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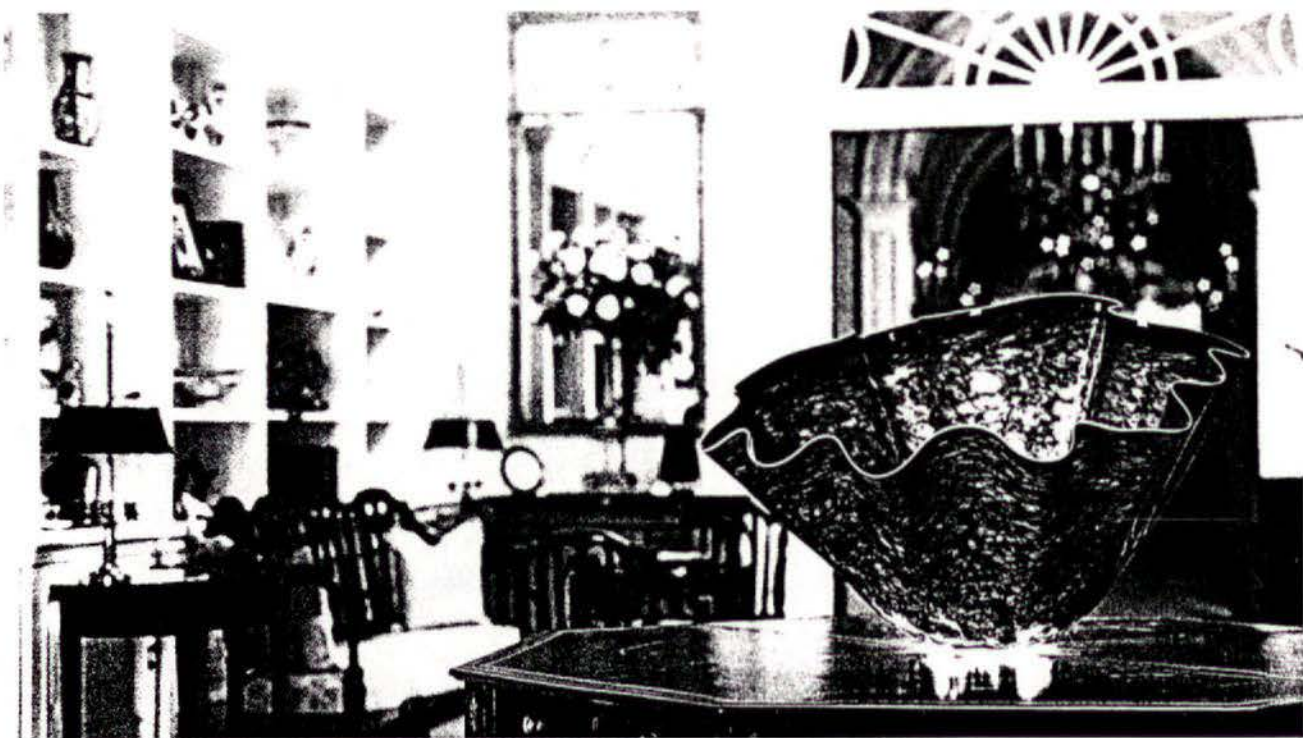


Contemporary crafts
find a home in the
White House (p. 52)

By Phil Patton

Today's crafts join our nation's past at the White House

More than 75 craft artists have contributed to the new collection, which is currently on view at the National Museum of American Art



Dale Chihuly's scalloped blown-glass sculpture is right at home in the Center Hall of the White House.

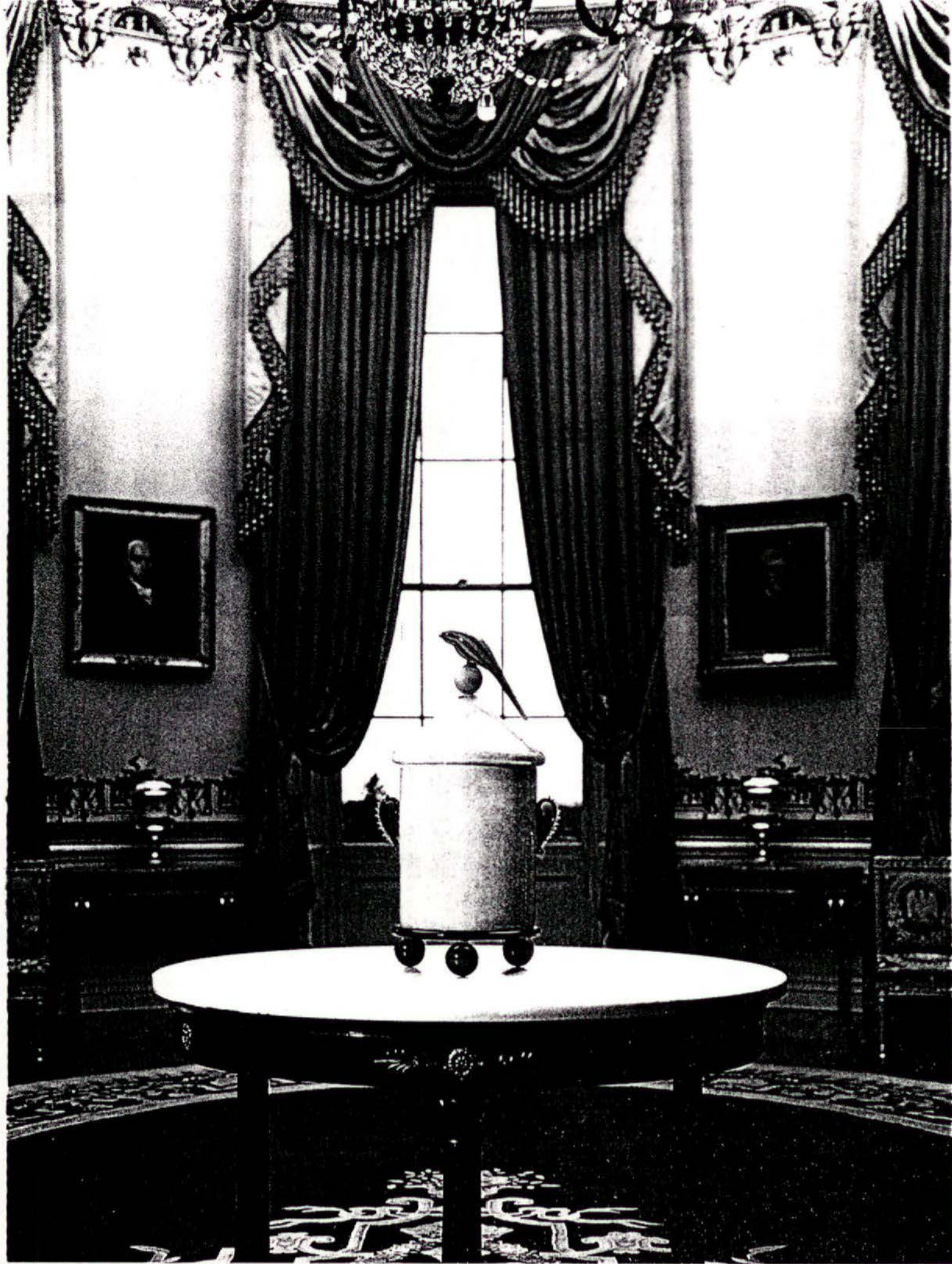
Presidential portraits in the Blue Room (opposite) preside over David Levi's two-foot-high *Bird Jar*.

Two graceful yellow shapes, evoking those of ancient Greece, sit on an antique table. Outside, through the window, the Washington Monument rises against a bright autumn sky. In the Yellow Oval Room of the White House, the two glass vases by craftsman Dante Marioni, one elongated and rising, the other wide and cuplike, seem at home. Pondered for a while, they suggest wading birds of two species, or perhaps even upright Don Quixote and squat Sancho Panza (see cover).

But for a few months, Marioni's work, along with those of 76 other contemporary American craft artists,

have left the White House, traveling across town to the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art (NMAA), where they will be on view until September 4. In the words of First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, the show illustrates "the extraordinary beauty and diversity of American craftsmanship." For those who cannot come to Washington, a catalog of the show, *The White House Collection of American Crafts*, is being published by Harry N. Abrams. Moreover, thanks to a grant from MCI, a tour of the exhibit will be available on the World Wide Web, a part of the Internet, complete with images,

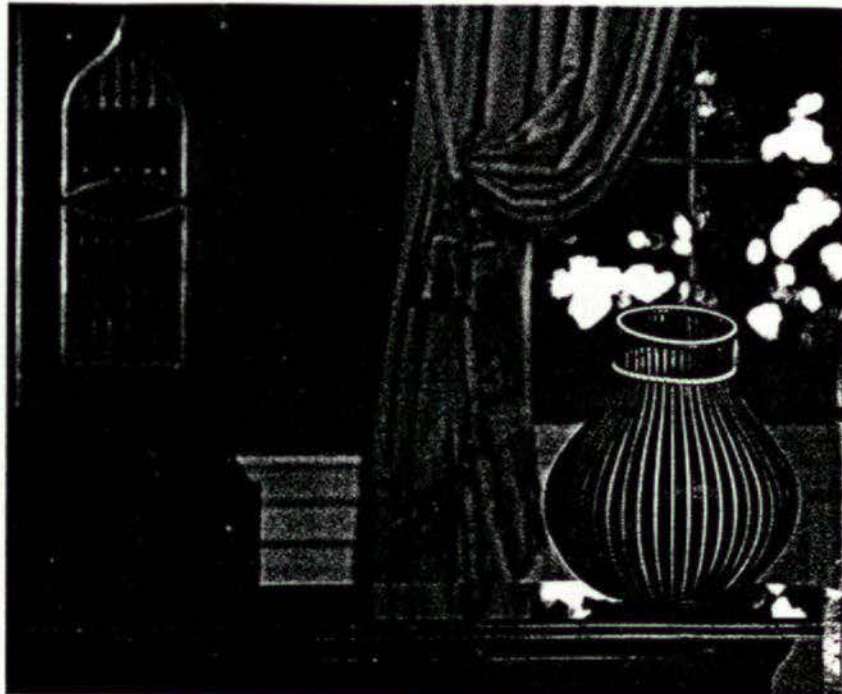
Photographs by John Bigelow Taylor





Imago Bag by Kate Vogel and John Littleton, in the Entrance Hall, looks soft but is actually glass.

Sharon and Leon Nichues created their *Eburna* basket using white oak, waxed linen thread and coralberry.



Ronald Fleming's lathe-turned, carved redwood-burl bowl resonates with the rich wood of a Red Room table.

Anne Hirondelle's stoneware teapots are a natural fit with the Diplomatic Reception Room's 1834 wallpaper.



descriptions, sound and video clips. This breaks new ground; it is part of the museum's goal of reaching people who can't travel to its stately premises.

The juxtaposition of high-tech and handmade may at first seem incongruous but, in fact, the show reveals a wonderful congruence between these seeming opposites. Creating computer programs is a craft of its own, demanding talent and skill. And many crafts are more high-tech than we might think, using advanced tools and materials to leverage the vision of the hand.

"There's a lot of technology to crafts," muses the show's curator, Michael Monroe, "and we were interested in showing the connection." Monroe cites Edward Moulthrop, originally trained as an architect, who produces huge turned wood bowls. Moulthrop soaks the wood for three months in polyethylene glycol, a chemical solution that keeps the wood from shrinking or cracking. Only this solution allows Moulthrop to work pieces of wood this size. Another craft artist, Sidney Hutter, uses glues cured by ultraviolet light to bond pieces of glass. These glues, developed for the electronics and glass industries, lend a seeming fragility to the spiral patterns of Hutter's *White House Vase #1*.

The crafts collection grew out of a 1992 proclamation by President George Bush that designated 1993 as the Year of American Craft. After Mrs. Clinton's arrival at the White House, she talked with Monroe, curator-in-charge of the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery, which is a part of the NMAA. Together, they came up with the idea of decorating the White House Christmas tree with hand-crafted ornaments. Over a single weekend, Monroe worked feverishly to contact craft artists, asking them to send ornaments. Enough were received to decorate not only the White House's ceiling-high Fraser fir but seven other small trees as well.

Seeking to expand on that project, Mrs. Clinton and Monroe decided to assemble a group of larger crafts items for the White House itself. Monroe compiled a list of potential artists, expecting only about half of those he contacted to agree to donate work. Once the idea was born, "I made up the list in 48 hours," Monroe recalls, his eyes gleaming with mischief. The short time period is a sign not of carelessness but of connoisseurship; Monroe is one of only a handful of people well enough informed about the crafts world to make such decisions so rapidly. All 77 of the craft artists agreed to participate.

When the works arrived, they were placed on Duncan Phyfe tables and historic marble mantels in time for Christmas at the White House. Some of the pieces were used to serve foreign leaders being entertained by the President and First Lady; others became centerpieces

for Presidential dinners. About a million visitors to the White House also saw them, but Monroe dreamed of showing the works to many more people than that. Since the Renwick Gallery's schedule was full, the exhibit was planned for the NMAA.

In placing the pieces in the White House, Monroe worked carefully to find locations where they would be particularly effective, although they will be rotated from time to time. Master glass artist Dale Chihuly's *Cerulean Blue Macchia with Chartreuse Lip Wrap*, a form that resembles a huge sea scallop dipped in rainbows, repeats the scalloped pattern of the fanlight in the Center Hall. David Levi conceived his *Bird Jar* with the Blue Room in mind; the arabesque of the blue bird on the jar's top contributes to the sense of calm in the elegant room, where portraits of Madison and Jefferson hang. Ronald Fleming's leaf-inspired, redwood-burl bowl rises like spring growth in the Red Room. Graceful, wheel-thrown stoneware bottles by Michael Sherrill sit near a portrait of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

The fine-art quality of craft

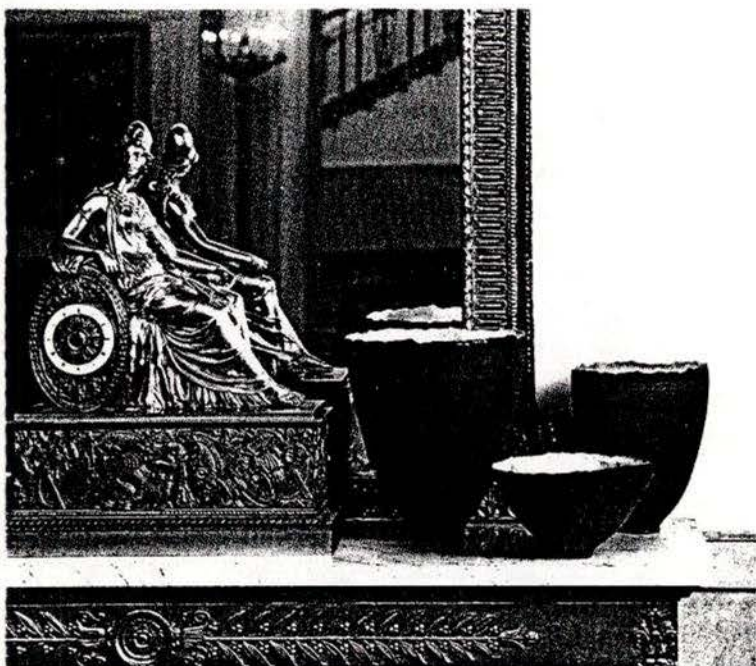
All of the craft artists were surprised and delighted when Monroe originally contacted them. Nathan Youngblood—who studied with his grandmother, Margaret Tafoya, one of the last of the traditional Pueblo potters—went to the White House after his piece was put on exhibit. It was a great honor, he says, to see his *Black Carved Jar* in the stately Cross Hall. "In the last 25 years," adds Youngblood, "artists have taken pottery to such a level that people are beginning to understand there is a possibility of its being fine-art quality and not just craft."

