenge, and then entrust the agency to meet that challenge. The spark . . . the arts would be a priority concern of his administration. The challenge . . . select organizations that could achieve national prominence and thus begin to lift New Jersey above the cultural shadows of neighboring New York City and Philadelphia. The trust . . . it would be up to the Council entirely to determine how to select, who to support, and how to assist.

Two and a half years later, as the Council enters FY 1985/86, the difficult task of germanating and developing such a major program is substantially completed. Its title is Artistic Focus, its premise that the targeted infusion of capital into a "ready" organization over perhaps three to five years, along with a very close working relationship with the Council, can result in that organization's attainment of national prominence. Piloted in FY1984/85 with an initial award to the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, the Council has now selected four organizations with which to fully launch Artistic Focus. They are McCarter Theatre Center for the Performing Arts, New Jersey Chamber Music Society, Paper Mill Playhouse and, for its second year in the program, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra.

The Artistic Focus evaluation process revealed McCarter Theatre, regarded as one of the finest regional theatres in the country, to be at a most intriguing juncture in its organizational growth. Solid in its artistic and administrative capabilities and, under artistic director Nagle Jackson beginning to carve a position as a theatrical innovator, McCarter had also embarked on a major capital fundraising campaign to renovate and expand its facilities. A larger physical plant would help accommodate expanded programming. Its long-range plan indicated expansion in several directions including a larger repertory company, an augmented season, increased summer offerings, strengthened position as a presenter of dance and, perhaps most important of all, development of new works. The key element of organizational readiness was clearly in place at McCarter, making the Council's first-year \$219,000 Artistic Focus award to McCarter a timely investment for New Jer-

sey's future through this rising multi-disciplinary organization.

The process of crafting an Artistic Focus Program forced the Council to examine seriously virtually every notion about organizational advancement, just what national prominence was, who could attain it and how. Some notions, such as the presumptions that massive sums of money were required and that large, established groups were the most likely beneficiaries, were dispelled. The first-year award of \$37,840 to the New Jersey Chamber Music Society demonstrated much that was learned by exploring these matters.

Founded as the Montclair Chamber Music Society ten years ago, the New Jersey Chamber Music Society had developed over the last few years a solid but not widely known reputation for artistic excellence, on par with some of the best chamber groups in the country. Small in numbers of players and staff, the Chamber Music Society had steadily increased its program offerings, its touring, and its repertoire. Organizationally, it was committed not only to the artistry of refined ensemble playing, but to music education, to cross-fertilization of audiences (particularly jazz), and to promoting works by New Jersey composers. Its response to



*As part of its plan to advance national performance and artistic excellence, the NJ Symphony has hired conductor Hugh Wolff.*



the question of what would be needed to achieve national prominence was simple: exposure. And so, its first Artistic Focus Award will help underwrite National Public Radio performance contracts and east-coast touring in order to establish its name.

The Artistic Focus selection process also prompted numerous groups to seriously examine their missions, goals, and status, and gave them a chance to reassess their long-range plans. The results, as with the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, were often very positive.

Few could dispute the mark Paper Mill has made on the theatre scene in New Jersey and throughout the northeast region. Literally rising from the ashes of its tragic 1980 playhouse fire, Paper Mill built a splendid new facility as well as a loyal following of some 35,000 subscribers for its lively and impeccably staged fare of musical theatre, drama, and dance. In its self-examination, however, Paper Mill came to grips with a deeper purpose. Along with jazz, musical theatre represented America's most notable international contribution to the performing arts, and Paper Mill had clearly demonstrated its ability to produce it. But what of the future of this American art form, especially in light of the outrageously escalating production costs at its traditional Broadway venues? Paper Mill resolved to add a key element to its overall program, a commitment to develop new works in musical theatre. First-year Artistic Focus funding in the amount of \$150,000 has been awarded for Paper Mill to establish a "new works" workshop and to produce a new play annually—just the ticket, it is hoped, for its ultimate rise to national prominence.

