



FROM THE PRESIDENT

WSG 30—Supporting Sculptors and the Arts Since 1984

In 2014 WSG will celebrate its 30th Anniversary. Founded in 1984 by a dedicated group of artists, the organization continues its mission today to promote an awareness and an understanding of sculpture and foster the exchange of ideas among sculptors, collectors, and the general public by organizing frequent events, including exhibitions, artists' panels, presentations, workshops, and social gatherings.

With the 30th Anniversary, WSG launches its *30 for 30 Campaign* to honor 30 years of service to the artist community. The campaign is asking everyone to give \$30 in additional support of the organization in addition to your \$45 membership or \$15 student membership dues. Membership dues and voluntary contributions make all of our exhibitions and activities possible. WSG relies on volunteers, donations, grant funding, and in-kind gifts. The 2012 budget was \$14,000, with member dues representing 82% of the year's income.

By adding \$30, *you can make a difference!* Members who make a \$30 or more donation with their dues before April 1, 2014, will be acknowledged on the WSG website and in the Spring 2014 issue of *Washington Sculptors* publication. A special reception for donors contributing \$30 or more will be held in Spring of this year, in celebration of the *30 for 30 Campaign* and coinciding with the WSG exhibition *LOULOU DI Flower/to Flower* at The Athenaeum in Alexandria, Virginia.

— Mike Shaffer, WSG President

BE A PART OF HISTORY Sculpture NOW 2014 Anniversary Video

Digital images of sculptures shown in the last 30 years in WSG shows are now being collected to assemble a dynamic slideshow/video. The video will be uploaded to YouTube and shown at our 30-year celebration at the American University Museum at the Katzen Art Center in November 2014.

Each WSG member may submit one digital image each of up to two sculptures exhibited in WSG shows in the last 30 years. Label the images with your name, title of the work and the year of the show and the name of the show if known. Names of sculptors will be listed at the end of the video in order of appearance. In the event it is not possible to include all images that members may send in, preference will be given to those that are of the highest quality and of works in the oldest shows.

Digital images should be no larger than one Mb in size, in jpg format. They need not be greater than 72 dpi resolution. Images should be submitted to WSG Anniversary Video WSG Anniversary Video <30thimages@washingtonsculptors.org> **no later than March 1, 2014.** Please direct your questions to Marilyn Geldzahler at <mgeld@verizon.net>.

— Marilyn Geldzahler

2014 WSG PROGRAMS & Exhibitions

The following volunteers are needed for WSG: refreshment coordinator and writers for press releases and grants. If you are interested, please e-mail Pattie Firestone at <pattie.firestone@verizon.net>

LouLoudi

March 21 – May 4, 2014
The Athenaeum
201 Prince Street, Old Town Alexandria,
VA 22314
Juror: Renée Stout
Reception: Sunday, March 23, 4-6pm
Jurors talk: TBA
Exhibition closes/De-installation:
Sunday, May 4, 2014

Gedankenexperiment

June 17 – August 23, 2014
American Association for the
Advancement of Science
1200 New York Ave NW, Washington DC
Juror: Sarah Tanguy
Reception: TBA

Sculpture NOW 2014

November 8 – December 20, 2014
American University Museum Katzen Center
Juror: Jack Rasmussen
Reception: November 8, 2014

Salons

Saturday, February 8, 2014
4-6pm
Gloria Chapa's Studio
1809 Randolph Street NE
Washington, DC 20018
gloriachapa.com (artist website)
Topic: Working at Home in a tiny studio:
Strategies

Saturday, March 8, 2014
4-6pm
Carol Brown Goldberg's Studio
5630 Wisconsin Avenue NW, #1701
Washington, DC 20015
carolbrowngoldberg.com (artist website)
Topic to be announced.
No problem for cars as there is a valet
at building.

Saturday, May 10, 2014
4-6pm
Jim Wallace's place
11430 Strand Drive, Apt. 115
Old Georgetown Village Condominiums
Rockville, MD 20852
Topic: Other Salons and Informative
Lectures Around Town (AAAS, NAS, DC
Science Café, Hamiltonian, etc.) Also, please
bring any images of your work (thumb drive
or laptop) that you might want to discuss.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

president: Mike Shaffer
vice president: Elsabé Dixon
secretary: Cat Lukens
treasurer: Pattie Porter Firestone

COMMITTEES

Newsletter

editor: Lynda Smith-Bugge; feature writer: Rima Schulkind*; design and image management: Stephanie Firestone*; group listings: Carmela Knepler*; solo listings: Marilee Schumann*; distribution: Gordon Lyon

Website

Mike Shaffer, Greg Braun*, Diane Szczepaniak

Communications

press releases: (volunteer needed)
graphic design: Laura Jamroz

Exhibitions

Elsabé Dixon, chair; Gloria Chapa, Jeff Chyatte, Jeff Cooper, Terry deBardelaben, Pattie Porter Firestone, Mimi Frank*, Artemis Herber, Laura Jamroz, Mike Shaffer, Diane Szczepaniak

Grants

Gay Hannah, Emily Piccarillo

Membership/Data Base

Mary Early

Nominations

Mike Shaffer, Pattie Porter Firestone, Mary Early

Outreach

Terry deBardelaben, Alan Binstock

Programs

Barry Goldstein

30th Anniversary Committee

Artemis Herber, Jeff Cooper, Marilyn Geldzahler*

Refreshments Coordinator

(volunteer needed)