For his part, Monroe is little concerned with defining crafts or distinguishing them from high art or folk art. And while the NMAA is renowned for its collections of high art and folk art, including self-taught art, the distinctions that NMAA director Elizabeth Broun sees are not based on function or hierarchy. To her, what distinguishes craft is a highly sophisticated understanding of materials and process; they are at the heart of the creative experience. "We don't pretend the categories are divine revelation," Broun says, "but they are useful and practical."

To be sure, crafts suffer from a bad image with the public at large. The term carries connotations of baskets made from kits and of low technology, in contrast with "high" arts such as oil painting or bronze sculpture. Part of this, to Monroe, has to do with simple ignorance of history. "In the early Renaissance," he points out, "at the top of the hierarchy of artists was the goldsmith."

In the West, the idea of crafts as a category separate from fine art emerged as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, as crafts came to be seen as a handmade, humanistic alternative to the "soul-deadening" ma-

Phil Patton wrote Made in USA: The Secret Histories of the Things that Made America. In June 1993 he wrote on the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago.



A French pier table bought by President James Monroe in 1817 holds *Prayer Bowls*, made by Cheryl Williams.

chine. This is the tradition of William Morris in England and of Gustav Stickley in the United States. In the White House itself, the appreciation of crafts as art was evident as early as 1882, when the otherwise little-remembered President Chester Arthur commissioned Louis Comfort Tiffany to create a floor-to-ceiling stained-glass screen for the Cross Hall (it remained there until 1902).

During the 1930s, when the Depression and the New Deal moved the country into a retrospective mood, there was rising consciousness of crafts as both a historical legacy to be documented and a living, evolving set of traditions. Schools such as Penland in North Carolina, Otis (now Otis Parsons) in California and Cranbrook in Michigan developed programs to keep the crafts vital.

The American Craft Museum was established in 1956 just down the street from the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. In 1972 the Renwick Gallery, housed in a French Second Empire building next door to Blair House, the Presidential guest residence, became the nation's official crafts museum. Since Michael Monroe became curator-in-charge in 1986, the Renwick has broadened its role in the field of crafts, publishing books in the "Contemporary American Craft Series" and mounting exhibitions on everything from silverware to quilts.

For the designers of the current exhibition, an evolution in the ways that art is presented to the public seemed to match the theme of the evolution of the crafts themselves. Steve Dietz of the NMAA conceived the idea

of juxtaposing crafts and computers with a version of the show on the Internet. "It lets you go into the White House in a way you could not otherwise do," he says one day while planning the virtual exhibition. He sees many ways of organizing the images and information. "We will have an electronic light table," Dietz says, where images will appear on a computer screen like slides laid out. "Clicking" on one of these little images will cause a screen-size image to appear along with a caption. Other planned features include a look at a map of the United States showing where the craft artists live; clicking on their names will call up further information, including videotaped interviews with many of them. Viewers can also take a guided tour of the exhibit with Michael Monroe or put together a personal tour, "navigating" with the computer mouse.

All this, of course, is not the same as visiting the actual exhibition, but many people do not have the choice of a real visit. The computer tour will be accessible to people around the globe, and this version of the show will never go "out of print"; it will live on inside a pizza-box-size computer on the first floor of the NMAA (the address is <http://www.nmaa.si.edu>).

One floor above that computer, in the grand barrel-vaulted and granite-columned office of director Elizabeth Broun, the exhibition's planning group met in February to discuss the Internet version of the show. One couldn't help but notice that Broun's carefully hand-crafted desk contrasts with the computer that sits on it.

At the meeting, there's a lot of talk of "hypertext markup language" and "built-on-the-fly databases." Michael Monroe rolls his eyes and smiles at the strangeness of it all. He has never seen the World Wide Web, but he has a number of very good ideas nonetheless. He has gotten images from the craft artists themselves; he has a list of those who are willing to be interviewed on videotape in their studios.

For Elizabeth Broun, there are concerns. "We're getting into all kinds of uncharted territory here," she says. How will visitors react to the idea of a stationary camera that will provide images of the exhibition spaces over the Internet? Why is it useful? "It reinforces the metaphor that you are there," says Steve Dietz.

Will there be enough telephone capacity if the virtual exhibition becomes very popular? "We call it the 'success disaster,'" Dietz laughs.

In the end, what they agree on is that the virtual exhibition must be as carefully put together as the real one, as elegant in form as the objects in the show. Says Dietz, "It has to be crafted by hand—so to speak."

Michael Sherrill's *Incandescent Bottles* echo Aaron Shikler's 1970 portrait of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.



White House Collection Of Crafts

In cooperation with the White House, the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution will present "The White House Collection of American Crafts" from April 28 through September 4.

"The President and I are delighted that this magnificent collection of American crafts will be on display at the National Museum of American Art. The pieces represent the extraordinary beauty and diversity of American craftsmanship as well as the generous spirit of our artists," said Hillary Rodham Clinton. "It is my hope that this exhibition will help further appreciation of crafts as one of our most vital cultural forms."

"This is an exciting moment as well as a significant one for the National Museum of American Art and everyone interested in crafts," Elizabeth Broun, the museum's director, said. "The President and Mrs. Clinton have taken a special interest in our nation's craft art, reflected in their efforts to collect and display these objects at the White

House. We are honored to work with them to bring the White House craft collection to the museum."

The exhibition was organized by the National Museum of American Art. The accompanying virtual tour on the Internet was made possible by MCI. A book with especially commissioned photographs of the objects in the White House public and private rooms will be published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., in May.

This unique collection of seventy-two objects was formed in 1993 with the encouragement of the Clintons in honor of the Year of American Craft. Contemporary glass, ceramic, fiber, wood, and metal works were selected for the White House by Michael W. Monroe, curator-in-charge of the National Museum of American Art's Renwick Gallery. Most works were donated by their makers; four are gifts of artists' patrons.

"We sought out key pieces from an outstanding group of craft artists at different stages in their careers, chosen for the ex-

cellence of their vision and technique," Monroe said. They come from all parts of the United States and represent many different craft traditions. It was important to the Clintons that the works signal the range of what is being achieved by American craftspeople today. The collection ranges from utilitarian pieces to purely decorative and sculptural forms."

The White House Collection of American Crafts was first introduced at the White House during the 1993 holiday season. The objects were carefully integrated by Michael Monroe into period settings in the White House among paintings, sculpture, antique furniture, decorative art, and memorabilia of historical significance. To date, the works have been enjoyed by well over one million visitors to the White House. The crafts will be on view again in the White House after the exhibition.

The collection consists of nine metal pieces (silver, copper, gold, and bronze); three quilts; seventeen turned wood vessels; eighteen ceramic bowls, teapots, and jars; sixteen pieces of blown glass; three pieces of wooden furniture; three baskets; one textile figure form; and one piece of jewelry. These works of art are distinguished by remarkable individuality and often a twist of humor.

Teapots include Ralph Bacerra's earthenware pot in a saturated hue of red, molded from a tree trunk and twigs and accented with 24 karat gold and geometric patterns. The decoration on a cocoa pot by Mara Superior was inspired by the graphic qualities of historic embroidered samplers and features drawn details including lettering, lace patterning, and a sprinkling of brown specks suggesting cocoa beans. A contrasting ceramic, James Watkins' double-walled and massive wheel-thrown cauldron, *Ritual Display*,

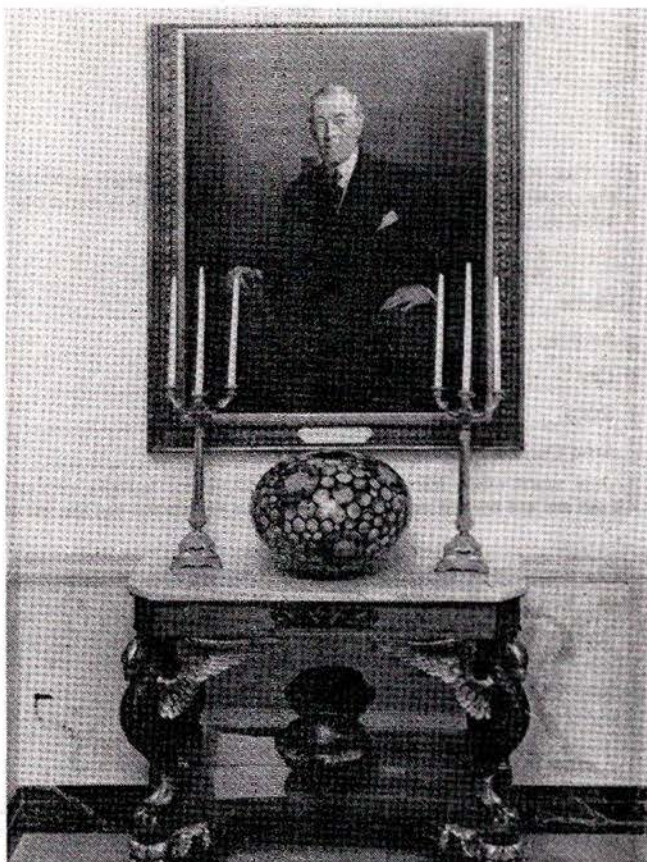
suggests the scorched walls of deep canyons.

A pair of forged-steel candlesticks by Albert Paley demonstrates his ability to coax fluid, sensual, and supple forms from an industrial material known for its rigidity. Susan Ewing's striking *OBOR 1 Coffee Server* of 24 karat goldplate over brass shows her concern with pure shapes and volumes and animating abstract forms for a utilitarian purpose.

Judy Dales' expressive quilt with a contoured border, *Spirit Flight*, combines a multitude of printed fabrics in soft hues to create a painterly flow of color in which an ethereal figure floats above the starry heavens. A very different work in fiber is the perfectly symmetrical *Basket #932* of natural white birch bark and silk thread by Dona Look.

A pair of free-form glass vessels constructed with layers and layers of brilliantly colored tiny glass threads by Mary Ann Toots Zynsky have been fused, slumped, and folded with heat. Dale Chihuly's large, sculptural blown-glass form, *Cerulean Blue Macchia with Chartreuse Lip Wrap*, appears to pulsate with its undulating shape and ever-changing blotches of raucous color.

Wood is represented by a number of works, including *White Pine Mosaic Bowl* by Philip Moulthrop, a bulbous sphere made of cross sections of white pine suspended in resin. This artist's father, Edward



White Pine Mosaic Bowl, Philip Moulthrop, top, and *Translucent Wood Bowl*, Ron Kent, bottom. Photographed on the Grand Staircase of the White House. On exhibit April 28 through September 4 at the National Museum of American Art.



New Beginnings, Ronald F. Fleming, redwood burl, lathe-turned, and carved. Gift of the artist, lent by the White House for an exhibition opening April 28 at the National Museum of American Art.

Moulthrop, contributed a lathe-turned bowl of ashleaf maple. Artist Wendell Castle presented *Presence Clock #7*, a sculptural timepiece of mahogany, bronze, brass, and curly maple that achieves a whimsical balance on an asymmetrical pedestal base. The hands of the clock droop

as if from exhaustion.

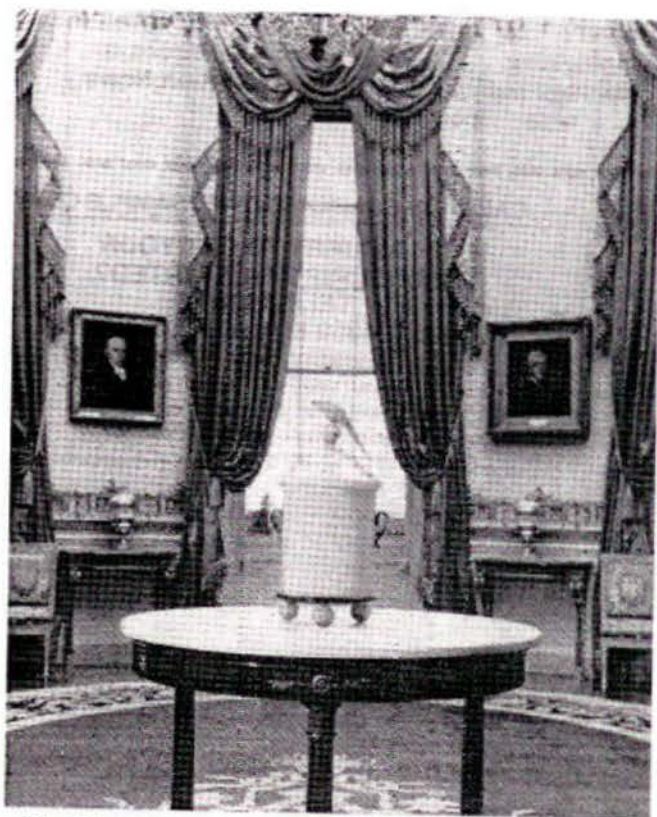
Joan Mondale, a potter herself, who, as the wife of Vice President Walter Mondale, collected crafts for the vice president's residence, contributed one of her stoneware bowls featuring a ribbed exterior and expressionistic calligraphic brushstrokes.

In addition to the father-son Moulthrops, other multiple generation craftmaking families are represented in the collection. Laney K. Oxman contributed a hand-built and wheel-thrown ceramic piece called *Feminine Nostalgia*, while her son, Zachary Oxman, donated a Hanukkah menorah of cast bronze, granite, and marble. Harvey Littleton, the founder of the modern studio-glass movement in the United States, is represented by a three-part blown-glass sculpture. His son and daughter-in-law, John Littleton and Kate Vogel, presented the White House with one of their sculptures of colorful blown glass.