Finally, we come to the largest of FY 1985/86 Artistic Focus awards and to the group that demonstrates the type of close working relationship with Council that the Artistic Focus Program requires. The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO) has received a second-year award of \$736,000 to continue its advance toward highest artistic excellence and national acclaim. Its award of \$600,000 last year was predicated upon a multi-faceted plan of action to cement its operational and artistic footings. Key elements included expanding to a 28-week season, building a \$5 million endowment, and its most immediate objective, securing a top-flight conductor. Throughout FY 1985, the Council received quarterly progress reports and met repeatedly with the Symphony's board and executive staff to monitor progress. By year's end, NJSO delivered the exciting news that it had hired Hugh Wolff, a young and vibrant conducting talent to guide the orchestra's musical growth. Wolff comes to New Jersey from his position as associate conductor of the National Symphony in Washington, D.C. He is a recent recipient of the Affiliate Artists Seaver Conducting Award and has conducted throughout the United States and Europe.

In addition, the Symphony had begun its corporate campaign and had expanded the

---

## Planning for the Arts

**T**he New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA), a division within the Department of State, was established in 1966 as the agency of state government to promote and support the visual, performing, and literary arts. Throughout its nineteen-year history, the agency has matured as an organization and has been in a position to increase steadily the amount of funds awarded to the arts community, as well as to provide the kinds of programs that have expanded the state's cultural resources.

The Council's own growth has directly paralleled the expansion and the accompanying needs of New Jersey's arts constituency. In recent years, the growth has been most dramatic. Substantial increases in legislative appropriations—from \$2.9 million in FY 1981 to \$8.6 million in FY 1986—have enabled the State Arts Council to serve its constituency with even more dynamic and innovative programming.

As the agency responsible for distributing these funds fairly to eligible and deserving arts organizations and artists and for nurturing a healthy environment in which the arts can thrive, the Council decided 1985 was an auspicious time to review the state of the arts in New Jersey and to develop a comprehensive long-range plan.

Last fall, the Council embarked on a year-long, intensive study of the needs of New Jersey's arts constituency, the status of current Council operations and programs, and the various kinds of public support for the arts practiced throughout the country. Supervised by the full Council board,

directed by the Council's Policy and Planning Committee, and developed by the Council staff, the planning process was tremendously assisted by the direct input of the arts constituency and many nationally recognized arts administrators and planning specialists. The activities that took place as a part of this process were numerous. Surveys, public hearings, a special conference, both formal and informal staff self-evaluations, the Council's annual retreat, consultations, and special meetings of the Council and its standing committees all yielded important findings to be incorporated into the long-range plan.

One of the Council's initial planning activities was directed at providing a national context for New Jersey arts development. A two-day conference, funded in part by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and entitled ARTS IN FOCUS: NEW JERSEY AND THE NATION, brought together twelve arts administrators from around the country to discuss topics of relevance to state arts agencies, innovative programs and strategies used to promote and support the arts, and the critical issues facing the arts in the United States today. (See *Arts-New Jersey*, Spring 1985). More than 200 members of New Jersey's arts community attended the conference which took place in November 1984 and provided another impetus for the formation of a document.

To advance the planning process and get a firmer grasp on both existing agency conditions and the potential for refinement, the  
(continued on page 11)

---

number of concert offerings throughout the state to include audiences from all 21 counties. It was on the basis of that strong first-year performance, that second-year funding was made.

And so, the basic program components are now in motion. From a staff member's point of view it is difficult to suppress both the excitement and the sense of anxious hope over the program. Getting to this point has been a major accomplishment and profound learning experience for both the Council and the Artistic Focus participants. Therein lies another story (see page 12), for Artistic Focus is but a part of the total plan for the arts in New Jersey, and one which will continue to evolve in new directions and with other participants.