Special Projects

Mariah Josephy

Volunteer Coordinator

Pattie Porter Firestone

*non-board member volunteers

WSG ADVISORY BOARD 2013

Philip Barlow, Collector
John Beardsley, Author
Emilie Brzezinski, Sculptor
Lynden Cline, Sculptor
Joan Danziger, Sculptor
Alonzo Davis, Sculptor
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Glenn Harper, Editor, *Sculpture*
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Vivienne Lassman, Curator
Virginia Mecklenburg, Senior Curator,
Smithsonian American Art Museum
Sarah Newman, Curator, Corcoran Gallery of Art
Jack Rasmussen, Director and Curator,
American University Museum at Katzen Arts Center
Victoria Reis, Executive Director, Transformer
Wendy Ross, Sculptor
Laura Roulet, Curator
Foon Sham, Sculptor
Lou Stovall, Artist/Printmaker
Vesela Sretenovic, Curator, Modern and
Contemporary Art, Phillips Collection
Athena Tacha, Sculptor
Sarah Tanguy, Curator, Art in Embassies Program,
U.S. State Department
Duncan Tebow, Assistant Dean for Liberal Arts,
Northern VA Community College at Annandale
Joan Weber, Collector
Françoise Yohalem, Consultant, Curator

The Washington Sculptors Group, founded in 1984, promotes an awareness and an understanding of sculpture and fosters the exchange of ideas among sculptors, collectors, and the general public through: sponsorship of frequent events, including artists' panels, presentations, workshops, and social gatherings; co-sponsorship of programs with museums and other art groups; and organization of professionally curated exhibitions in museums and alternative spaces in the Washington area and beyond. The work of WSG is carried out by its Board of Directors, along with its nearly 400 members—sculptors, collectors, curators, and others interested in sculpture—in its working committees. WSG received the Mayor's Arts Award for Excellence in Service to the Arts in 2004.

membership

WSG. Dues for a calendar year (Jan. – Dec.) \$45/year, \$15/year to students with ID (scholarships available). Dues for renewing members are due in Oct., Nov. and Dec. for the following year. Dues paid by new members Jan. through Sept. will be applied to the current year. Current paid-up members have "Member through 2014" above their names on their mailing labels. To join/renew, print membership form from the WSG website, fill it out and send it with a check to: Washington Sculptors Group, PO Box 42534, Washington DC 20015. PayPal may also be used to pay WSG membership dues through the WSG website. To change your membership address of record and for receiving this newsletter, send your name and address by email to <membership@washingtonsculptors.org> or by regular mail to WSG at the address above.

Receive Reduced Membership Fees

These partnering arts organizations give the following membership discounts to current WSG members:

International Sculpture Center (ISC) – 15%

Washington Project for the Arts (WPA/DC) – 10%

International Arts & Artists (IA&A) – 10%

Sculptors Inc of Baltimore – \$10 off

Philadelphia Sculptors Group, New England Sculptors Group,
and Tri-State Sculptors Group – upon request.

resources

WSG Website <www.washingtonsculptors.org>

The WSG website contains information about the organization and its events and activities in the following areas: Programs, Exhibitions, Exhibition Opportunities, Publications, History, Mission, Governance, Membership and Contact addresses. In the Member Gallery, any visitor to the site can find names, images and biographical information about current members who have entered material into the data base. Current members can sign into the data base and upload information about their work by going to the Gallery Update Form.

Washington Sculptors periodical

Issued three times a year. Deadlines April 10, Aug. 10, and Dec. 10. Send information to <membernews@washingtonsculptors.org>. See the website for information on submitting visual materials. To enter the drawing for a feature article in the newsletter, send your name to Rima Schulkind who conducts the interviews and writes the articles <rima@schulkind.com>.

Yahoo Group

A forum for members, collectors and all those interested in three-dimensional media to share information, get technical advice, discuss exhibitions at area museums and galleries (including your own). Go to <www.yahoo.com>, click on 'groups'; search: washingtonsculptors (one word) which brings you to: 'Washington Sculptors Group, Washington DC' where you sign in.

Contact

Washington Sculptors Group
PO Box 42534, Washington DC 20015, tel: 202-686-8696
email: <info@washingtonsculptors.org>
website: <www.washingtonsculptors.org>

Many of the listings below are for shows that are over. The editor feels that this is not a “where to go” section, but a source for showing members what their colleagues have been doing and to honor members’ accomplishments in print. Events that are likely to be available after publication will be marked with a ■.

**Solo and Feature Shows
(2 or 3 artists), Commissions, Honors:**

■ **Greg Braun**, *Walgreen’s Wave*, permanent installation at Walgreen’s of Rockville, 430 Hungerford Dr., Rockville MD.
– ■ *Creating Space: Concept, Content, Context*, Hillyer Art Space, Washington DC, January 4 – February 1, 2014.

■ **Nizette Brennan** is one of three artists chosen to present a vision for the public artwork for the new Reston Governmental Center.

■ **Renee Butler**, *New Photographs*, Reyes + Davis, Washington DC, through May 2014. To visit make appointment.



Renee Butler, *Skywall*, photos, 8 x 8 x 2 in

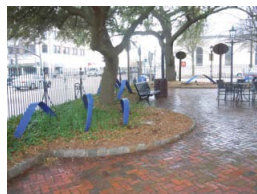
Jeff Chyatte, Brancusi Art award for *Nexus*, 2013 Outdoor Sculpture Show, Portsmouth VA Art & Cultural Center.

Martin Feldman, *Birds*, curated by Richard L. Dana, Hyattstown Mill Arts Project, Hyattstown MD, October 2013.



Martin Feldman, *Ironing Bird*, mixed media, 39 x 60 x 19 in

Pattie Porter Firestone Juror’s Choice award for *Thoughts Running Like a River*, site-specific installation, 2013 Outdoor Sculpture Show, Portsmouth VA Art & Cultural Center.



Pattie Porter Firestone, *Thoughts Running Like a River*, painted aluminum, 4 x 4 x 40 ft

■ **Marilyn Geldzahler**, *Flamenco*, purchased by Amazon’s Wireless Service, Herndon VA.