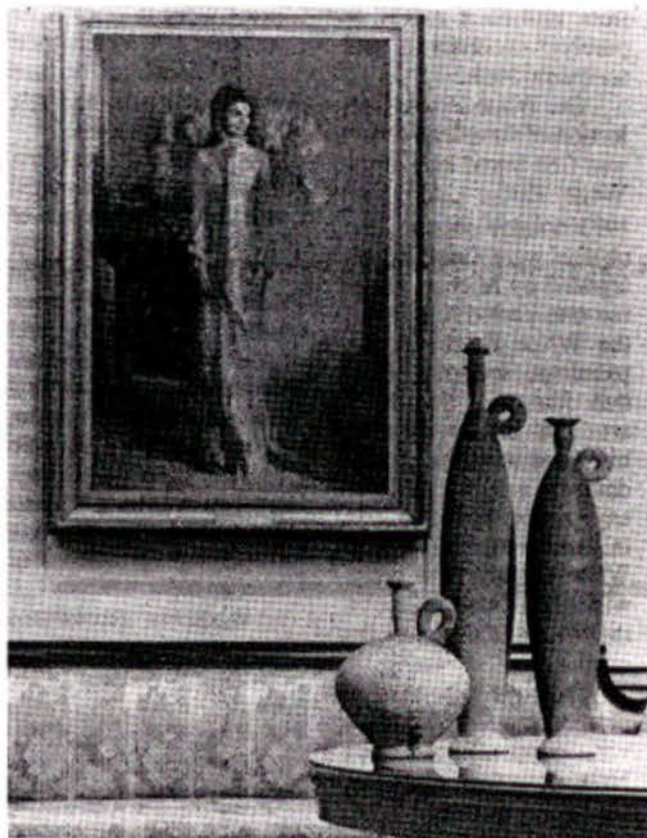
Interest in American crafts at the White House dates back at least to 1882, when President Arthur commissioned Louis Comfort Tiffany to create a colored glass screen for the Cross Hall. Previous



Photographed in the second floor Center Hall of the White House, *Cerulean Blue Macchia with Chartreuse Lip Wrap* by Dale Chihuly will be part of "The White House Collection of American Crafts" opening April 28 at the National Museum of American Art.



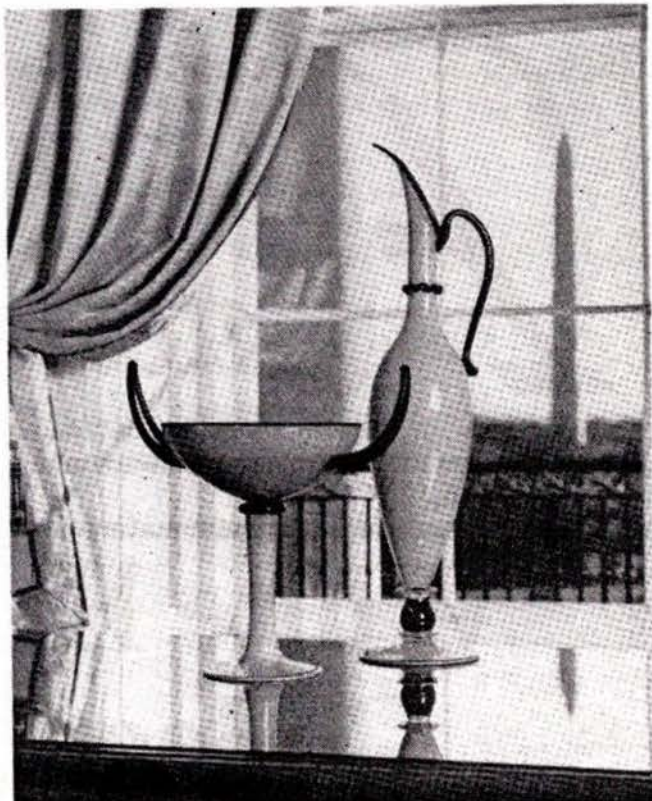
"The White House Collection of American Crafts" exhibit will open April 28 at the National Museum of American Art. David W. Levi's blown glass *Bird Jar*, photographed in the Blue Room of the White House, will be on exhibit.



Incandescent Bottles, Michael Sherrill, white stoneware, wheel-thrown, photographed in the Vermell Room of the White House. Sherrill's craft will be part of an exhibit opening April 28 at the National Museum of American Art.

first ladies known for promoting crafts include Ellen Wilson, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Rosalyn Carter.

In conjunction with the exhibition and with the support of MCI, the National Museum of American Art will present a virtual tour on the Internet of the White House Collection of American Crafts with Renwick Gallery curator-in-charge Michael Monroe. By clicking on a small photograph of each of the seventy-two crafts in the collection, electronic visitors will have a choice of hearing or reading Monroe's comments about the work and, in many cases, viewing a video clip of the artist. The Internet user can read about the history of the White House room where the object has been installed and at the same time see a full-screen image of the work. Using a map of the installation, electronic visitors can take a self-guided tour of the objects, accessing photographic, video, audio, and textual information. In addition, visitors can leave messages for the White House, the curator, and the artists. Since January Internet users have been able to visit National Museum



Yellow Pair, blown glass, gift of artist Dante Marioni to the White House, photographed in the Yellow Oval Room of the White House. The bowl and pitcher will be part of "The White House Collection of American Crafts" exhibit at the National Museum of American Art.

of American Art and Renwick Gallery collections and peruse related texts.

A series of free lectures will expand on the developments in contemporary crafts presented in the show. Tours of the exhibition will be offered weekdays at 1:30 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. Special group tours are available by reservation; call (202) 357-3111.

The opening of "The White House Collection of American Crafts" coincides with the annual

spring craft weekend of the national James Renwick Alliance, a support group for the Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art, and the annual Smithsonian Craft Show, April 27 to 30. For more information on the Smithsonian Craft Show sponsored by the Smithsonian Women's Committee, held this year for the first time at the National Building Museum, call (202) 357-2627, extension 121.

Made in U.S.A.

A sampling of American craft gets a new home — and respect — in the nation's capital

By Mary Daniels

TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

With the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art right across the street from the White House, it was quite natural for Hillary Rodham Clinton to turn to her neighbor for help when she decided to form the first official White House Crafts Collection, says Michael W. Monroe.

He is the curator in charge of the Renwick Gallery, a separate museum dedicated to exhibiting American craft of all periods and collecting 20th Century American craft.

Clinton asked Monroe "to find works that would work with the architecture of the White House," he says.

It was a major undertaking done in record time, one which has resulted in an exhibit (which opened April 28 at the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C.) and a book.

Until Sept. 4, the public will be able to see 72 contemporary craft objects by 77 artisans which have been displayed on a rotating basis in the Executive Mansion's public and private spaces since 1993.

If a trip to the nation's capital is out of the question, craft-lovers still can see the pieces in the book, "The White House Collection of American Crafts" by Michael W. Monroe (Harry N. Abrams Inc., \$35), which was published to coincide with the April opening of the exhibit. The book contains an essay by Barbara Lee Diamondstein, a former White

House staff assistant and the first director of cultural affairs of New York City, and 92 color photographs cataloging the exhibit.

The endeavor began serendipitously in 1993, when the White House participated in the celebration of the Year of American Craft. President Clinton and his wife invited more than 3,000 craft artists from across the U.S. to create ornaments with an angel theme for the official White House Christmas tree. When it was discovered that the Christmas tree needed a new skirt, Monroe says, quilters from each state were asked to do a segment of the skirt depicting characteristics of their home state.

Fitting in

The contributions by these craftspeople made the First Lady realize that there were many other places in the White House where American crafts could be displayed.

"The White House is filled with furniture, china, glassware, carpets, drapes, settees, sofas, which are exquisite examples of historical craftsmanship," says Monroe, a Wisconsin native who studied at the Art Institute of Chicago.

There are fireplace mantels, tabletops and bookshelves where crafts can be displayed, Monroe says.

"After identifying them, we took pictures of all the appropriate situations," he adds.

His next task was to find works that would fit into the room.

Judging by the book, he's made good matches. For example, the curator points out a work called

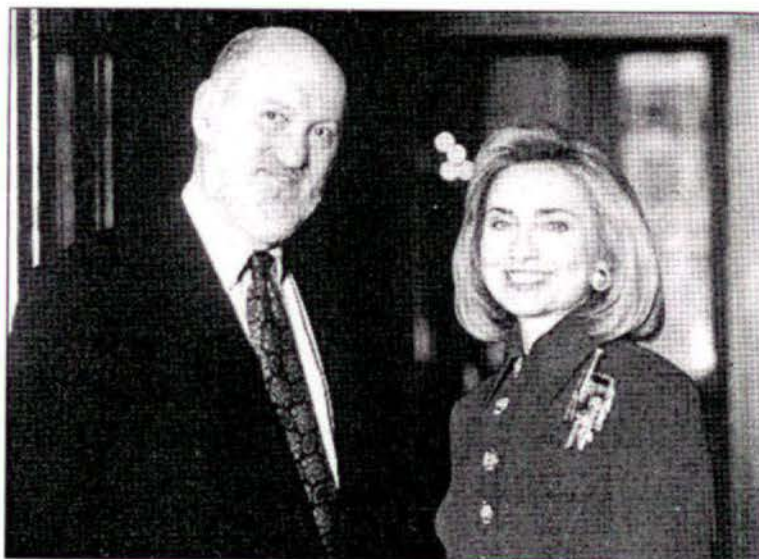


Photo by Nancy Ellison

Curator Michael Monroe with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton wearing brooch by William Harper

"New Beginnings," which is carved from a single burl of redwood in a design of individual overlapping leaves and says, "Look at the bowl of leaves by Ronald Fleming of Tulsa sitting in the Red Room, which is filled with mahogany furniture. You can see how that piece echoes against the carvings in that room."

Monroe also points out that there is a lot of gold leaf in the White House, and there are several pieces in the craft collection that incorporate gold leaf, such as the "Prayer Bowls" of Cheryl C. Williams, a ceramist from Eugene, Ore.

All shapes and sizes

Apart from texture and color, shapes were another consideration. Beneath a portrait of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis in the Vermeil Room, "an elongated interpretation of her," Monroe has placed the "Incandescent Bottles" of North Carolina artist Michael Sherrill. Monroe describes the bottles as "extenuated, long, tall and elegant vessels."

When making his overall choices, Monroe says he looked "not



Photo by John Bigelow Taylor, courtesy of the National Museum of American Art

Ken Carlson's Porcupine Basket

only for ideals of craftsmanship, but extraordinary vision" in the artists whose work he chose.

To show the full range of media used by the artists, Monroe covered five categories: clay, wood, fiber, glass and metal.

There are numerous examples of pieces made by a parent and pieces made by their child, which show the continuity of craft from one generation to another. One example is a piece of glass sculpture by Harvey Littleton, who is credited with reviving contemporary glass blowing, and another by his son John Littleton and John's wife, Kate Vogel, who also do glass blowing.

Monroe also wanted to represent the many ways that artists learn to do their craft. For example, Native American Nathan Youngblood of Santa Clara Pueblo, N.M., who donated a black carved jar to the collection, learned by the apprentice system, Monroe says. "Other people have gone to the highest, most sophisticated art schools," he says.

Both men and women and a range of ages are represented, from the self-taught furniture-maker Sam Maloof, who still is producing in his 80s, to 27-year-old Zachary Oxman of Virginia, who donated a menorah.

Artists' say

Most artists donated their pieces to the White House. Because of the short time frame (the book was started around Thanksgiving), most artists did not do special pieces for the White House, Monroe says. Two exceptions are "White House Vase #1" in cut, ground and polished plate glass by Sidney Hutter of Massachusetts, and a white earthenware vessel with a 24-karat gold interior called "The White House Bowl" by Bennett Bean of New Jersey.

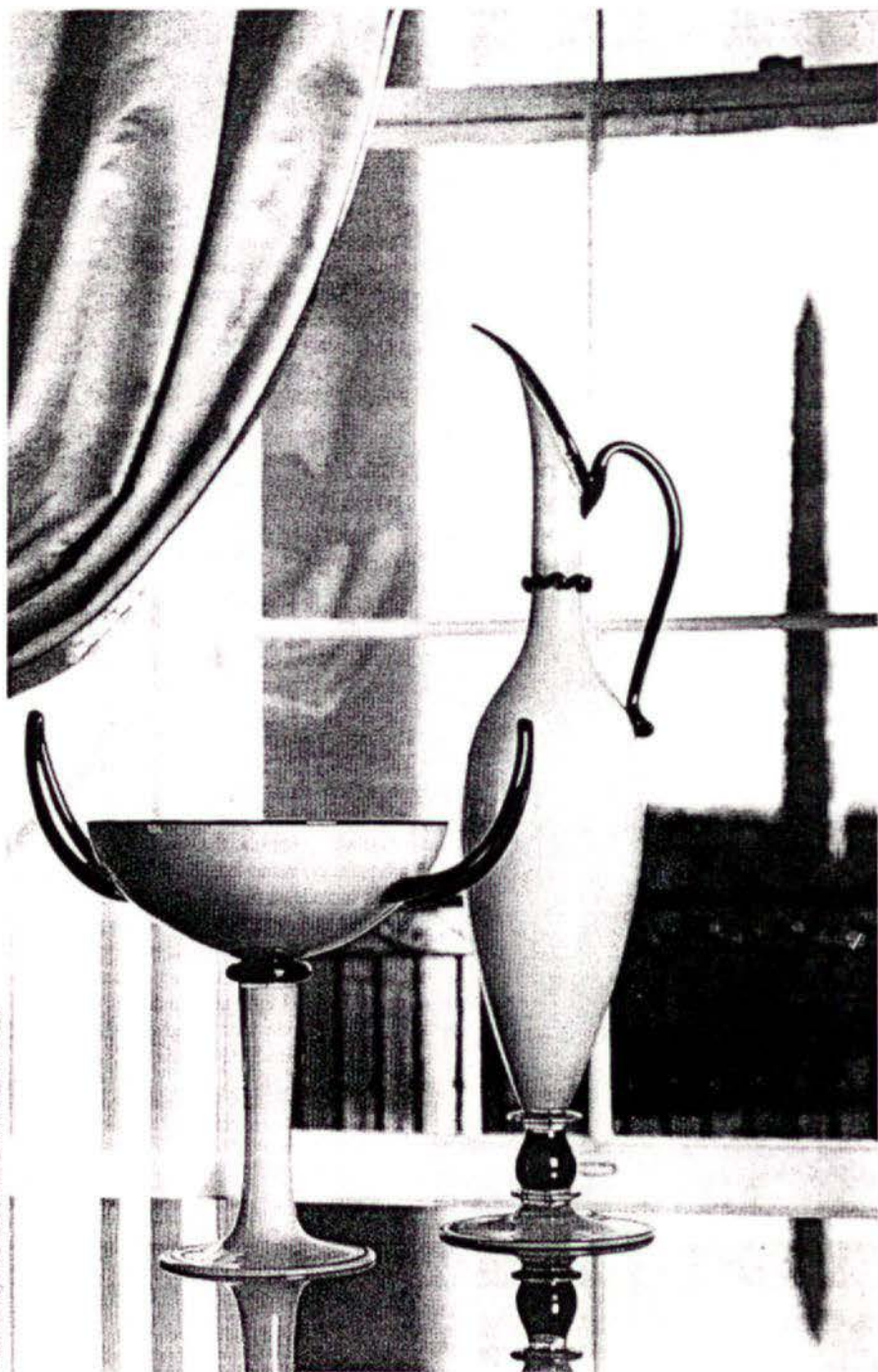
Many of the pieces in the exhibit already have been used as centerpieces for state dinners in the White House.

The artists in the show say they feel Monroe has done a good job.