In conclusion, readers will note that FY 1986 Artistic Focus Awards totaled over \$1.1 million. Those awards were made

above and beyond any General Operating Support Awards to the four recipients. The remaining \$2 million increase to the Council's FY 1986 budget has been distributed throughout its several other grant categories and programs. The New Jersey State Council on the Arts expresses its deep appreciation to all persons and groups who facilitated the Artistic Focus process this year, especially to the more than 70 organizations statewide that completed the extensive Artistic Focus surveys. The information and data provided has far-reaching implications for state arts planning, and has already proven to be a valuable resource beyond the needs of Artistic Focus. ■

by David Miller

---

David Miller is NJSCA State/County Partnership coordinator.



## Planning . . .

(continued from page 10)

Council scrutinized its own operations. Program staff conducted an in-depth self-evaluation which resulted in a draft of an in-house, pre-planning document entitled "Analysis of Council Programs and Constituent Needs." Reflecting the staff's perspective and expertise, this document addressed the nature of Council activities and their impact upon individual artists, arts organizations, and audiences.

Equipped with this body of information, the Council entered an annual two-day retreat held in January 1985. Through the guidance of arts consultant Jerry Yoshitomi, moderator of the conference ARTS IN FOCUS: NEW JERSEY AND THE NATION, the Council explored its fundamental relationship to the New Jersey arts constituency, the status of its current policies, the quality of its programs, and its aspirations for the

***"Based upon certain fundamental precepts such as public/private partnership, network building, and individual action, this plan will set specific goals and objectives and outline future activities."***

future. It was at this meeting that the Council made a commitment to develop a five-year plan for its own agency and for the arts in New Jersey.

From the start, the Council recognized the need for input from the arts community and took active measures to provide this opportunity. Eleven discipline-specific public hearings held in the spring of 1985 enabled more than 300 artists and arts administrators to share their concerns, assess the Council's current operations, and make recommendations for further Council development. The Council's program coordinators then prepared drafts of programmatic long-range plans based on these public testimonies.

In addition to these hearings, throughout the planning process the Council members and staff consulted on matters of program development with representatives of various arts networks representing presenters, county arts agencies, and major-impact organizations.

Finally, all FY 1985 matching-grant recipients were invited to complete a survey on organizational development plans, growth projections, and financial and operational needs. The survey, known as the Artistic Focus Survey, was evaluated by four acknowledged experts in the arts field and was used to determine which arts organizations



Council members, staff, and arts professionals from around the country gathered in New Brunswick in November, 1984 to discuss the future of the arts in New Jersey.

were to receive FY 1986 Artistic Focus grants. The four experts were Nash Cox, former director of the Kentucky Arts Council; Elizabeth Weil, former coordinator of the NEA Challenge Grant Program; Esther Novak, director of the American Telephone and Telegraph Foundation; and Mikki Shepard, arts consultant and former development director of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The information from all these sources, as well as other contact with constituents, was incorporated into the planning document.

The process ultimately will result in a comprehensive five-year plan for Fiscal Years 1986-90, a plan that addresses virtually every relevant concern, need, and issue confronting the arts in New Jersey today. It will map out precise but flexible strategies to remedy problems, to meet the needs articulated by the arts constituency to

the Council, and to help all members of the arts community better fulfill their missions. Based upon certain fundamental precepts, such as public/private partnership, network building, and individual action, this plan will set specific goals and objectives and outline future activities.

Though the planning process leading up to the document has been thorough and exhaustive, the Council is firmly committed to planning as an ongoing process and as a vital agency function. The process must continue even in the midst of the Council executing a formally adopted five-year plan. Several measures have been taken, such as additional public hearings and interim evaluations, to ensure that this a "living" document, one that is capable of being tested, modified, supplemented, and improved. ■

*By David Miller  
and Ronnie Weyl*

## On the Cover

(continued from page 1)

as a production potter, creating with his partner a line of salt-glazed porcelain and stoneware pottery that is sold throughout the country to various shops and galleries.