Carol Brown Goldberg, Third Prize, International Urban Sculpture Competition, “Ciudad de Murcia”, Hall of Columns of the Palace Arts Center Almudí, Plano de San Francisco, Murcia, Spain, November 14 – January 6, 2014.
– ■ *The Circle of Time: Painting and Sculpture* by Carol Brown Goldberg, Reading Public Museum, Reading PA, September 21 – January 12, 2014.



Carol Brown Goldberg, *Segura Steps*, bronze, 15 x 5.5 x 7.5 ft



Greg Braun, *Walgreen’s Wave*, gypsum drywall, wood, latex paint, 7 x 32 x 3 ft

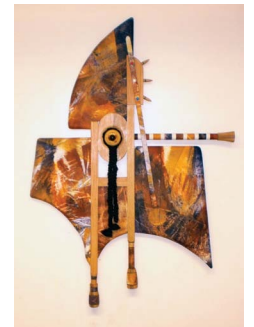


Marilyn Geldzahler, *Flamenco*, aluminum, 6 x 7 ft

■ **Bill Harris**, *The Commentary: Bill Harris*, curator Phil Davis, Brentwood Arts Exchange, Gateway Arts Center, Brentwood MD, January 13 – March 8, 2014, Opening Reception, January 18, 5-8pm.

Artemis Herber, *Cardboard City*, The Goethe-Institute, Washington DC, August – September, 2013.

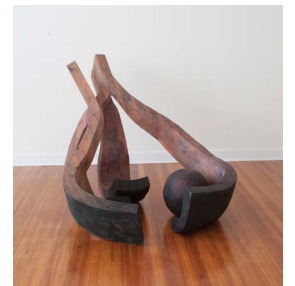
■ **Mariah Josephy**, *Aviary*, 410 Good Buddy Gallery, 410 Florida Ave NW, Washington DC, April 19 – May 31, 2014. Receptions, April 19 and May 31.



Bill Harris, *The Royalty Of Sojourner’s Truth*, printed canvas over wood w/fiber, 60 x 43 x 2 in

Barbara Kobylnska, *Creatures large and small*, Polish Artists Association at Gallery 022, Warsaw Poland, September – October, 2013.

Rachel Rotenberg, *Sculpture by Rachel Rotenberg*, Martino Gallery, Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, September – November, 2013.



Rachel Rotenberg, *Gathering*, cedar, oil paint, 48 x 79 x 50 in

Barbara Kobylnska, *Creatures large and small*, size of creatures varies up to 6 ft



member news continues on page 4

■ **Pamela Soldwedel**, *Surprises!*, curated by Marina DiCarlo and Sandy Parker, Gallery Underground, The Shops, 2100 Crystal Drive, Arlington VA, January 5 – February 1, 2014.
– ■ *Works*, curated by Dale Johnson, Watergate Gallery, 2552 Virginia Ave, NW, Washington DC, February 8 – March 4, 2014.



Pamela Soldwedel, *Parting III*, marble, 16.5 x 13 x 26.5 in

■ **Valerie Theberge**, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities Artist Fellowship Award, 2014.



Valerie Theberge, *Untitled*, glass mosaic over cement base. 7 x 32 x 3ft

■ **Bill Wood**, *Honorable Mention for City Water*, 2013 Outdoor Sculpture Show, Portsmouth VA Art & Cultural Center.

GROUP SHOWS

■ *24 + 24*, work by 24 members and 24 guests, Waverly Street Gallery, Bethesda MD, February 11 – March 8, 2014, Reception: Friday, February 14, 6-9pm, including **Greg Braun**.

40 for 40: Celebrating Four Decades of GRACE, Greater Reston Arts Center (GRACE), Reston VA, September – November, 2013, including **Dalya Luttwak, Foon V. Sham**.



Dalya Luttwak, *Emulsion*

44th Annual Treasury of Art Show, Vienna Arts Society, Vienna VA, juror Jack Rasmussen, November 22 – 24, 2013, including **Marilyn Geldzahler**.

American Fine Craft Show, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn NY, December 14 & 15, 2013 Zenith Gallery, including **Katie Dell Kaufman, Joan Konkell, Donna M. McCullough, Paula Stern, Tim Tate, Joyce Zipperer**.



Joan Konkell *The Journey*, mesh, acrylic on canvas, 48 x 36 x 4 in

Celebrate the Season of Art, Sherwood Center, Fairfax VA, October 31 – January 2, 2014, including **Marilyn Geldzahler**.

Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, Cheltenham UK, Jurors Lyn Cluer Coleman, Sarah Goodwin, Dr. Justin Marshall and Emma Critchley, October – November, 2013, including **Artemis Herber**.



Artemis Herber, *Supplies*, corrugated cardboard, scrap cardboard filling, shellac, charcoal, 30 dia x 25 h in

■ *Contraptions: Reflections on the Almost Functional*, McLean Project for the Arts, McLean Virginia, curator Nancy Sausser, January 16 – March 1, 2014, including **Adam Hager, Rima Schulkind, Stephanie Williams**.

Discarded, Ojai Art Festival, Ojai CA, juror Deborah Munk, November 2013, including **Artemis Herber**.

Elements in Balance: Earth, Air, Fire, Water, Annmarie Sculpture Garden, jurors Rebecca Head Trautmann, Andrew Baxter, June – August, 2013, including **Jan Paul Acton**.



Rima Schulkind, *Fermat's Last Theorem*, found objects, 72 x 14 x 12 in

■ *Emulsion*, Galley O, Washington DC, juror Lauren Gentile, November 9, – January 18, 2014, including **Dalya Luttwak, Jan Paul Acton**.