Cheryl Williams went to the White House last year to see her work. "It's great the craft collection is in newspapers and magazines, giving people an overview of what's going on in the crafts world," she says. While relatively few have their work in the White House, she says, "there are thousands of artists out there."

Capital Crafts

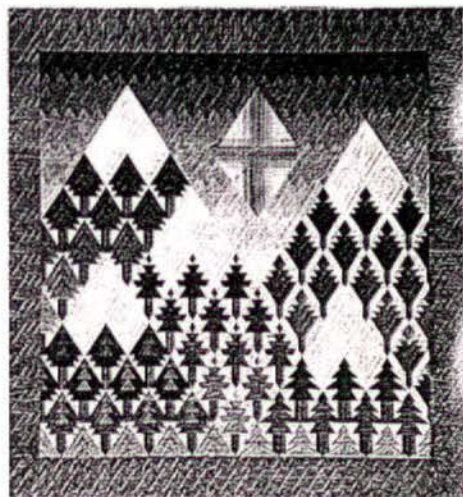
Not just "house beautiful," "White House beautiful"



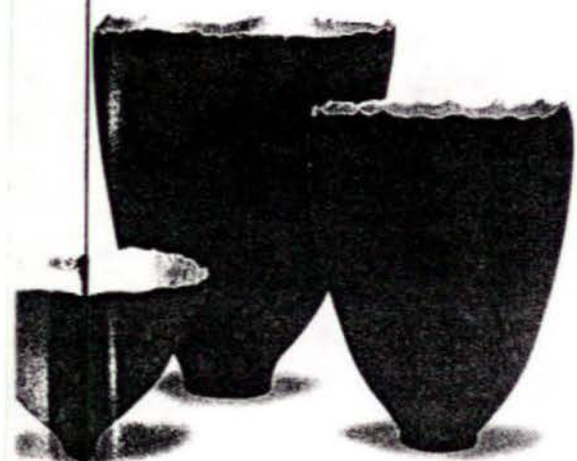
Yellow Pair, Dante Marioni

The Clinton first family decided early in their residency at the White House to celebrate American crafts as part of a nationwide recognition, throughout 1993, of the Year of American Craft. As curator-in-charge of the Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art, the Smithsonian's museum of crafts, located just across the street from the White House, I was particularly honored when the president and first lady invited me to assemble a collection of crafts that would be integrated into the historically rich setting of the White House.

I wanted to form a collection that could stand as a tribute to the continuing tradition of craft-making in our country. Encompassing the mediums of glass, ceramic, metal, wood, and fiber, the collection features the work of 77 of America's leading craft artists working today. Many are recognized masters; others are among



Purple Mountains Majesty, Adrien Rothschild



Prayer Bowls, Cheryl C. Williams

the emerging generation.

Donated by artists and their patrons, this contemporary collection is now on exhibit through September 4 at the National Museum of American Art as well as in digital form on the Internet.

My challenge was to find pieces that would complement the interiors of the White House. One was Ron Fleming's graceful wooden bowl for the Red Room. Hand-carved leaves, turned on a lathe from a single piece of redwood, form the shape of this elegant bowl, relating it to the numerous pieces of richly carved American Empire-style furnishings found in the room. Dale Chihuly's blown glass form, a favorite of the first family, was placed on an octagonal 18th-century English partner's writing desk.

Many of the pieces I chose were inspired by classical forms that craftsmen have used for centuries in their creations. For example, Randy Stromsøe's silver with gold leaf *Centerpiece Bowl on Three-Legged Stand* features architecturally inspired columns that hold a forged shallow ceremonial bowl, while Dante Marioni's *Yellow Pair* borrows vessel

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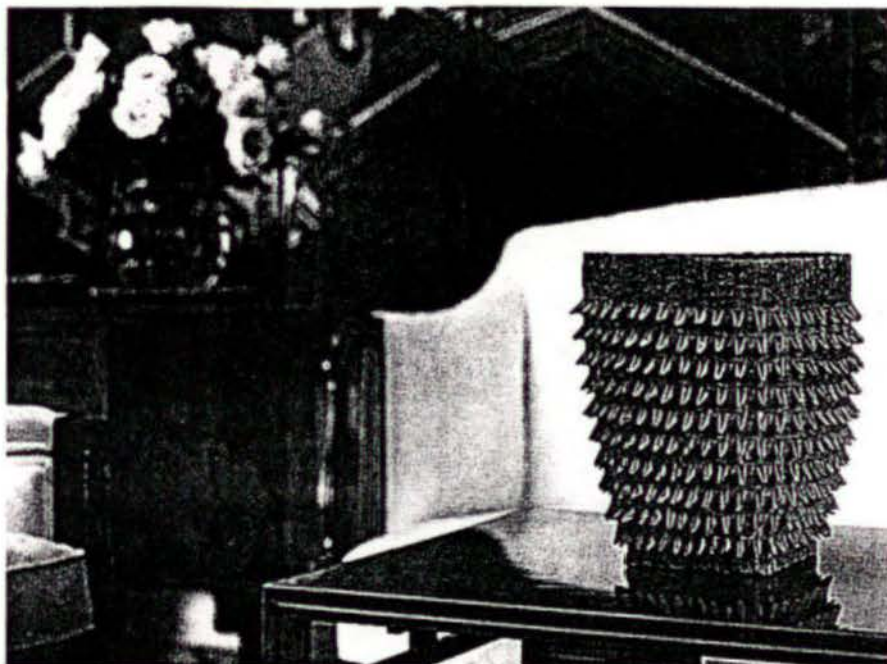


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Porcupine Basket, Ken Carlson

forms from ancient Greece.

A sense of humor is revealed in several pieces. I thought that Mara Superior's *Cocoa Pot*, for example, was quite appropriate for the Vermeil Room, which is often used as a ladies' sitting room. Inspired by the graphic qualities of embroidered samplers, Superior covered her teapot with lettering, lace patterning, and a sprinkling of brown specks suggesting cocoa beans.

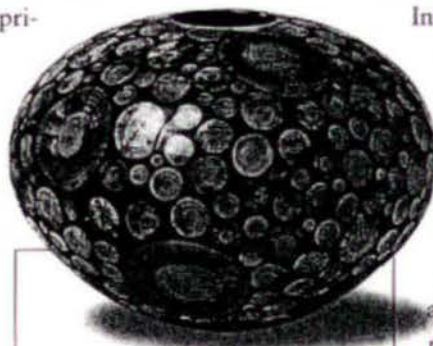
On the more serious side, I selected Cliff Lee's incised and carved porcelain vase for the White House library. *Peach Vase on a Pedestal* (peaches are symbols of longevity) was placed on the desk in this room, whose soft gray-and-rose color scheme perfectly complemented the cool-green celadon

glaze on Lee's vase.

Another innovative feature of this exhibition is a comprehensive "virtual tour" on the

Internet. This site combines video, audio, text, and color images to give electronic visitors an expansive window on the ideas and techniques of the craft artists whose work is in the collection. You can take the "virtual tour" with me of the rooms in the White House where many of these crafts were seen. The filming was actually done in a studio at the MCI World

Headquarters building a few blocks from the White House, using large photo blowups as backdrops for my tour. The Internet tour, made possible by MCI, will bring crafts to millions of students, artists, educators, and

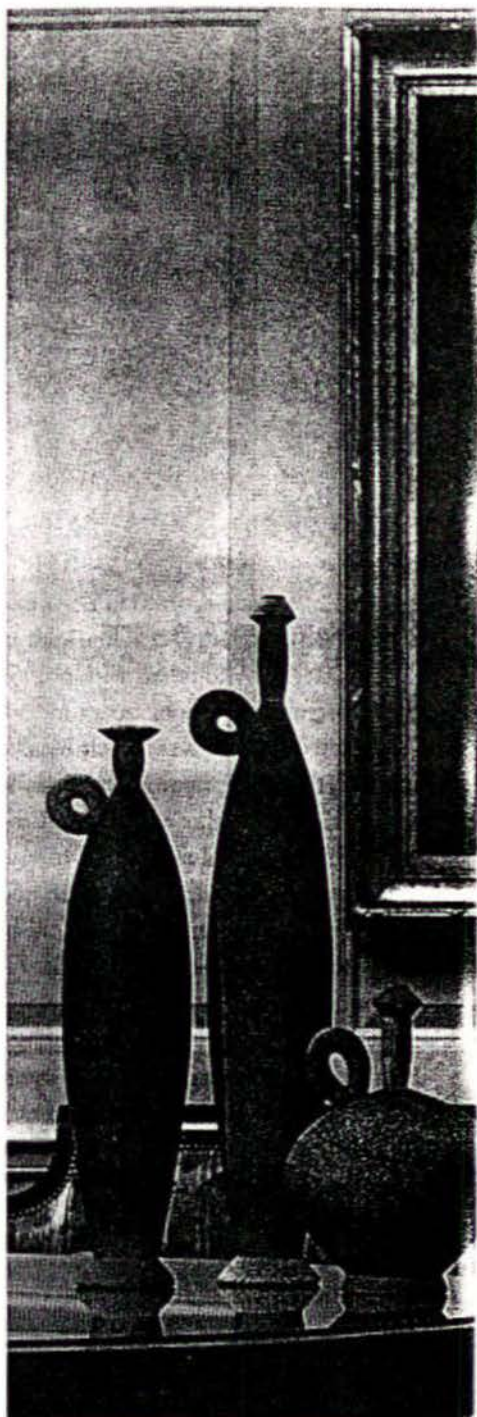


Exhibition Schedule

Memorial Art Gallery of the
University of Rochester, New York
(October 7-November 19)

American Craft Museum
New York City
(December 8-February 25, 1996)

George Walter Vincent Smith
Art Museum
Springfield, Massachusetts
(April 4, 1996-June 2, 1996)

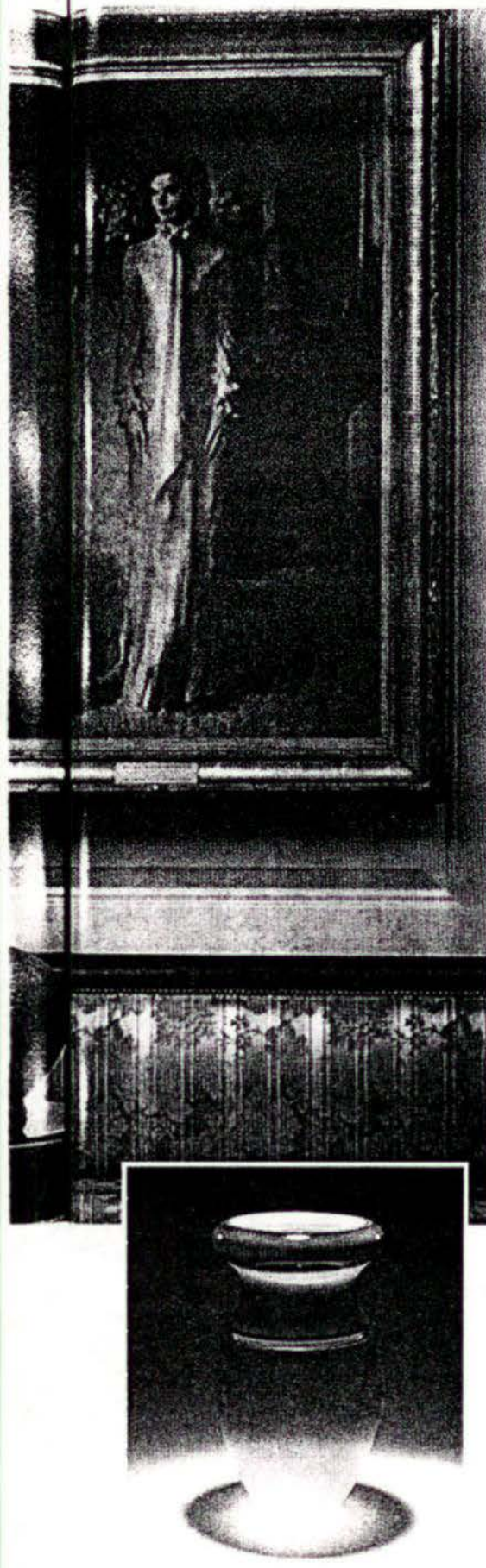


Above: *Incandescent Bottles*,
Michael Sherrill

Left: *White Pine Mosaic Bowl*,
Philip Moulthrop

craft appreciators on the World Wide Web (<http://www.nmaa.si.edu/WHC/AmericanCrafts>).

Michael W. Monroe is curator-in-charge of the Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.



Crimson/Green Blue, Sonja Blomdahl

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White House Crafts: Executive Disorder

THE WHITE HOUSE craft show has everything imaginable going for it. The 72 pieces are now splendidly arrayed at the National Museum of American Art. They were selected by Michael W. Monroe, curator-in-charge of the Renwick Gallery, who probably knows as much as anyone about American crafts. The 77 artists were made an offer they couldn't refuse: the prestige of having their work displayed in the presidential mansion.

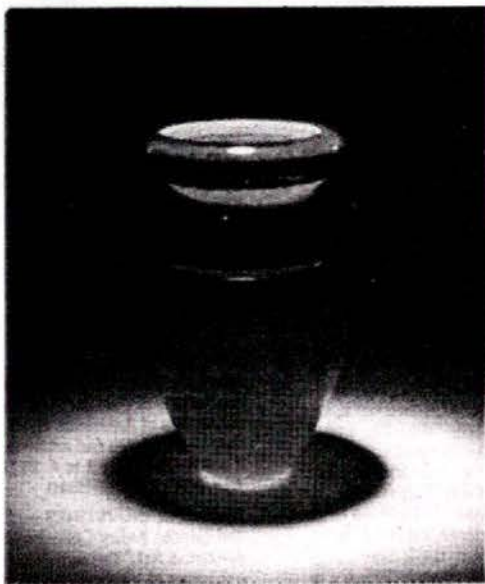
And yet the show is a disappointment. There are a dozen world-class pieces and a couple of dozen very nice ones, but more than half of the works are ordinary or overdone. A few are awful.

Monroe says the one-time-only show, conceived in 1993 in celebration of "The Year of American Craft," was not intended to be an assemblage of blue-chippers but an ethnically, stylistically and geographically balanced mix of works by our old masters, artists in mid-career and newcomers. He was further restricted, the curator says, by the necessity of choosing pieces appropriate to specific White House settings.

The explanation is ingenuous, because calling this the White House Collection of American Crafts inescapably puts the national seal of approval on every item and artist in it. It will be assumed that they've been singled out as our

best and brightest, which collectively demeans the American crafts resurgence and individually insults the many better artists who were left out.

It is the excellence of the top works in the show that so cruelly reveals the shortcomings of the others. Dale Chihuly's "Blue Orchid Implied Movement" (1987), Hillary Rodham Clinton's favorite, is a translucent fluted bowl of such uncharacteristic subtlety that it's *not* instantly recognizable as a piece by our long-reigning glass



Sonja Blomdahl's "Crimson/Green Blue": It goes just a little too far.

master, which makes it a double delight.