After hours, Plasket pursues his work as an artist creating one-of-a-kind pieces in porcelain, clay, and/or glass. A 1986 NJSCA Crafts Fellowship has meant that he has more time now to devote to this work. In his statement of purpose made to the Council, he described the close, personal relationship he has developed with clay.

"Color, texture, and other surfacial qualities that clay possesses has allowed me to create an environment on which I can construct images of relating objects in harmony with contrasting visual characteristics of another medium. The slick, prismatic, and reflective qualities of glass have provided me with a substance to design the objects through which I can relate color, motion, and the surrealistic-like emotions I feel. I enjoy the relationship between the visual softness of the clay, the visual attraction of my colors, and the visual hardness and undeniable presence of the glass.

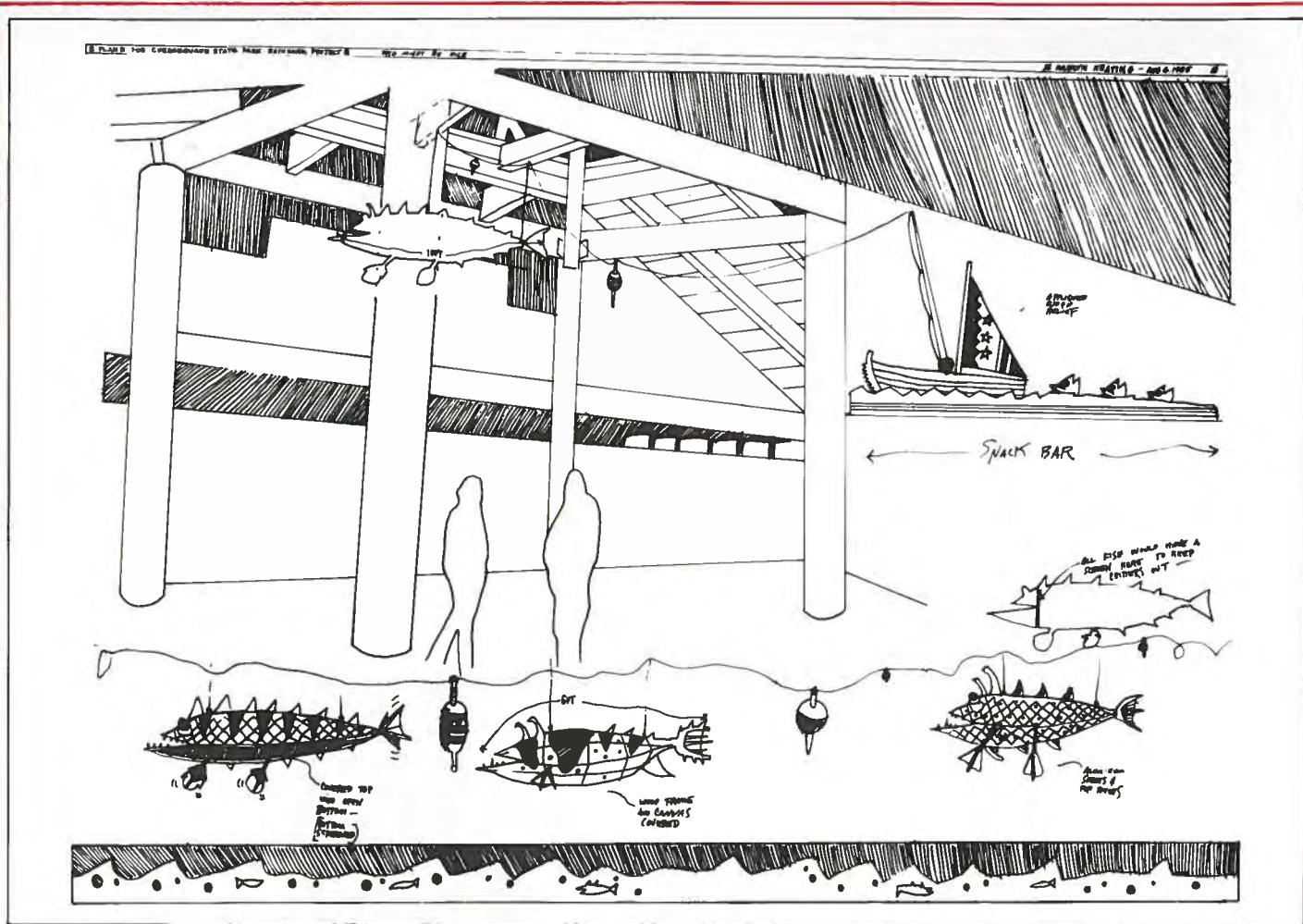
"I allow my glass images to emerge from their clay environment through which they have been conceived but compel them to remain in touch with their surroundings. This is an expression of my life as an artist and a direct reflection of the design imagery that accompanies my present emotional makeup."