■ *Go Figure! The Towers*, 8000 Towers Crescent Drive, Tysons Corner VA, curator Craig Schaffer, February 9 – May 4, 2014, including **Pattie Porter Firestone, Gordon Lyon, Jane Petit, Paula Stern**.



Jan Acton, *Reflexion*, alabaster, marble base, steel pin, 10 x 8 x 19 in

■ *Form Transformed: Five Sculptors*, Touchstone Gallery, Washington DC, January 3 – February 2, 2014 including **Janet Wheeler, Rosemary Luckett**.

■ *Juried Online Exhibition*, Linus Galleries, Southern California, including **Artemis Herber**.

MD Art @ College Park, The Art Gallery, University of Maryland, College Park MD, June – August 2013, including **Gordon Lyon**.



Rosemary Luckett, *My Immigrant Grandmother*, metal, wood, paint, fabric, 55 x 29 x 12 in

member news continues on page 5

Objects of Desire, Neptune Fine Art Gallery, Washington DC, September – October 2013, including **Foon V. Sham.**

River Arts, Chestertown River Arts, Chestertown MD, September 2013, including **Gordon Lyon.**

■ *Second Biennial Maryland Regional Juried Exhibition*, University of Maryland, Adelphi MD, jurors Nona Martin, Faheem Majeed and Amy E. Raehse, November – January 26, 2014, including **Mike Shaffer.**

Small Wonders, Urban by Nature Gallery, curator Capitol Arts Network's Gallery, Washington DC, November 2013, including **Elizabeth Steel.**

Structure Online Gallery, Arc Gallery, San Francisco CA, juror James Bacchi, November – December, 2013, including **Artemis Herber.**

The Open West UK, Newark Park, Gloucestershire UK, July – August, 2013, including **Artemis Herber.**

■ *Washington Art Matters II (WAM II)*, Katzen Museum, American University Museum, Washington DC, curator Ben Forgey, January 25 – March 16, 2014, including **Nizette Brennan.**



Foon Sham, *Glasgow Cube*, Scottish wood and phone books, 0.5 x 10 x 10 in



Gordon Lyon, *Water Nymph*, painted wood, 7 x 3 x 2 in



Mike Shaffer, *Homage to Duchamp*, metal, wood, rubber tire, acrylic, 40 x 22 x 18 in



Nizette Brennan, *Madonna Table*, Italian stone, 63 x 40 x 30 in



Elizabeth Steel, *Untitled*, alabaster, 6 x 5 x 3 in

■ *WPA Select 2014*, Artisphere, 1101 Wilson Blvd, Arlington VA, curators Cynthia Connolly, Jeffry Cudlin, Brandon Fortune, Jennifer Scanlan, Olivia Kohler-Maga, Megan Rook-Koepsel, Mera Rubell, Gregory Volk, February 27 – March 21, 2014, Opening Reception (free and open to the public) Thursday, February 27, 7-10pm; Curator Talks (free) Wednesday, March 6 & 13, 6:30-8pm; Art Auction Gala (tickets required) March 22, 7-11pm, tickets via website: wpadc.org/select-2014, including **Stephanie H. Firestone, Len Harris, Sean Hennessey, Sam Noto, Rachel Rotenberg, Craig Schaffer, Marcos Smyth.**



Stephanie H. Firestone, *Woman*, Raku, welded steel base, 20.5 x 6.5 x 6.5 in

Robert Cole

It is sad to have to write a posthumous article about an artist who was such a vibrant force on the Washington art scene. My thanks to his wife and partner, Susan, for allowing me to interview her at this difficult time.

My first awareness of Robert Cole and his work came in watching the evolution of a fascinating little sculpture park on 7th Street across from Touchstone Gallery. This nondescript empty space between buildings that had long been a dumping ground got cleaned up, and at first contained a number of sculptures by a variety of artists. It then became a rotating exhibit of Robert's work. He was frequently there, picking up refuse, exchanging one piece for another, chatting with passersby, just hanging out. The site lasted three or four years, and was much missed when it became just another office building.

Robert's larger than life bronze and steel sculptures are to be found all over the area, e.g.: *Mushroom Trees* at the Naylor Road Green Line metro station; many commissioned sculptures at projects with the locally based E.D.G. architectural firm; *Humanity's Throne* in front of Premiere Bank on 17th St.; *The Pressman*, a sculpture for the Washington Post, commemorating



Robert with *Bacchus*

article continues on page 12

Athena Tacha



Athena in her studio

Attempting to compress Athena Tacha's many awards, commissions, books, and other achievements into the confines of a short article was a challenge. Following the path from her unmistakable early childhood talent to her current retrospective at Grounds for Sculpture traces a dizzying journey. It illuminates the trajectory of an artist whose energy is only exceeded by her imagination and talent.

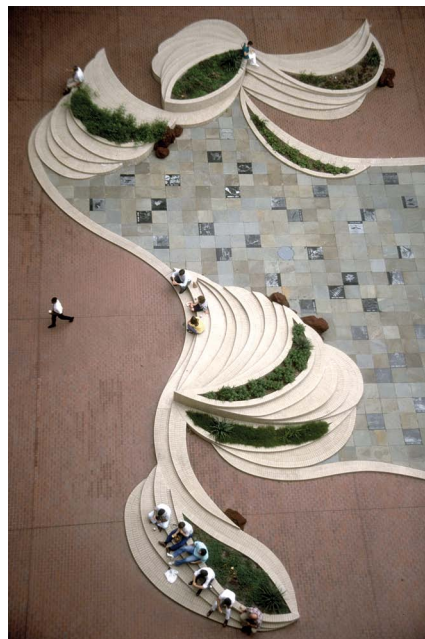
Born in 1936, in Larissa, Greece, she grew up during World War II and the Greek civil war. By sixteen she had already demonstrated skill in drawing, carving, languages and music. Her talent confirmed by an Athens art critic, she entered the National Academy of Fine Arts where she sculpted from a model four hours, six days a week. After receiving her MFA at the National Academy of Fine Arts (with the topmost fellowship) she came to the U.S. on a Fulbright travel grant for graduate studies in art history at Oberlin College. She completed her M.A. thesis under Professor Ellen H. Johnson, who became her mentor and closest friend. Then on to Paris with a Greek government fellowship

for Ph.D. studies in aesthetics and art history at the Sorbonne, producing her thesis on *The Role of Light in Modern Sculpture*.