"Rocker #60" (1982) by Sam Maloof, who at 78 is the dean of American furniture makers both in talent and longevity, is so inviting as to refute the old spiritual: You *can* get to heaven in a rocking chair. Maloof, entirely self-taught, never forgets that a chair is a chair, even if it sells at Picasso prices; every line, curve and angle of this wonderful walnut creation is intended to make it a better and more comfortable rocker, which is what makes it a work of art. Every chair Maloof makes is museum quality, and the pity of it is that so many of them wind up in museums instead of under grateful bottoms.

A fourth of the works in the show—17 pieces—are lathe-turned wood. Only four or five of them could stand comparison with the works of woodturner Bob Stocksdale, 82 and still active, whose matchless craft is currently on view at the Renwick and who was unaccountably left out of the White House Collection. (Among the pieces that could stand up to any woodturnings anywhere are a redwood burl carving, "New Beginnings" [1993], by Ronald F. Fleming; a guatambu-wood carving, "White Mountain Apache Olla Basket Illusion" [1992], by Lincoln Seitzman; and "White Pine Mosaic Bowl" [1993] by Philip Moulthrop, who gives ordinary wood new richness by embedding it in resin.)

What spoils many of the pieces in the show is a neo-Victorian fussiness, excessive elaboration or decoration that overwhelms otherwise aesthetic shapes. Guilty of almost literal lily-gilding is Randy J. Stromsoe, whose lovely silver "Cen-

terpiece Bowl on Three-Legged Stand" (1993) is crippled by incongruous gold-leaf leggings. Emphasizing how Stromsoe went a smidge too far is an elegant footed silver punch bowl by Dawn Kilani Hoffman that somehow achieves elaborate understatement.

The better the basic piece, the more one winces at the excess. "Crimson/Green Blue" (1992), a blown-glass vase by Sonja Blomdahl, goes from great to gaudy by way of one color too many. "A Cocoa Pot" (1990) by Mara Superior, is kitschy enough to make a Pennsylvania Dutchman quail. Laney K. Oxman has achieved an artistic apotheosis of a sort in "Feminine Nostalgia" (1993), a super-rococo whatnot that's *all* decoration.

It's tempting to turn away and say no harm done, but this unevenness is hurtful, not only to the outstanding artists who were left standing out in the cold, but to those in the show whose works are diminished by the lesser pieces around them. Such as Nathan Youngblood's severe and superb "Black Carved Jar" (1991), which stays within yet goes beyond the traditions of his Santa Clara Pueblo. And Ken Carlson's amazing woven-copper "Porcupine Basket" (1993). And Zachary Oxman's liting "Festival of Light" (1993), a Hanukkah menorah that's both functional and fantastic. And . . .

It just isn't fair.

— Hank Burchard

THE WHITE HOUSE COLLECTION OF AMERICAN CRAFTS — Through Sept. 4 at the National Museum of American Art, Eighth and G streets NW. 202/357-2700. Open 10 to 5:30 daily. Metro: Gallery Place.

Chronicles

Garden of Artful Delight

By Sarah Booth Conroy

Washington Post Staff Writer

In the twilight, after a day fraught with stresses and successes, Hillary Rodham Clinton likes to sit on a bench in the First Lady's Garden and look at the American contemporary sculptures that now bloom there.

The first lady doesn't want to keep it all to herself, but to share with the 1.2 million people who come to the White House annually the capacity of the 12 sculptures to "evoke our emotions and provoke our ideas," she said.

"At a time of great debate about the role of art in society, I am particularly pleased that we can showcase American art and artists," she said. "Art is not a marginal part of our culture—nor a luxury that should only be accessible to those who can afford it."

Most Tuesday through Saturday mornings, not only potentates and patrons but also the public can stroll and peer at the sculptures through the glass-walled East Colonnade. During the autumn garden tour the populace can walk through the exhibit of works from South-eastern museums, which is the second to be installed. The first was from Midwestern museums and the third, to be installed in the fall, will be from a region yet to be announced.

At a gathering last week of art and preservation patrons and officials to see the new exhibit, most of the 250 or so guests became mesmerized. The cause was the great 1969 George Rickey kinetic sculpture—a stainless steel post with arms that move, point, shift and dance with the slightest urging of the breeze. As the sun came out of a cloud, J. Carter Brown pointed out: "The George Rickey comes alive in the light." As if it had heard, "Two Lines Oblique, Atlanta," waved its great arms, sending the rays shivering along.

The Chronicle told it would be riveting to see the artwork perform in the presidential helicopter's wake. Townsend Wolfe, director of the Arkansas Arts Center in Little Rock, assured the Chronicle that the helicopter lands at a discreet distance from the sculpture. "We tried the Rickey first at the east end, but it works much better here."

The Association of Art Museum Directors chose Wolfe to select the works. Wolfe "is someone I have known for a long time, admired and appreciated," Mrs. Clinton said, "and had nothing to do with his selection." The curator said, "I helped them with art for the governor's mansion."

All but one piece are by living artists who continue what Mrs. Clinton called "the rich diversity of American creativity."

A MacArthur Foundation grant winner, John Scott, made "Target I" (1993), polychromed welded steel silhouettes. The Birmingham Museum of Art lent the piece. Lonnie Holley, self-taught, used found materials—concrete, wood, paint and straw—to make "Leverage" (1993),



Hillary Clinton laughs in the First Lady's Garden, where 12 sculptures are exhibited.

lent by the Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University. Mark di Suvero is represented by the painted steel "Pollock's Indians" (1976), lent by J.R. Speed Art Museum, Louisville.

The only sculpture by an artist who has passed on and the earliest work in the group is that by David Smith, probably the most famous sculptor of the dozen represented. "Cubi XXVI" was constructed of steel posts in 1965, the year Smith died. The National Gallery of Art lent the work—how could it refuse Brown, its director emeritus as well as a member of the Committee for the Preservation of the White House?

All but the Rickey are framed in squares edged by a low hedge bordering the rectangular grass-covered court. Rachel Lambert Mellon, with her husband, Paul Mellon, a great collector and patron of art, designed the garden for Jacqueline Kennedy.

Though the sculpture fits its place, the significance of the new art goes far beyond its immediate pleasure.

The White House has become a great display of American architects, artists and craftsmen of the first years of the 18th century. The permanent collection (except presidential and first lady portraits) is officially limited to works made at least 25 years ago, by artists no longer alive.

But, Mrs. Clinton told the Chronicle, she's tried to extend the time boundaries—carefully, not to offend tradition. The Committee for the Preservation of the White House and the White House Historical Association, both invigorated by her interest in the historic premises, are providing strong advice and consent. They cooperated on the sculpture exhibition, which was financed by the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation.

The White House Craft Collection, another exhibit of living American artists championed by Mrs. Clinton, was recently displayed at the president's house. It's now at the National Museum of American Art and the subject of a book published by Abrams and will travel throughout the country. Eventually the crafts will go to the Clinton library/archives, but they will be lent to other venues, including, by request, the White House.

The exhibits help make Mrs. Clinton's point: "Today we confront challenging decisions about the kind of people we are, the society we wish to have, the country we will live in, as we move into the 21st century."

Admission to the White House tours is free. Call 202-456-7041 for information.

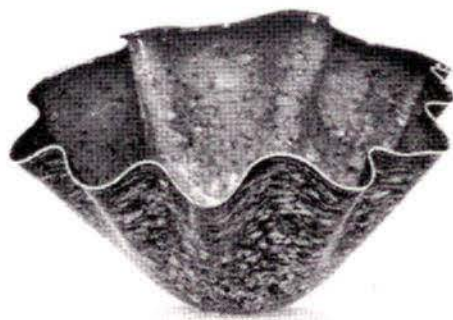
View

Sunday, August 6, 1995

Crafts from the rooms of the Clinton White House



A silver bowl on pillars by Randy J. Stromsoe reflects the stately theme.



Vessel forms, such as this Dale Chihuly piece, dominate the collection.

Art By Edward J. Sozanski

WASHINGTON — Nineteen ninety-three was not only the year that Bill Clinton assumed the presidency, it was the Year of American Craft. To mark the occasion, Michael W. Munroe, curator-in-charge of the Renwick Gallery, created a survey exhibition there called "American Crafts: The Nation's Collection."

At the request of the President and the first lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Munroe also put together a more focused craft collection for the White House. The Clintons, who collect contemporary crafts, believed that visitors to the President's residence should be made aware of what American craft artists have achieved in recent years.

They had tradition behind them. In 1913, Ellen Wilson, the wife of President Woodrow Wilson, furnished one room in the mansion

with handwoven coverlets, fabrics, bureau scarves and floor coverings made by women from the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The show doesn't pretend to be a broad survey of U.S. craft. The pieces were chosen to complement the decor.

Eleanor Roosevelt promoted artisanship through Val-Kill Industries, a workshop she and three other women organized in 1927 in Hyde Park, N.Y. Val-Kill specialized in Colonial Revival furniture; the Roosevelts acquired a maple bedroom suite

for the private quarters of the White House.

The closest parallel to the Clinton commission occurred in 1977, when Walter Mondale moved into the vice president's house. His wife, Joan, who is a potter, worked with Munroe to fill the house with American art and studio crafts.

The White House craft collection consists of 72 objects by 77 artists. As Munroe has observed, it doesn't pretend to be a broad survey of craft activity in America. Rather, it's a collection that was shaped in large part as a response to the house's architecture, historical settings and furnishings. The objects complement the decor by adding accents of form, color and texture.

The collection was first put on view in various rooms at the White House in late 1993.

(more)

Now, its items are in "The White House Collection of American Crafts" at the National Museum of American Art, through Sept. 4.

The first thing one notices about this group of objects is the preponderance of vessel forms. These are mainly ceramic, glass and turned wood, although there are some metal pieces and several stunning baskets. This seems odd at first, until you consider the environment for which the collection was selected.

There isn't much wall or floor space available for display in the White House, and thus the collection contains only one piece of furniture, a rocking chair by Sam Maloof, and three hanging quilts. But there are lots of tables, cabinets, bookcases, desks and mantels that can accommodate compact objects such as vases and bowls.

Hence, the focus on vessels, which create appropriate decorative accents in a building that's already crammed with 19th-century furniture and artworks of historical significance.

The other thing you notice about the objects is their general refinement. Nothing is overly gaudy or rambunctious; even the pieces that sport bright colors, such as the glass vessels by Dante Marioni called *Yellow Pair*, are modulated by classical

lines and proportions.

A number of works appear to have been chosen for their appeal as curiosities or for whimsical touches.

Josh Simpson's *Megaworld*, a large glass sphere that suggests the Earth as seen from space (but that also looks like a giant paperweight), is a prime example of the former. David W. Levi's brilliant yellow *Bird Jar*, a glass concoction with absurdly vestigial handles and a bird on its lid, typifies the latter.

There's also a considerable amount in stateliness reflected in Munroe's choices, such as a silver centerpiece bowl on three massive pillars by Randy J. Stromsoe and a re-creation of a Chinese sang-de-boeuf vase — both the form and the glaze — by John S. Cummings.

The result of this formality and gentility is a collection with a corporate personality, one with more polish and flash than soul. The only odd note in the whole ensemble is a small stoneware bowl with chino glaze by Joan Mondale, a singularly unpretentious object that looks out of place amid all this high finish and ultra-meticulous craftsmanship.

Although the installation at the museum is appropriately polished, it's obvious from the nature of the collection that it needs to be seen in context — that is, in the rooms of the White House. Photographs in the book that accompanies the show (*The White House Collection of American Crafts*, Harry N. Abrams, \$35) show the objects in their original settings.

(It's also possible to "tour" the collection on the World Wide Web of the Internet. The program offers a survey of the objects, a tour of the White House and an introduction to the artists. The tour address is <http://www.nmaa.si.edu/whc/american-crafts>.)

If you run down the checklist, you'll notice that all but four of the objects were donated by the artists (those four came from private donors). Artists are always being importuned to donate artworks to one cause or another, and even to museums. One would suppose that the United States could afford to pay its own way in this regard, especially because buying an artist's work is always the most appropriate and meaningful way to express support.

In this case, the artists were hooked by the prospect of having their work on view in the White House. Who could refuse such an offer? Perhaps they believed that their pieces would always be so displayed; if so, they were mistaken.

According to a White House spokesman, the collection will eventually be

(more)



Prayer bowls by Cheryl Williams are among the works in *"The White House Collection of American Crafts."*

placed in President Clinton's archives, pending the opening of a Clinton presidential library.

If the collection were left at the White House when Clinton leaves office, it would probably be packed up and put in storage, the spokesman said. This is what happened to a craft collection assembled by Joan Mondale for the vice president's residence during the late 1970s.

Furthermore, if the collection remained at the White House, its objects could be lent only to museums of the Smithsonian Institution, such as the National Museum of American Art or the Renwick Gallery, the spokesman said.

Housing the collection in the Clinton archives means that it will be available to a broader public, and can be lent to museums around the country, he added.

After the exhibition closes at the National Museum of American Art, it will travel to four other venues, in-

cluding the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, N.Y. (Oct. 7 to Nov. 19) and the American Craft Museum in New York (December 1995 through February 1996).

After the tour, the collection will return to the White House, where portions of it will be displayed in various public rooms on a rotating basis. The Clintons also will use some of the objects in the private living quarters, as they did before the exhibition opened here.

If You Go

■ "The White House Collection of American Crafts" continues at the National Museum of American Art, Eighth and G Streets N.W., Washington, D.C., through Sept. 4. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Free. Telephone: 202-357-2700.

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**THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR
MAY 18, 1995**

Document Title: _____

ARTS

White House Crafts Collection Tours US – and Cyberspace

Now at the Smithsonian, an exhibit of glass, metal, ceramic, fiber, and wood crafted by top American artisans can also be viewed 'virtually' on the Internet

By Leslie Albrecht Popiel
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WHEN thinking of the White House, one imagines stately portraits, elegant draperies, and classic furniture – hardly the kind of place one expects to find a droopy surreal clock or whimsical red earthenware teapot.

But for a little more than a year, the president's home was the venue for a collection of contemporary American crafts, chosen specifically for the White House as part of 1993's "The Year of American Craft" celebration. The collection has recently moved to the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art.

"The White House Collection of American Crafts" also marks the Smithsonian's first major venture with art on the Internet – a "virtual tour" of the exhibit available to Internet users who have computers with multimedia capability. The tour includes images of the crafts, audio commentary from the curator, videos of the artists, and the history of the White House settings where the crafts were displayed.

So far, the "virtual tour" seems to be a success: Steve Dietz, the Smithsonian's head of new media initiatives, says that, although it is difficult to measure, several thousand people are accessing the exhibit by computer each day.

There really is no replacement for seeing the exhibit in person, Mr. Dietz says. But in some cases, the virtual tour offers viewers more than either an actual tour or the accompanying book, such as videos of the artists at work, and the ability to leave messages for the White House, the museum curator, and the artists.

The collection was selected by the museum's curator-in-charge of the Renwick Gallery, Michael Monroe, with the encour-

agement of the White House. Part of the appeal of crafts comes from their human quality. Craft works are not computer-designed or mass-produced; they are made by another human being, Monroe explains.