Plasket hopes to continue to grow as an artist and experiment further with his plates. "I would like to expand the size of my work and create a large wall installation. This would allow me to let many environments interact with each other and let light become more of a factor in the relationships of my objects to their atmosphere."

Plasket attended Jacksonville University in Florida and Glassboro State College in New Jersey, and has studied clay printing, hot and cold glass working, and lamproom glass working with prominent figures in those areas. A member of New Jersey Designer Craftsmen and Southern New Jersey Artists and Craftsmen's Guild, he has had his work shown in numerous exhibitions and juried shows throughout New Jersey and New York. ■

*by Ronnie Weyl*





Drawing submitted by Marilyn Keating as part of her proposal for the Cheesquake Park project.

## Art in Public Places

On August 6, 1985, in a meeting attended by representatives of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, the Division of Building and Construction/Department of Treasury, and the Division of Parks and Forestry/Department of Environmental Protection, it was unanimously decided that the \$5,000 commission at the Cheesquake Bathhouse Facility at Cheesquake State Park in Matawan would be awarded to sculptor Marilyn Keating of Gloucester City.

The Bathhouse Facility is a year-old structure that was built at Cheesquake State Park to house a concession stand and changing rooms for visitors who come to bathe at nearby Hooks Creek Lake. The building is constructed of redwood and is open on two adjacent sides with columns supporting the roof. It has a sloped-roof interior that is approximately 21 feet at its highest point and culminates at a central skylight. The artists had the option of designing a three-dimensional piece which could be suspended in the large interior space created by the sloped roof, or a two-dimensional piece that could be installed on

one or both of the two blank walls inside the bathhouse.

The proposal submitted by Marilyn Keating took advantage of both of these options. The commissioned work will incorporate a 20-foot plywood boat relief that will be installed on the wedge-shaped wall over the

concession stand. The boat will be painted in bright primary colors and will have an actual canvas sail. A yellow nylon rope, a device which will visually connect the various elements of the piece, will be strung from the mast of the boat to various points across the sloped ceiling and will culminate at a large suspended fish hanging opposite to the boat. The fish will be constructed out of aluminum sheeting, simulating the look of real fish scales and providing a durable medium for the partially unprotected site. In addition, the fish is to be designed with moving parts in the tradition of whirligigs and weathervanes that would be activated by the wind. Decorative fishing bobbers will also be placed at random points on the yellow line.

The panel found Ms. Keating's proposal to be compositionally sound, visually appealing, and in keeping with the desired theme of the park. In addition, the wide diversity of people that the park serves was considered, and it was anticipated that the commission would be well received by these people. Construction of the state approved proposal will begin this fall, and installation of the artwork is to be completed by Memorial Day of 1986. ■

by Bonnie Bird

Bonnie Bird is NJSCA assistant visual arts coordinator.