She returned to Oberlin in 1963 to serve for the next ten years at the Allen Memorial Art Museum of Oberlin, first as its Assistant Curator and then as its Curator of modern art, organizing exhibitions and publishing books and articles on modern sculpture. In 1966 she exhibited

her own work in the first of many juried shows at the Cleveland Museum of Art where in subsequent years she won first prize three times.

Athena kept her two careers completely apart: as an art historian she was Athena Spear (having met and married Richard Spear, professor of Baroque art history at



Green Acres (detail), 3 x 77 x 85 ft

Oberlin). As a sculptor, she was Athena Tacha. She did not "want to appear to curry favor in the art gallery world" for her own art. Making her art evenings and weekends, she at first did what she now calls "imitative art," e.g. a free-standing wall made of bottles, and collages made of food images or women's faces. She started collecting natural objects such as pebbles and bark that she would later incorporate into many of her works. She created her first "original" works using glass and plexi, to express light and movement.

In 1970, before achieving a full professorship at Oberlin in the early '70s, she organized *Art in the Mind* for the Oberlin Museum, one of the first three exhibitions of conceptual art in the U.S. Fearing that



Wave, 11 x 20 x 18 in

she would be "stuck forever" in the art history world, she left the Oberlin Museum in 1973 to teach sculpture. The same year, the Whitney Museum offered her the guest curatorship of an Elie Nadelman retrospective, but she had the incredible courage to say no. Who says no to the Whitney! She then began designing her "step sculptures" for outdoor spaces. In 1971 she created her first full-scale step-sculpture in the *Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition*, Blossom Music Center,

...the Whitney Museum offered her the guest curatorship of an Elie Nadelman retrospective, but she had the incredible courage to say no. Who says no to the Whitney!

Peninsula OH. During this decade she and her husband began their extensive travels in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Near East and Meso-America. The next two decades were highly productive — Athena garnered more awards and commissions than most artists achieve in a lifetime, and this after she had published many books and articles on sculpture.

In 1975, in two hectic months, using students and masons (who were, fortuitously, on strike at the time) she created the public sculpture *Streams in Oberlin*, her first completed large work. The High Museum in Atlanta mounted a retrospective exhibit of Athena's work in 1989.

Very much a conceptual artist, Athena deals with ideas as well as actual form. A large exhibition room in her studio contains dozens of maquettes addressing the concept of fragmentation. Adventure-some in her choice of raw materials, she uses everything from taxidermy stuffing material to mushroom spores!

Known nationally and internationally for her many commissions, Athena has not neglected her Washington base of the last fifteen years. Two major public installations are *Strathmore Bridge* at Strathmore Hall and *Light Obelisk Fountain* and L.E.D. Arcade at Friendship Plaza, both in Bethesda, MD. In 2006 the Katzen Arts Center presented her *Small Wonders* exhibit. Represented locally by the

Marsha Mateyka Gallery, she has had three solo exhibitions there- the latest this spring. (In earlier years, she had seven solo exhibitions in New York galleries.)

A retrospective of Athena's public art models, landscape sculptures and photographs, *With/in Nature*, is currently on view in the Domestic Arts Building at Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, New Jersey, through March 2014. It includes the maquette *LabyrIntbos*, for a future temporary outdoor sculpture to be installed at Grounds for Sculpture.

While a retrospective often marks the culmination of a career, not so for Athena. She has not retired from making art, just from entering competitions. (Suffice it to say that of the 150 competitions in which she was a finalist, she won 50.) She is now making finished small sculptures — not maquettes — and is doing a lot of photography: she has begun a series with photos of Petra, Jordan, on the theme

Life of the Wind and Water. She is also "re-inventing" older work she had previously done, such as her series *Caterpillars* — making new sculptures from their tiny models.



Light Obelisk Fountain,
30 x 30 ft



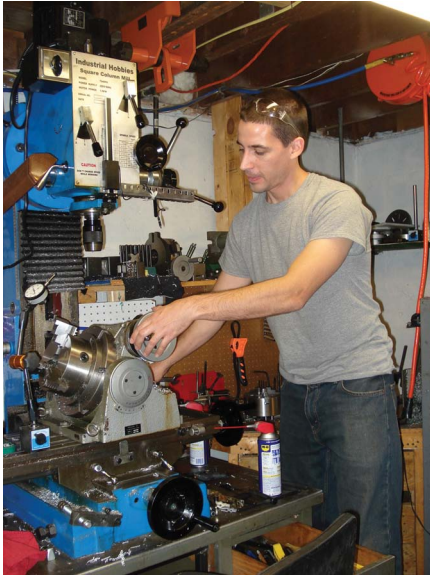
Mubammed Ali Plaza (aerial view)

In contemplating the course of this highly productive artist's career, just presenting the highlights chronologically would take pages. She and her art historian husband have just spent six months cataloging her entire oeuvre of over 1560 separate listings, currently available on line. <<http://oberlin.edu/faculty/atacha/Catalogue.html>>

In her own words, an excerpt from *Rhythm as Structure* (1977) allows a glimpse into the complexity that is Athena Tacha's art:

Since my work needs to be walked on and lived with in order to become fully communicable, it ideally should be located in public places. Like other artists, I am consciously breaking away from the 20th century tradition of having art concentrate on its own ontological questions — a highly specialized direction. I would welcome a link with the general public, a social or urban function for my art — such as its being a square or a park. I would like my art not to be set apart as art, looked at with awe or antagonism, but to exist in the context of daily life. In this way, I would hope that the average person, crossing the work routinely, would absorb unconsciously my message, just as Romans get into their marrow part of the meaning of the Spanish steps or St. Peter's square. I would hope that through my work, as with Indian dance, people's bodies can eventually capture an echo of the rhythms that permeate the universe as I see it — in constant flow.