The task of coordinating crafts within the White House presented a new challenge for Monroe and his staff. "We wanted to find pieces for the historical settings in the White House," Monroe says, which meant that objects needed to be "color or texture appropriate" and had to coordinate with furniture.

For example, the bright yellow-and-blue "Bird Jar" was displayed in the Blue Room atop a mahogany marble-topped table purchased by President James Monroe. Its colors complemented the blue draperies and gold-framed portraits of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson. The challenging task of intertwining modern American craft with such hal-

lowed and well-known furnishings was done well: the shiny yellow jar with a blue bird perched on top looks perfectly at home in the Blue Room. Unlike putting together a museum exhibition, Monroe had to deal with the additional constraint of finding objects

that would look right in the White House, not just in a public museum setting. "We went through the White House with a photographer and took a record of places a craft could work," Monroe says. In many cases, the best type of craft turned out to be a vessel of some sort – a basket, jar, or vase – something that could be displayed on top of a table or could be used on special occasions, such as centerpieces at dinners. Monroe came up with about 35 places that seemed well-suited to displaying a craft. Then came the fun part: soliciting the pieces.

As curator of the Renwick Gallery, which is dedicated to American craft, Monroe already had a good idea which artists he wanted to feature in the White House. In the end, 72 pieces by 77 artists became part of the collection, most of them donated by the artists, valued in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. "There's a sense of community and sharing and generosity" among craft artists, Monroe says.

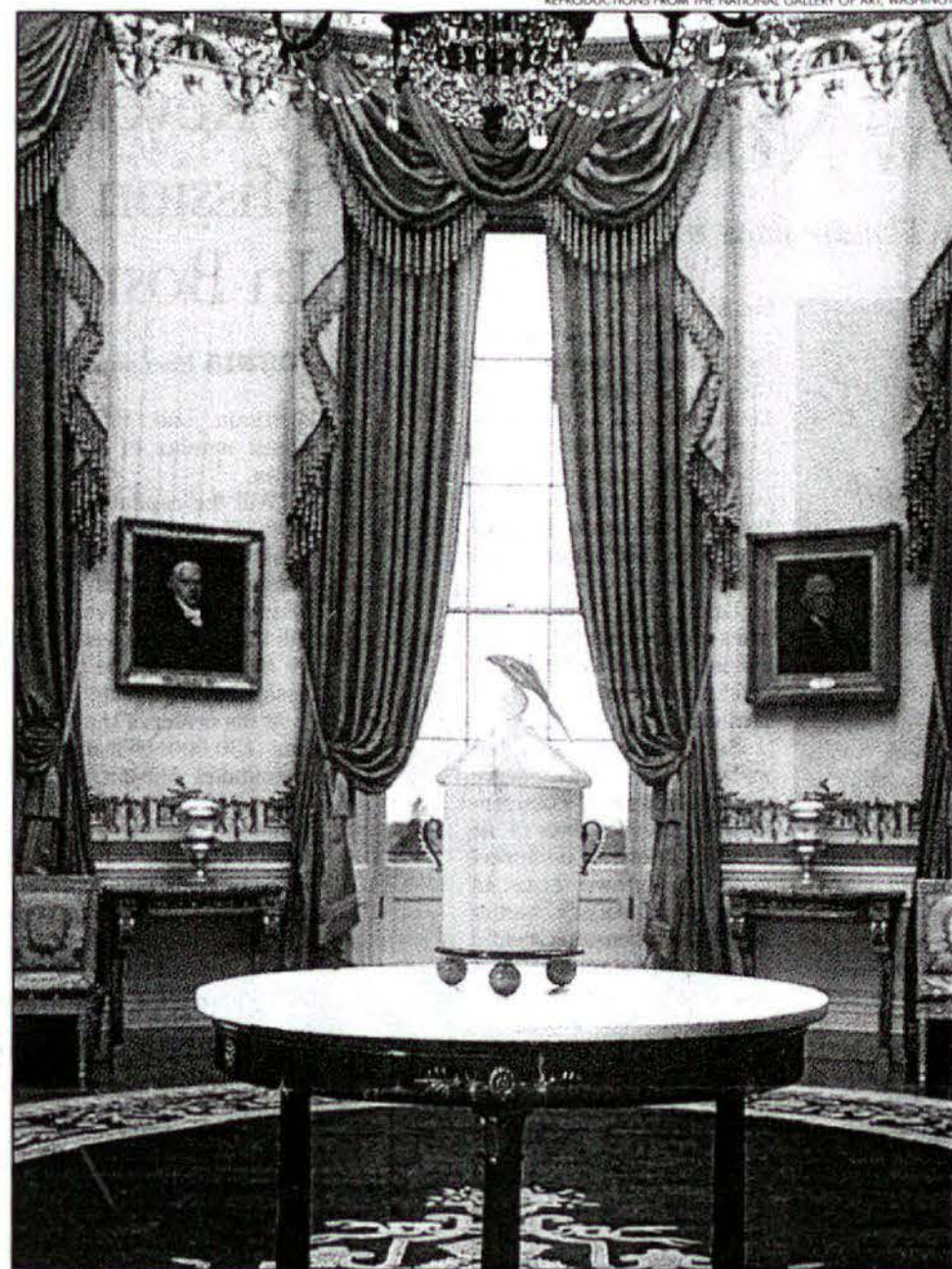
Monroe says he could not possibly attempt to represent the full range of craft art in one collection, especially with the limitations of displaying in the White House, but he did want to accomplish several goals in his choice of crafts. All the different mediums are represented – clay, wood, fiber, and glass. Functional pieces, like Dawn Kiliani Hoffman's "Oval Punch Bowl and Ladle," and objects meant purely for enjoyment, like Harvey K. Littleton's flowing glass "Blue Orchid Implied Movement" were chosen, showing the blurred line between craft and art.

It was also important to Monroe to represent artists both emerging and well-established, as well as those who had come to learn their craft through different means. Monroe chose artists from the same family, like father-and-son wood craftsmen Melvin and Mark Lindquist, to show how craftmak-

ing is often intergenerational. Some artists were formally trained at universities or art schools; others are mostly self-



'MAN IN LION COSTUME': The mask on Akira Blount's stitched-and-painted doll lifts to reveal a human face.



'BIRD JAR': David W. Levi's whimsical hand-blown glass jar combines the artist's love of bold colors and classic containers. In the White House, it found a color-coordinated home in the Blue Room.

taught. Monroe points out that basketmakers Sharon and Leon Niehues of Pettigrew, Ark., taught themselves to weave 20 years ago with a book provided by the Arkansas Extension Service.

Above all, crafts for the White House collection had to be original. "I look for artists with vision who also have the technical skills to bring about that vision," Monroe explains. "All of these artists are superb technicians, but they also have wonderful vision. They have a unique style that separates their work from that of other artists."

One of Monroe's favorites – and an example of a craft that "adds a new interpretation" to an old idea – is Wendell Castle's "Presence Clock #7." The face of this mahogany, brass, bronze, and curly maple clock is perched asymmetrically on a cone, which stands on a pair of "melted" clock hands.

Monroe also sought crafts that drew upon traditional shapes and forms, such as Dante Mariotti's classically inspired "Yellow Pair," a bright yellow blown glass bowl.

INFORMATION RELATED TO THE CRAFTS EXHIBIT

- "The White House Collection of American Crafts" will be on display at the National Museum of American Art in Washington through Sept. 4.
- The exhibit will travel to the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, in Rochester, N.Y., Oct. 7 to Nov. 19; American Craft Museum in New York, Dec. 1995 to Feb. 1996; Museum of Fine Arts in Springfield, Mass., April 4 to June 2, 1996; and a West Coast venue to be announced.
- The Internet "virtual tour" of the exhibit can be accessed on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nmao.si.edu/whc/americancrafts>

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Off Into Cyberspace to a Universe of Artisans

By RITA REIF

CLICK-CLICK INTO THE EVER-expanding Internet, and you might see astronauts being interviewed on a space shuttle or the endangered temples of Ankor Wat. Click again and, beginning tomorrow, you can enter the world of crafts, where you can see artisans in their studios potting vessels, forging metals, weaving baskets and blowing glass.

And if you cruise further, you can tour a White House exhibition of American crafts that was seen by more than 1.5 million

Cruising the Internet, you can drop in on a popular White House exhibition of American crafts.

people to the mansion from December 1993 to early last month, when the show ended. The exhibition, meant to last 30 days, stayed on in a smaller version of 22 pieces largely because it had two very highly placed fans. "The President and Mrs. Clinton loved having these crafts around the house," said Neel Lattimore, a deputy press secretary of the First Lady.

Indeed, the White House show proved so popular that the National Museum of American Art of the Smithsonian Institution decided to exhibit the 72 objects in the collection. That decision led to a book on the exhibition, published by Abrams, and to the museum's most ambitious on-line effort to date: video, audio and visual coverage of the collection and its creators on the Internet. The museum show went on view last weekend and remains through Sept. 4. It then travels to Rochester, Springfield, Mass., and New York, where it will appear at the American Craft Museum.

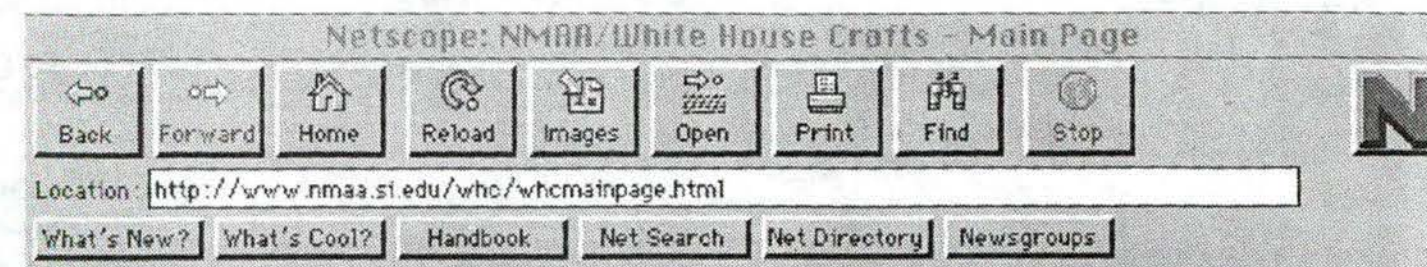
The centerpiece of Internet's access will be 30-second video clips from the White House tour and from visits to the studios of five artists. But it will go far beyond that. There will also be a full viewing of the exhibition at the museum; interviews with artisans at crafts fairs; photographs and descriptions of every object in the collection; audiotape coverage of the show, and

lists of the names and addresses of artisans, including E-mail numbers, if any. Internet's crafts coverage on video is close to two hours. (The Internet E-mail address is <http://www.nmaa.si.edu/whc/american-crafts>.)

The White House guide for Internet subscribers is the chief crafts expert of the Smithsonian Institution, Michael Monroe. Mr. Monroe served as the adviser to the White House as it put together the crafts collection in 1993; he then organized the museum show and wrote the book.

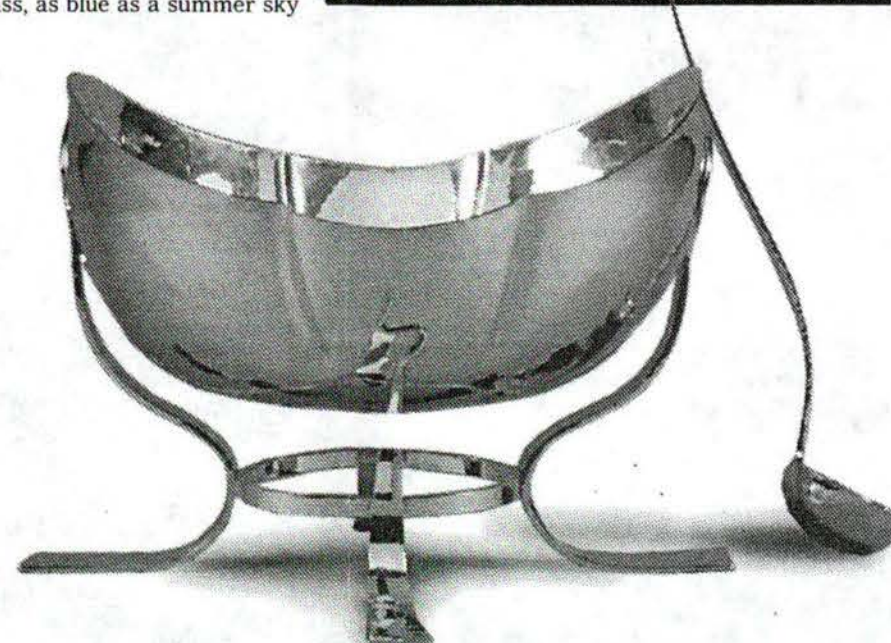
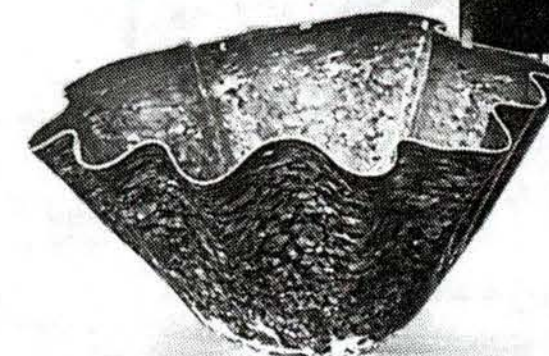
In a score of video clips, Mr. Monroe shows viewers the crafts as they were displayed in the Green Room, the Blue Room, the Red Room, the Yellow Oval Room, the library, the map room and a maze of hallways. He explains how artisans wove the baskets, glazed the clay vases and stitched the quilts shown there, supplementing his talk with descriptions of each room and of the period paintings and antiques in each setting. When he speaks about a super-modern piece that was shown on the Grand Staircase — Philip Moulthrop's turned wood bowl of pine rings inset in blackened resin, looking like golden planets in an inky sky — you see it in context: placed under a traditional portrait of Woodrow Wilson, on an American Empire table carved with gilded eagles.

On the video, Mr. Monroe pauses to discuss Dale Chihuly's huge bowl of rippled blown glass, as blue as a summer sky



Photographs from Smithsonian Institution

On the Web Among the works in the White House collection of American crafts that can be seen on the Internet are Dale Chihuly's cerulean blue bowl of rippled blown glass, left, and Dawn Hoffmann's silver punch bowl and ladle, far left.



and edged in chartreuse, that is seen on an 18th-century English partners desk. The vessel's colors are a perfect foil for the bright yellow walls of the second-floor space where it is shown, a hall never seen by visitors touring the White House because it is the First Family's informal sitting room.

More personal views of the crafts are presented during the visits with the artisans in their studios. Dawn Hoffmann, a metal-smith shown blasting a copper cooking pot with a blow torch, explains the technique: "You have to envelope the piece in the flame to heat it evenly." She used the same process to anneal the silver in her curvy punch bowl and ladle that are on view in the White House collection at the museum.

The National Museum of American Art, a pioneer among American art museums in offering electronic access to its collections, has the largest presence on American Online, a commercial service, of any art mu-

seum in this country.