## About the Artist

Upon receiving her bachelor of fine arts degree in sculpture at Moore College of Art in Philadelphia in 1974, Marilyn Keating began actively pursuing a career in art. She has had several solo exhibitions, including shows at the Janet Fleisher and Eric Makler Galleries in Philadelphia, and has participated in several group exhibitions at the Stedman Art Gallery at Rutgers University, Camden, the Noyes Museum in Oceanville, New Jersey, and the Perkins Center for the Arts in Moorestown, New Jersey. The Noyes Museum has a piece by Ms. Keating in its permanent collection that is currently on exhibit. Ms. Keating is also the recipient of a 1985-86 Fellowship in sculpture from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. ■





David Keller stands amid masks created by Eldridge Park Artists for their exhibition at the Ellarslie Museum in Trenton.

---

## NJ Poet:

### David Keller

David Keller, recipient of an NJSCA 1986 Artistic Merit Award in Poetry, defies the stereotype of the artist in lonely isolation. He has been a member of the *U.S. 1 Poets Cooperative* for ten years, is a resident faculty member and director of admissions at the *Frost Place Festival of Poetry*, and has become an active participant in the *Eldridge Park Artists/Clark Kent Troupe*.

Keller believes that the informed discussion and mutual criticism that have been a part of his association with other poets and artists are integral to the development of his art. In a recent interview conducted as he and other Eldridge Park artists prepared for an upcoming exhibition at the Ellarslie Museum in Trenton, he said, "Criticism is painful sometimes, but that's the point where you become a professional—at the point where you stop showing your work to your family, who will be terribly nice, and begin showing it to people who will not be nice but will be honest because they're your friends.

"I went to U.S. 1 Poets every week for ten years and that has been a great help. It's an open-membership group, with criticism, unlike some other groups who just give you an audience. Being able to meet with people who know your work, who know it well, who are honest and who are able to say, 'this isn't working' is a tremendous help."

Keller's poems appear regularly in publications such as *The Denver Quarterly*, *New England Review*, *Pequod*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Poetry* and he is a co-editor (with Rod Tulloss and Alicia Ostriker) of *U.S. 1: An Anthology, The Contemporary Writing from New Jersey* (Wm. Wise & Co., 1980).

## At the Heart

The sun  
has finished the small buildings, and the light  
recedes, heading toward the bridges.  
It has been years. Coming back  
today was not the memory  
of what you'd left or taken to the next place,  
but as if the streets you passed  
were someone else's life entered  
by mistake you'd say, tired from walking.

A woman sweeps off the steps,  
the familiar spirit of the neighborhood,  
but doesn't look up. The clouds  
are colored paper. What teases at you  
is how the buildings are part of the sunset  
sinking down one wall, then the next.  
Suddenly everything is changed, one skyscraper  
electric blue, silver, rising beyond shoppers  
and the man selling magazines. It glows  
like a river seen from distant hills.

In the town where you were young, fireflies  
rose from the grass like sparks.  
Some nights your parents  
would forget about you altogether  
and you and your three brothers would follow  
the lights long after bedtime,  
as they moved off, slowly  
around the house and into the treetops.  
You might have been leaving with them.  
First the driveway, then the bushes  
by the mailbox lost to sight,  
the house and its lights fading  
in the warm, dark air,  
and that reflection in the building,  
the city you no longer need close by.  
Oh, that is it come  
back to you now, what you wanted: the world  
inside you rising, tall buildings,  
this sharp blue light and beyond, the sky.



## *How Everything Begins*

This barn belonged once to Robert Frost.  
The man standing in the front is her father.  
People come to visit with their children  
for some association with the place  
and the mountains, not visible this cold evening.  
He had children too  
though you wouldn't think so  
from what he mentions. One boy,  
the eldest I imagine, killed himself over  
some issue, sex or a father's love he couldn't get.

If I had a daughter the most difficult thing  
would be to explain what I do.  
She would want to know, of course, but I worry  
what she will think of me, hearing the stories,  
the children in them always more distant.  
Would she love me?  
The man speaking tonight, he too must carry things  
he'd like to weep over and forget finally.  
His wife is pretty, and the little girl.  
I wonder how she will turn out,  
what illnesses and anger have kept  
her parents awake nights and afternoons  
they wanted to disclaim right then all children  
and drive off to make love or sit, not speaking.