Chris Bathgate



Chris in his studio

Chris Bathgate is a very complex man — not only a sculptor, but a philosopher/craftsman/inventor/computer genius. His methodology is driven by his perception of our relationship with technology: he avers that we are biologically “limited” in that we are essentially hunter-gatherers, “set up” to undertake tasks in reaction to the challenge of the moment, but ill equipped to do repetitive tasks. On the other hand, that’s what machines do best. If the machine doesn’t exist to do a task Chris needs to be done, he designs and builds one, e.g. his home-made 3D printer was cobbled together from the parts of a salvaged treadmill and a variety of other mechanical parts he had on hand. Similarly, he adapted a mere milling machine to latch on to a hunk of aluminum, move it in every

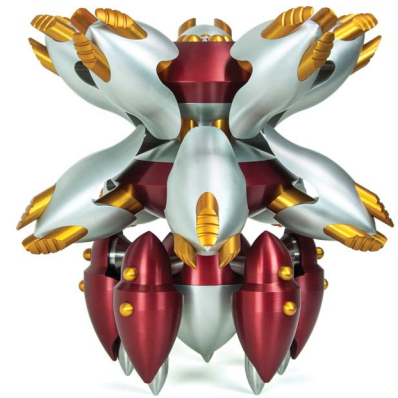
direction to allow the removal of precisely programmed sections of material to attain the ultimately desired shape. And soon there is a finished component, accomplished with a precision imperceptible to the human eye, to be added to other components, resulting in another piece of meticulous, flawless, perfectly finished artwork.

Make no mistake, the computerization of manual machines, rather than making the work simpler, adds greater complexity in the conception, programming, and creation of a piece. Just the process of learning the essential geometry alone defies my imagination.

Chris describes himself as a self-taught machinist sculptor whose work reflects



TI 524422363, 2011, machined copper, stainless steel, bronze, aluminum, 6 x 4.5 x 2.5 in



UN 712254435523314645, 2013, machined aluminum, stainless steel, 14 x 13 x 13 in

an “intellectual (as opposed to emotional) humanism.” On first seeing Chris’s finished pieces, they struck me as being like artifacts from a remote and technologically superior civilization. There is a totemic, ritualistic quality to them that somehow softens their machined exactitude.

The room where Chris displays many of his completed pieces is his “man cave room.” It contains a large, stuffed very dead bear, the head of a boar, and a built-in beer dispenser (which he of course makes himself). Is the ultra-sophistication of his hard-edge work somewhat mollified by this primal evidence of his hunter-gatherer heredity?

When I asked about conceptual art or collaboration, he literally cringed at the idea. In his words “I feel a profound sense of loss when trying to imagine myself trying to work in such a mode.” His is totally a hands-on approach to making work; his personal involvement at every level of its creation is an imperative. Chris is also a very private man. He needed a bit of bullying just to allow me to take his picture — uncomfortable about how to pose himself.

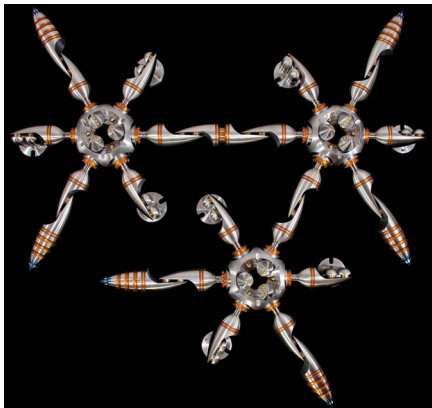
At 19, Chris dropped out of Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) and worked at repairing VWs for a year. He did a lot of

The room where Chris displays many of his completed pieces is his “man cave room.”

welding. Using this skill, he started bending and shaping metal pieces, combining “drippy shapes” and hard edges. He got a milling machine and was soon making precision parts — it took much time but he was captivated by the process. He spent 11 years mastering his craft while supporting himself working for a specialty contractor, doing fire code maintenance for hospitals. Oddly enough, it was his art that led him to innovate at his day job, using the skills he had learned building custom machines to develop a system for testing and maintaining devices used to cut off the air flow in ducts to prevent fire/smoke from spreading).

For the last three years he has supported himself solely as an artist. Due to the time consuming nature of his process, he is only able to make about 10-12 pieces a year. He primarily sells works straight out of his studio and many of his patrons buy works having never actually seen the works in person, relying solely on images of the work on which to base their decision to purchase. Normally a buyer purchases more than one piece — Chris tends to create collectors. Apparently if you like his work, you love his work!

Represented in galleries in Santa Fe and Chicago, Chris has also shown at the Museum of Arts and Design in NYC and



ML.622254434732323, 2012, machined aluminum, brass bronze, stainless steel, 64.5 x 67 x 10.5 in



IT 934445512224843614735, 2013, machined aluminum, stainless steel and bronze, 6 x 4.5 x 4.5 in



SO 83553333216612453, 2012, machined aluminum, stainless steel, 64.5 x 67 x 10.5 in



DC355554254645, 2012, machined aluminum, bronze, copper, stainless steel, 20 x 37 x 24.5 in

the Ratner Museum in Bethesda. He has received two Pollack-Krasner Foundation grants (2007 and 2011); the Creative Baltimore grant in 2008 and a Baker “B grant” in 2012, with the winning work exhibited in the Baltimore Museum of Art. He is booked for a show at the Strathmore Mansion in Rockville MD in January 2015 and also the Gowanus Ballroom in Brooklyn for early spring.