If crafts buffs without a computer or access to the Internet feel deprived, they can go to the museum and view the exhibition electronically, on two screens in an Internet room.

Many artisans today use computers to time their kilns, to weave cloth and to program images. So they told the museum that they welcomed the Internet coverage as a way to publicize crafts and make their works more available. But when asked what Internet users are missing when their exposure to the crafts is limited to the computer, many artisans echoed the response of Joan Mondale, the wife of former Vice President Walter Mondale and an accomplished potter in her own right. "A lot," she said.

And William Harper, a jeweler, said: "Is a picture of food equivalent to eating? Is reading a romance novel as exciting as being in love?"

LEISURE & ARTS

American Crafts Shine, in White House or out

By BARBARA JEPSON

Washington

The colored-glass screen that Chester A. Arthur commissioned for the White House from Louis Comfort Tiffany was ultimately sold at auction. The Appalachian textiles displayed by Ellen (Mrs. Woodrow) Wilson in the Blue Mountain Room disappeared long ago. And some 1,700 chairs from various presidential interiors have been relegated to a 40,000-square-foot, off-site storage facility. History may sometimes be unkind to presidents, but it tends to treat their home furnishings with indifference.

Yet the objects in "The White House Collection of American Crafts," on view at the National Museum of American Art (NMAA) of the Smithsonian Institution through Sept. 4, have so far received the uncommonly good treatment they deserve. Each of the 72 recent works in clay, fiber, glass, metal or wood reflects the collective achievements of the American crafts renaissance, which began over four decades ago.

Building on the visionary spirit, bold experimentation and hard-won technical breakthroughs of such pioneers as Peter Voulkos in clay, Leonore Tawney in fiber, Harvey Littleton in glass and Wendell Castle in wood, today's craft artists have gone beyond mere mastery of their materials to a level of extraordinary virtuosity. Unlike their predecessors, they no longer look to mainstream art movements like abstract expressionism for inspiration. Instead, they draw on the vast palette of contemporary society.

Ronald Fleming's burl redwood bowl, "New Beginnings" (1993), is fashioned from a log section burned in a California forest fire; the charred areas now provide poignant tonal shading on this lathe-turned vessel's intricately carved leaf fronds. Josh Simpson's "Megaworld"

(1994), a blown and hot-worked glass orb encasing an interior globe, is based on NASA photographs of earth from outer space. And Nathan Youngblood's hand-coiled "Black Carved Jar" (1991) employs traditional Pueblo pottery-making techniques such as the use of pulverized horse manure for oxygen reduction during the firing process to achieve its ebony color. "We call the smell of this Corral No. 5," he explains.

"White House Crafts" was the first of several exhibits conceived by Hillary Rodham Clinton and her advisers to help bring greater visibility to American artists. It recognizes the Year of American Craft proclaimed by President George Bush shortly before he left office. Michael W. Monroe, who recently retired as curator-in-charge of the Renwick Gallery, the NMAA's separately housed contemporary crafts museum, chose the work.

Mr. Monroe's mandate was to select works encompassing the diversity of today's crafts scene—both functional and purely decorative objects from well-known and less established artists. But his choices were limited by the size and scale of the table tops, mantelpieces and other furnishings in the formal period rooms of the White House. It was an opportunity for the curator to play decorator, and he did so with tasteful imagination, favoring works that combined traditional references with a distinctly contemporary sensibility.

Letters sent by the White House asked artists to donate a piece in a particular size, color or series specified by Mr. Monroe for display "in a prominent location in the White House throughout the years." The artists responded generously, and the collection went on view in December, 1993 at the presidential residence, where it was seen by over a million visitors. A handsomely illustrated volume entitled "The White House Collection of American Crafts" has also been published by Abrams in conjunction with the exhibit.

Yet ironically, the collection will not remain at the White House. No one bothered to check the guidelines set by the Committee for the Preservation of the White House, which consider works other than presidential portraits ineligible for acquisition unless the artist is deceased or the work is 25 years old.

Once the Clinton White House learned this, it pursued other options rather than seek an exception to the non-legally-binding guidelines. Instead it waited until January to ask the artists for permission to transfer the donated works to the National Archives for "periodic display" at the future Clinton Presidential Library, where they will be available for loan to museums. A wiser choice might have been to bequeath the collection to an institution with a demonstrated interest in crafts, such as the American Crafts Museum or the Renwick, but Mr. Monroe is not saying so. Having these objects at the Clinton library, he believes, will "expose another segment of our population to crafts, and anything that increases the audience for crafts has nothing but positive ramifications."

In a way, this goal of expanding access to the collection is already being met. At the NMAA exhibit, visitors can either see the objects in the flesh or experience them electronically in an adjoining room via a virtual-reality tour on the Internet (from your home computer access the World Wide Web and type <http://www.nmaa.si.edu/whc/americancrafts>). Although the clarity of the illustrations leaves something to be desired, the on-line option enhances understanding of the collection. Those interested in a particular artist can scroll through a biographical section or click on the "media" category and tour faux studios where digitized, miniature videos show some 29 of the participants at work. They can also view selected objects in their original White House settings, which provides a dual perspective on the collection.

Not surprisingly, some of the works suffer by removal from their White House contexts. For example, David Levi's yellow and blue "Bird Jar" (1993), which interacted so provocatively with the furnish-

ings of the Blue Room, appears prosaic at the NMAA.

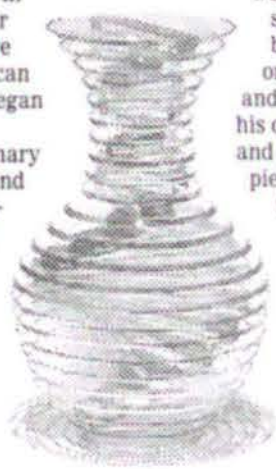
Other objects hold their own in either environment. Dante Marioni's "Yellow Pair" (1993), two oversized, blown-glass vessels originally placed in the Yellow Oval Room, echo ancient Greek pottery in their classical lines, yet overthrow tradition in their height and neon yellow color. Cliff Lee's celadon green "Peach Vase on a Pedestal" (1993), a beautiful complement to the Oriental porcelains and furnishings in the pale gray and rose-hued Library, benefits from the opportunity for closer scrutiny. This exquisitely wrought, wheel-thrown vessel has raised designs which were carved with a miniature hacksaw after the porcelain hardened to the consistency of leather. The artist, who discovered a passion for porcelain during his third year at medical school, now does surgery on ceramics. "It's more rewarding psychologically," he says, "and I don't have to worry about being sued."

Even before the White House's bait-and-switch invitation was made known, some of the most prominent artists were apparently unimpressed by the lure of being in the White House collection and did not donate their finest, i.e., most expensive, work. Wendell Castle's whimsical "Presence Clock No. 7" (1990) and Edward Moulthrop's "Rare Ashleaf Maple Spheroid" (1993) are definitely middle-drawer contributions. And the show contains some curatorial missteps—contrived works such as Andrea Gill's silly clay "Pitcher" (1991) and Adrian Saxer's "Untitled Ewer" (1992), an unappealing mish-mash of porcelain, feathers, plastic and a fishhook.

But the majority of objects are high-caliber. Phillip Moulthrop redeems the family name with his impressive, lathe-turned "White Pine Mosaic Bowl" (1993); it contains cross-sectioned disks of white pine suspended in black resin, where they float like sparkling coins. Another standout is Sidney Hutter's "White House Vase No. 1" (1993) of laminated, stacked, plate glass. It can be viewed as an homage to cubism or as an eerie x-ray of a vase "skeleton." Sam Maloof contributed one of his inimitable rocking chairs, which appears poised to take flight.

After it leaves the NMAA, the show will travel to at least three additional locations, including the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester in Rochester, N.Y. (Oct. 7 to Nov. 19), the American Craft Museum in New York City (Dec. 7, 1995 to Feb. 25, 1996) and the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum in Springfield, Mass. (April 4 to June 2, 1996).

Ms. Jepson is a writer in New York.



Vase by Sidney R. Hutter

CERAMIC BULLETIN

AMERICAN

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THE MAGAZINE FOR TECHNOLOGY • ENGINEERING • MANUFACTURING

APRIL 1995

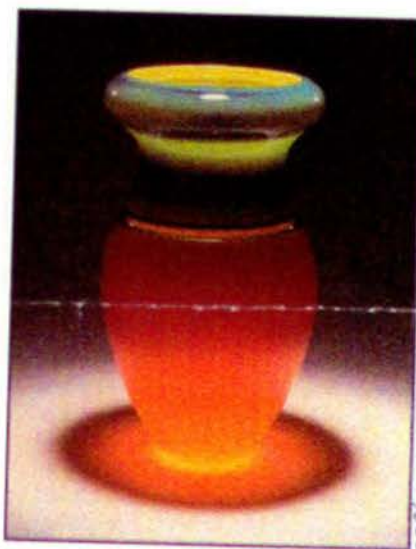


S Society/Industry
N News 24 • I



White House Crafts Collection Exhibited

The National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., will present the "White House Collection of American Crafts" from April 28 through Sept. 4, 1995. The 72-piece collection was formed in 1993 with the encouragement of the Clintons in honor of the Year of American Craft.



"Crimson/Green Blue" by Sonja Blomdahl, 1992 (above). "Incandescent Bottles" by Michael Sherrill, 1993, appears on the Table of Contents (p 3).

Contemporary works were selected by Michael W. Monroe, curator-in-charge of the museum's Renwick Gallery. Most pieces were donated by their makers. The exhibit includes 18 ceramic bowls, teapots and jars and 16 items of blown glass.

"The President and I are delighted that this magnificent collection will be on display. The pieces represent the extraordinary beauty and diversity of American craftsmanship as well as the generous spirit of our artists," said Hillary Rodham Clinton.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION



PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION



*Una colección única de 72
objetos de artesanía
pertenecientes a la Casa
Blanca y formada en 1993 por
especial indicación de la
familia Clinton, será puesta en
exhibición del 24 de abril al 4
de septiembre de 1995 en el
Museo Nacional de Arte
Americano situado en la calle
8 y G. N.W. en Washington
D.C.*

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 1995

HOUSTON CHRONICAL



John Bigelow Taylor / The White House Collection of American Crafts

Dale Chihuly's blown glass "Cerulean Blue Macchia with Chartreuse Lip Wrap" stands out in the second floor center hall of the White House.

White House celebrates crafts

By **MADELEINE McDERMOTT HAMM**
Houston Chronicle Home Design Editor

American crafts artists hold their heads a little higher now, thanks to the White House.

Even though an estimated 100,000 work as full-time, professional craftsmen today and only 77 of them had work selected in 1993 to display in the White House, a strong point has been made. These handcrafted works in wood, glass, metal, fiber and clay deserve to stand beside the treasured antiques and fine art in the imposing, traditional rooms for all visiting dignitaries and tourists to appreciate.

Purists who think of the rooms of the White House as formal museum settings must surely frown on the addition of a piece such as David M. Levi's bright yellow and blue "Bird Jar" in the Blue Room. But project curator Michael W. Monroe says the round blown-glass container with little ball feet and a bird perched on top "holds its own as the room's focal point" as it sits on a mahogany marble-topped table purchased by President James Monroe in 1817 in a French Empire-style setting.

See CRAFTS on Page 12J.



Blown-glass
"Bird Vase," by
Dimitri Michael-
ides and David
M. Levi

Crafts

Continued from Page 1J.

These craft pieces were chosen not to shock but to fit in, to respond to specific existing styles and historic spaces. But not to blend in and go unnoticed.

President Clinton and first lady

Hillary Rodham Clinton moved into the White House in 1993 at the beginning of the designated "Year of American Craft: A Celebration of the Creative Work of the Hand." Former President Bush had signed the proclamation the year before, and the Clintons decided to make their new home an active part of the crafts celebration.

The first lady asked Michael Monroe, curator-in-charge of the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art, to help assemble a crafts collection. She wanted the White House to showcase the best work of the present and the future alongside the beautiful pieces from the past.

On Friday, the 72-piece White House Collection of American Crafts will go on temporary display at the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., through Sept. 4. To coincide with the exhibit opening, Abrams is publishing a handsome book by Monroe, showing all the objects in the collection, many in the White House public and private rooms.

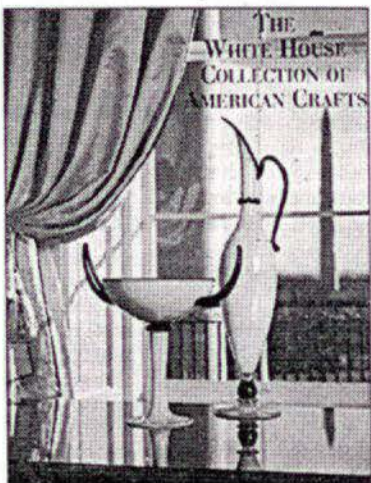
In the opening statement in *The White House Collection of American Crafts* (Abrams, \$35), Hillary Rodham Clinton emphasizes that displaying American crafts in the White House is not an original idea. "For example, first lady Ellen Wilson decorated rooms in the private quarters with weavings from

Tennessee and the Carolinas" she writes.

Also in conjunction with the exhibit and the support of MCI, the museum will present a virtual tour on the Internet of the collection, guided by Monroe. By clicking on a small photograph of each of the 72 pieces, electronic visitors will have a choice of hearing or reading the curator's comments, learning more about the White House room where

the piece was installed, and in many cases, viewing a video clip of the artist.

This high-tech viewing capability is fascinating when considered in relationship to what is being viewed — handcrafted objects. As Monroe writes in the book, "Despite our increasing reliance on computer technology, the intimate and physical qualities of the handmade object have never



Abrams has published *The White House Collection of American Crafts*. The crafts respond to existing styles and historic spaces.