I have come to see how secret, sexual I am  
even in what I first hold to,  
how I imagine my child a daughter,  
holding her breath so she will not grow older,  
and how much I am afraid,  
the pleasant ecstasies of women, their bodies  
and what they know. I have thought of a daughter  
so often I'm surprised she's not real.  
This child sits on her mother's lap, the light  
runs its soft strands down  
the wife's blouse and the child's hair  
like a silk scarf, as if this child were all desires  
spoken, in safety. Outside the last mosquitos  
are raiding the inarticulate dark.  
I wonder what Frost's kids asked him  
and if he bothered to answer. We hear nothing  
from them. The man here announces he has written a poem  
for his daughter, and he begins. The child  
smiles quickly at her mother, at all this  
just for her. Their look  
seems to pass knowledge about the man  
they both live with and share, some thing the child knows  
about longing and its inventions  
but thinks her mother has yet to fathom.

## *Boiling Up The Dead*

You must be a little afraid outside,  
late on the cold days.  
The sky is gray as tree trunks  
and things buried, held fast in the hard ground.  
Children have been warned not to look up,  
not to touch their tongues to metal.  
One neighbor has taken ill.  
Everything is slow and painful,  
the water in the open places,  
the last puddle and ditch dark  
as a bruise where the early moon  
beats out and in behind clouds  
like your heart, that pulse  
back of one eye. Geese go over  
so low you can hear the air  
torn beneath their wings.  
One trails behind, the lone sister  
reclaiming the land with its silence  
as you and I are reclaimed,  
heretic fingers and toes beginning to burn  
clean through.

I think of food, its touch  
a dream to keep us from loss. Think  
of the water pipes, iron  
tunnels lacing the ground.  
Take the water, a gift,  
and the last shreds of chicken or turkey.  
If the bones are thick, crack them,  
a heavy knife will do,  
for the reddish mud at their center  
that the animals kept to withstand  
our hatred. The bubbles boiling  
from the pot's dark riverbottom  
catch, whirl around the twigs and stems  
and soften. The stars, crystal lights  
of pure cold, are buttons from an old sweater.  
Throw in everything you have hoarded  
for once, no one saying no,  
and the windows will close over  
with steam as the bones work to feed us,  
boiling beyond all remembrance,  
the spell broken.



THE NEW JERSEY STATE COUNCIL  
ON THE ARTS  
109 WEST STATE STREET, CN 306  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625

BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
TRENTON, N.J.  
Permit No. 21

Address correction requested



Thomas H. Kean, *Governor*  
Jane Burgio, *Secretary of State*  
Margaret Q. Hager, *Chairman*  
Cheryl Martinez, *Vice-Chairman*  
Joseph J. Amato, *M.D.*  
Elizabeth G. Christopherson  
David J. Farris  
Franklin V. Fischer  
Carol A. Friedland  
Jerome Hines  
Jean von Deesten Hooper  
Dolores A. Kirk  
Joanna E. LaSane  
Gerald A. LeBoff  
Lillian Levy

Michelle Mathesius  
Assemblywoman Maureen Ogden, *Ex Officio*  
Celeste S. Penney  
Clement Alexander Price  
Kevin Shanley  
Senator Gerald R. Stockman, *Ex Officio*

Jeffrey A. Kesper, *Executive Director*  
Barbara F. Russo, *Assistant Executive Director*  
Noreen M. Tomassi, *Editor*  
Ronnie Weyl, *Contributing Editor*  
Design by: Noreen M. Tomassi  
Helene Plank

ARTS NEW JERSEY is published by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.  
The New Jersey State Council on the Arts is a division of the Department of State.

## ***Announcement!***

The winter issue of Arts-New Jersey will introduce an all-new design and an expanded 24-page format. Look for it in January!