For the future, Chris anticipates no substantive change of direction, anticipating instead an incremental organic growth in his work, just as his welding naturally

grew into what he’s now doing. He sees a likelihood of robotics entering the production process, but only with his complete mastering of the process, not allowing the possibility of being mastered by it — a continuation of his strong need to control every gesture involved in the creation of his work. process most closely resembles that of a machine builder or engineer.

(For a detailed description of his process and biography, honors and accomplishments, go to <chrisbathgate.com> or his handsome book *Chris Bathgate Metal Works*.)

Rima Schulkind

Profiling Rima Schulkind as WSG celebrates its 30th anniversary is an intimidating task. How can one describe her artistic talents in several genres and her innumerable contributions to the metropolitan art scene, most especially the Washington Sculptors Group? A nationally successful ceramicist, an accomplished award-winning sculptor, a writer about artistic endeavors, a long-time WSG board member and founder and editor of this publication, her impact on WSG is impossible to adequately embrace.



Garden Gate with Kudzu, stoneware, walnut, kudzu, 33 x 19 x 20 in

Growing up in Manhattan, Rima stumbled onto the Metropolitan Museum at around age nine and found a haven where she subsequently spent many happy hours. After moving to Washington as a teenager, she replaced the Met with the Phillips Collection, and again spent many satisfying hours, often doing her homework on the sofa near the grand piano under the *Afternoon of the Boating Party*.

Early social awareness led her to major in sociology at G.W. But the disappointing realization that she really couldn't change the world turned her ultimately to art. When her children were mid-adolescents, she and her closest friend discovered clay and thought it would be wonderful to make pottery, open a ceramics shop, and "live happily ever after." That dream didn't become reality, but Rima stayed with clay, took courses at Montgomery College, private lessons with Ebby Malmgren, and hung out at Hinckley Pottery and Glen Echo.

After a year of daily attendance at one or more "clay thing," she opened her own in-house studio and began making "art pottery," first in very delicate porcelain, then, tiring of delicacy, in rustic and pit-fired stoneware, followed by labor intensive low-fire vessels. As her pieces became more and more in demand at craft galleries, she had to hire several assistants to do the sanding and under-glazing, until finally, overwhelmed by the feeling of being more factory than creative artist, she sent a "Dear John" letter to

the thirty-some galleries across the country that carried her work, saying that there wouldn't be any more. Their response that she should only double her prices, as many of them had long before already done, added anger to her angst and confirmed her decision.

Rima joined Touchstone Gallery in the mid '70s as a potter. Her work then moved from vessel forms into more sculptural but still ceramic pieces and further to work in such industrial materials as plexiglass, plastics, neon, paper, cement, and metal. In her latest work, she has returned more and more to including ceramic elements, often blended with such natural elements as reed, vine, and stone. No matter the medium, repetition of component shapes and a focus on the void are frequent themes. After a Cleveland art consultant saw her painted ceramic shapes and neon on plexiglass in the NYC Javits Center 1988 ArtExpo show, she spent the next seven years delivering commissions to wealthy Cleveland clients, each wanting similar pieces, "only bigger." (Rima's husband dubbed them the Stepford Wives of Art!)

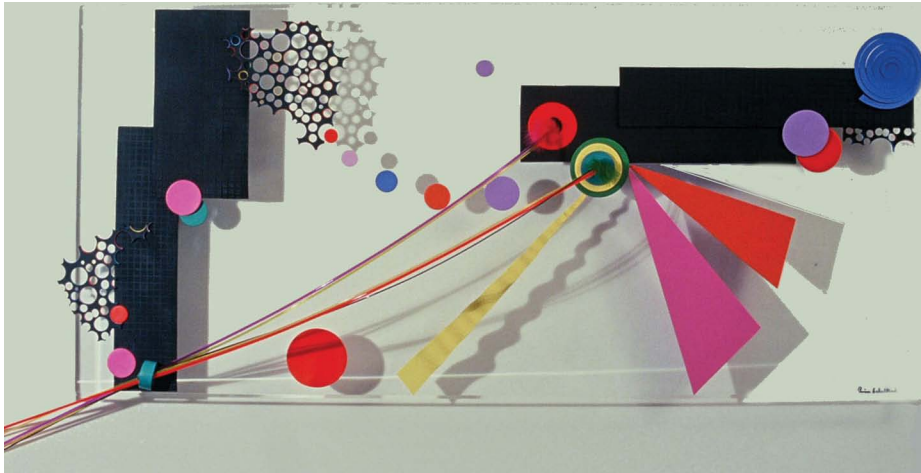
A most rewarding moment in the mid '90s came when a major collector, David Dobkin, saw a piece at the Brookside Gardens show and phoned her saying, "I have the largest private outdoor sculpture collection in the northeast and want you to deliver [that piece] to me when the show closes." It was installed on a platform that, combined with its lighting, probably cost him twice as much as he paid for the piece.

When I asked Rima if her activism as an ardent progressive found its way into her art, she replied that even though her work is abstract, being a word person, she names everything thoughtfully. "The rebels in Nicaragua named their successful revolution 'The Triumph,' so I gave that name to a series of pieces and the buyers had no idea! The only really representational work



Meditation on the Void, polymer cement, 100 x 108 x 14 in

I've done was my series of women's torsos, *Her Infinite Variety*, that addressed the different aspects of woman: social, political, powerful, religious, humorous, wicked, venial, pure — from a strongly feminist perspective."



Revels and Revelations, painted ceramic, acrylic rods, pexiglass,
36 x 90 x 6 in



Vision, porcelain, sculpture paste,
22 x 18 x 1.5 in

Rima has been a frequent writer on art over the last four decades, with critiques and articles in *Eye Wash*, *Koan*, *Sculpture* magazine and, as founder, writer and editor of this WSG publication. She sees writing criticism as a “selfish” activity, in that it enhances her own viewing experience by making her look at art in a more intense and objective way. Like everyone else, she says, she is mentally and physically lazy and “looking at each piece with a different set of eyes and different head, make me better than I usually am.” She finds interviewing for WSG a great joy that provides her the privilege of meeting fascinating artists and members of the Washington art illuminati.

Teaching also provides much satisfaction. (She has taught in a homeless shelter, a jail, and with private students in her studio.) She has felt fortunate for the last ten years to have traded art lessons for the two sons of her computer guru in exchange for technical assistance. The eldest spent one morning a week in her studio for five or six years, winning prizes in every exhibition he entered. Now the younger is studying with her and also entering competitions and winning prizes. After exhausting a variety of materials and projects, they now spend their time viewing art at galleries and museums. This experience, she says, pushed her to explore materials, directions, logistics and design concepts that she would not have otherwise. She says it’s enhancing to “climb out of your own box” this way.

Being an active member of a variety of art organizations — Touchstone Gallery, Art-O-Matic, WSG, a monthly women artists’ group — counters for Rima the solitary aspect of artistic creation with an involvement and interactivity with others that she needs.

When I asked her about how she regards contemporary directions in sculpture, she reminded me of an experience at Baltimore’s Creative Alliance where she was paired for a showing of her work with directors of two alternative art venues. They both agreed that her work was “merely beautiful, elegant, and well executed and, therefore, irrelevant” (although, ironically, one of them was interested in buying one of her pieces). The direction sculpture was taking, they declared, even more so than other art forms, was conceptual, ephemeral, de-objectified. She declares, “I’m not getting on that train.”

Rima has been with an artist-owned gallery for 35 years, has had solo shows in New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Cleveland among others, and won many prizes. Her most recent success exemplifies her rich career: a piece she entered in a competition was sold, won her a check for best in show, and garnered the competition’s first prize of a solo exhibition, her latest show. Her goal as a sculptor is what she says we all want: “the regard of sculptors I admire.”

A compulsive recycler who “hates to waste anything,” Rima recently picked up some left-over materials and her hands and brain synchronized without her consciousness impeding — and aha! she had created a piece she really liked — one that both removed that nearly universal self-doubt that many of us have of being “only a pretend-artist” and provided confirmation of her genuine artistic merit. Her peers in the region’s art community don’t need to rely upon just one “aha!” moment to recognize her contributions — as writer, mentor/teacher, activist, organizer/innovator, and serious artist.

— Minna Newman Nathanson

Robert Cole *continued from page 5*

the decommissioning of its presses made of components of the press itself with (at Roberts' insistence) a depiction of a pressman.

Beyond the local area, he won a gold medal for *Madre Della Pace* at the 2003 Florence Biennale, then installed at the Merriweather Post Pavilion in Columbia.

Far more than solely being a productive artist, Robert was both a mentor and teacher, helping to train and set up young beginning sculptors. He did not believe in apprenticeship with its potential for dysfunction: he *hired* workers for their services and dependability and taught them through the hands-on workday routine. His hires learned not only the process and logistics of sculpture making, but also absorbed the work ethic he exemplified.

Robert's early studies in architecture, theater and painting, gave way to the three-dimensional work initiated by building models for creative home furnishings. This was followed first by polyester resin sculptures both abstract and figurative, then by twelve years of designing and building stringed instruments (conforming to traditional instrument design but also inventing his own instruments, e.g., one that is a cross between a viola and a cello). He then began carving sculptures in wood and stone. Ultimately, he arrived at what filled the last decades of his career: welded steel sculpture, mainly of the human figure, using the direct metal technique that allows for spontaneity without having to hew to pre-designed models and plans. He wanted to be able to make every piece in his own studio with his own hands, and with no limit on scale or durability. Thus, he maintained complete control of each piece, from design to completion.

As Susan spoke about his life and career, an image of him emerged

that could be summed up in a single word — integrity. It suffused his relationships both personal and professional, his work, and his philosophy. In addition to putting in long studio hours, he was an avid reader, and he and Susan had active musical lives that attracted and “spawned” other musicians. He was active in their community, generating and supporting art events, musical and theatrical happenings (such as the Fringe productions). And, despite his high standards and strong work ethic, he knew how to enjoy a full and rich life with their large and diverse circle of friends.

Some shared thoughts:

Barton Rubenstein: *Robert...was extremely kind and helpful to me. As a budding sculptor, he gave me a lot of advice...about materials and tools... Because of his kindness, especially in the beginning of my career, I have always made myself available to anyone who seeks my advice on similar matters, all the time thinking of Robert's kindness... As they say, one kind act begets another! I will miss Robert, his kind soul, his generous spirit, and love of life!*

Alan Binstock: *Robert was a uniquely focused artist. A mix of strength, talent and tenacity, he challenged the status quo and produced a prodigious volume of figurative sculpture in hand wrought, welded, stainless steel.*

For *Washington Post* obituary go to <http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/robert-t-cole-artist-and-metal-sculptor-dies-at-74/2013/11/16/e7cc600a-4ca0-11e3-ac54-aa84301ced81_story.html>

— *Rima Schulkind*

See *Washington Sculptors* images in color at <www.washingtonsculptors.org>



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