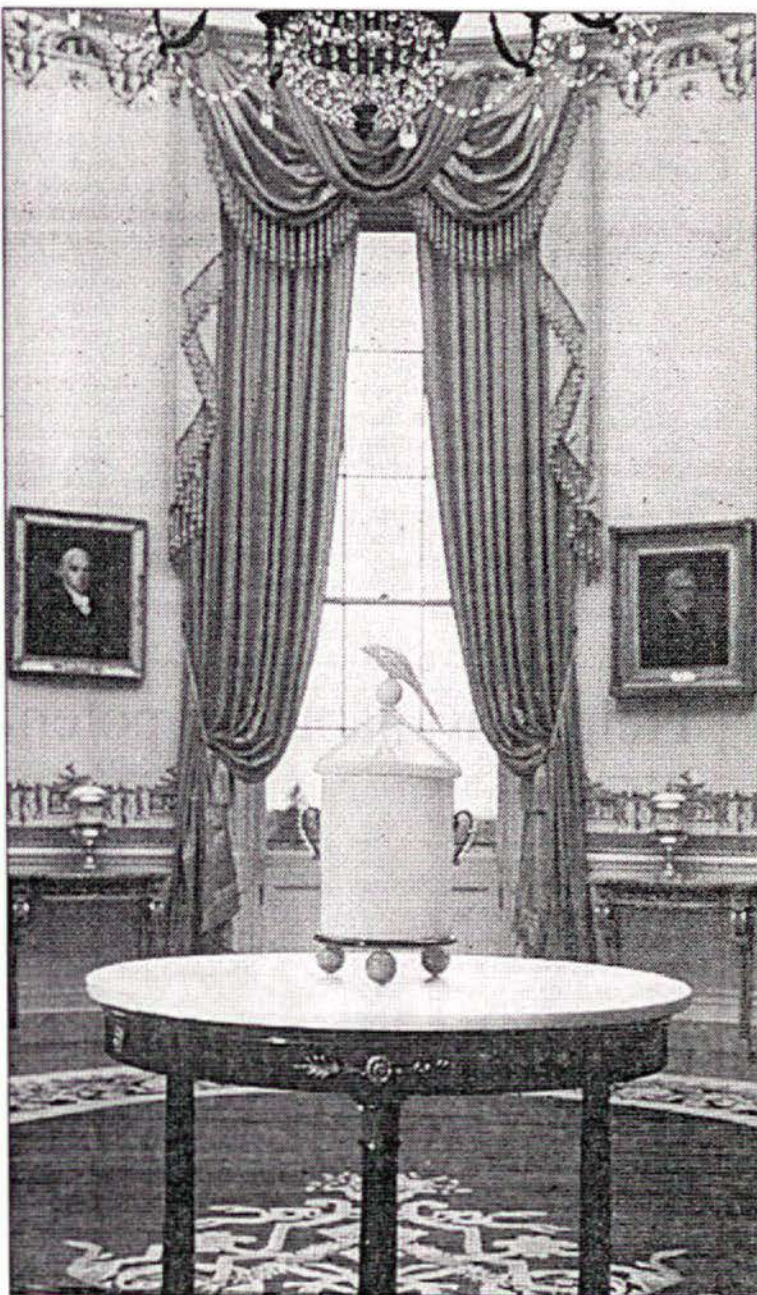
had more appeal."

Monroe selected the pieces to represent the talents of the leading artists as well as those just emerging on the scene. The objects, which come from all regions of the country, were donated to the collection by the artists and, in a few cases, by their patrons.

The artisans are as diverse as the works. There are names that make crafts devotees' hearts beat faster, such as Dale Chihuly, Wendell Castle and Harvey Littleton.

There are the self-taught, best illustrated by a graceful rocking chair from famed wood craftsman Sam Maloof, soon to reach age 80.

There are those, like potter Nathan Youngblood of the Santa Clara Pueblo in New Mexico, who learned their tradition as the apprentice of a master. Youngblood's "Black Carved Jar" results from years studying with his grandmother, Margaret Tafoya, among the last



John Bigelow Taylor / *The White House Collection of American Crafts*
David M. Levi's blown glass "Bird Jar" holds its own in the elegant White House Blue Room.

living representatives of the early recognized Pueblo potters.

And there are those like Zachary Oxman, at 27 the youngest artist represented, who combine formal education with their talent. Oxman, a metalsmith, holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in art.

The chosen works range from utilitarian to strictly decorative and are not presented as a comprehensive survey of American crafts. This is a collection selected to spotlight outstanding crafts and also to fit comfortably into the formal interiors of the White House.

THE CLIPBOARD

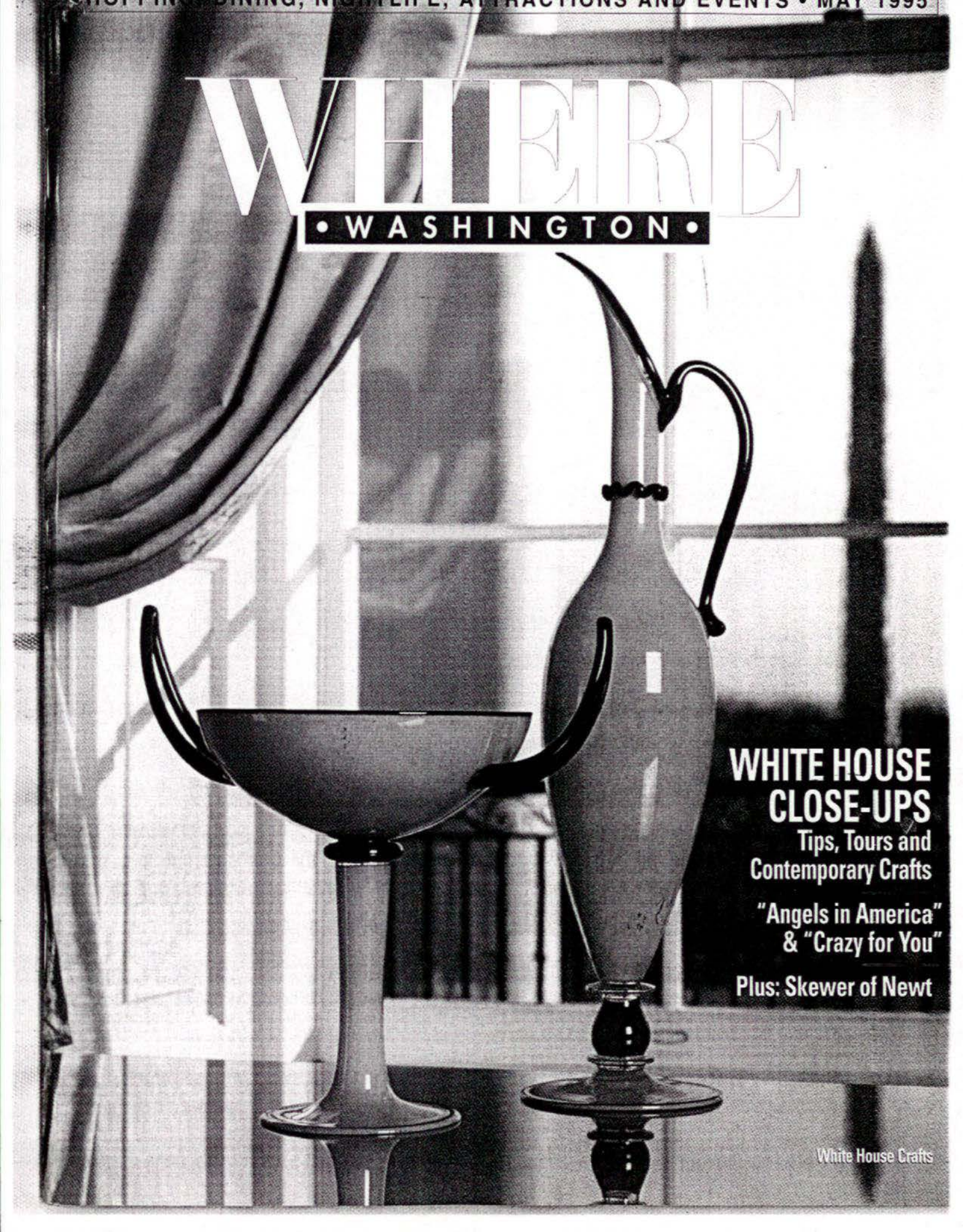
Spring-Summer 1995

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On the contemporary scene, note that the Smithsonian Institution's **National Museum of American Art**, Washington, D.C., has organized and is presenting a collection of contemporary crafts that was assembled for the White House to mark the Year of American Craft in 1993, with the encouragement of President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. On view are superb examples of glass, ceramic, metal, wood and fiber by artists from around the country, which will be returned to their special locations in the White House after the exhibition closes on September 4. The exhibition is accompanied by a state-of-the-art virtual tour on the Internet, made possible by the MCI Foundation... And in Winter Park, Florida, at the **Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art**, there is another noteworthy collection of American Arts and Crafts, with a rich trove of 19th-century American Art Pottery, now numbering some 800 pieces, including approximately 300 Rookwood examples.

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WHITE HOUSE CLOSE-UPS

Tips, Tours and
Contemporary Crafts

"Angels in America"
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White House Crafts

WHITE HOUSE CLOSE-UPS

The Blue Room gets a dusting up, a new center offers relief and information to visitors, and the craft collection hits the superhighway

BY COLLEEN GREWING

George Washington, the only president who never lived in the White House—it wasn't completed in time—indicated that it should be "Not too grand, but grand enough."

Today, the furniture, art and artifacts which fill the president's residence are national treasures. About 1.5 million visitors each year trek through its ground-floor hallway, peer into doorways, and traipse up the stairs to five elegantly appointed state rooms. Now, thanks to a new visitor center, a bolder and brighter Blue Room, and an off-site (and on-line) crafts exhibit, getting behind the gates of 1600 Pennsylvania is easier and more interesting.

Gone are the days when visitors had to queue up for hours in the humidity to get tickets for admission. Now, they pick up passes from an air-conditioned White House Visitor Center at 1450 Pennsylvania Avenue, where they can enjoy educational programs and exhibits and buy books, a video tour of the mansion or classy souvenirs.

The Blue Room—so-called because of the sapphire-blue upholstery on the 1817 furniture—had not been



PHOTO © JOHN BUSSELOW/TAYLOR, NYC

redecorated since 1972. Time and all that traffic had taken their toll. Today, it's resplendent with gold-on-gold wallpaper, fresh gilding and spiffy swags.

Treasures acquired since the Clintons moved in are 72 objects in the White House Collection of American Crafts. Some are functional, others purely decorative. They range from a stoneware bowl by Joan Mondale, potter and wife of former vice-president Walter Mondale, to Judy Dale's expressive quilt, *Spirit Flight*. There are Albert Paley's supple, forged-steel candlesticks and Dale Chihuly's large, sculptural blown-glass form, *Cerulean Blue Macchia with Chartreuse Lip Wrap*. Normally on display around the White House, >

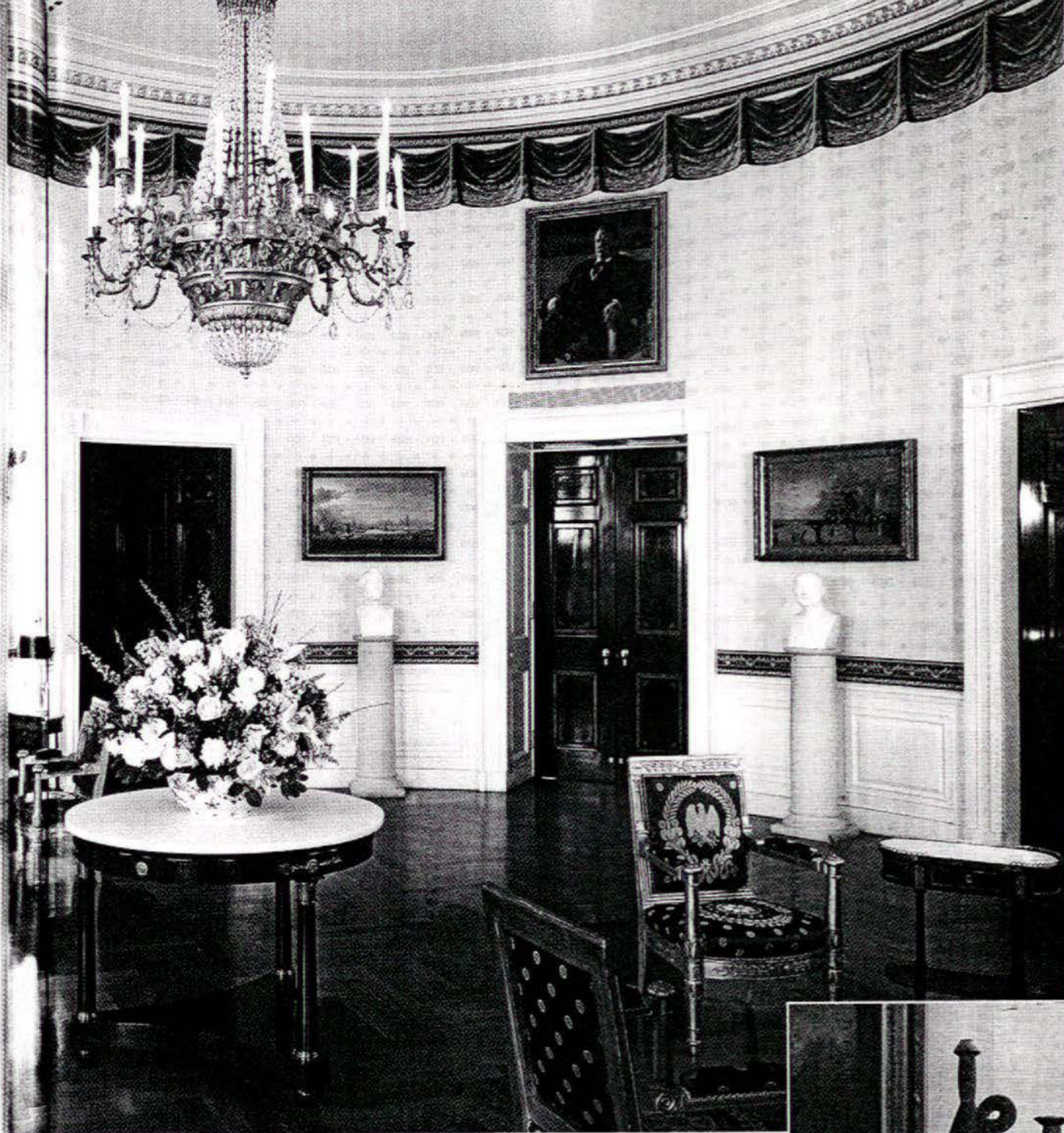


PHOTO COURTESY OF WHITE HOUSE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Left: Pictured in the Red Room at the White House, New Beginnings, a carved, lathe-turned bowl of redwood burl, by Ronald F. Fleming, is on view this month at the Museum of American Art.

Above: Bluer than blue, new swags and drapes of the Blue Room are keyed to fabric on the French Empire chairs ordered by President James Monroe. Leaves on the cornice are newly gilded.

Right: In their White House placement, Michael Sherrill's Incandescent Bottles, now exhibited at the Museum of American Art, are next to a portrait of Jacqueline Kennedy.

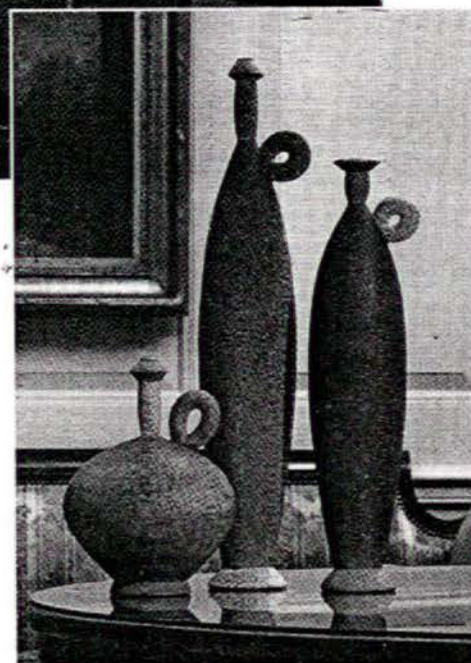
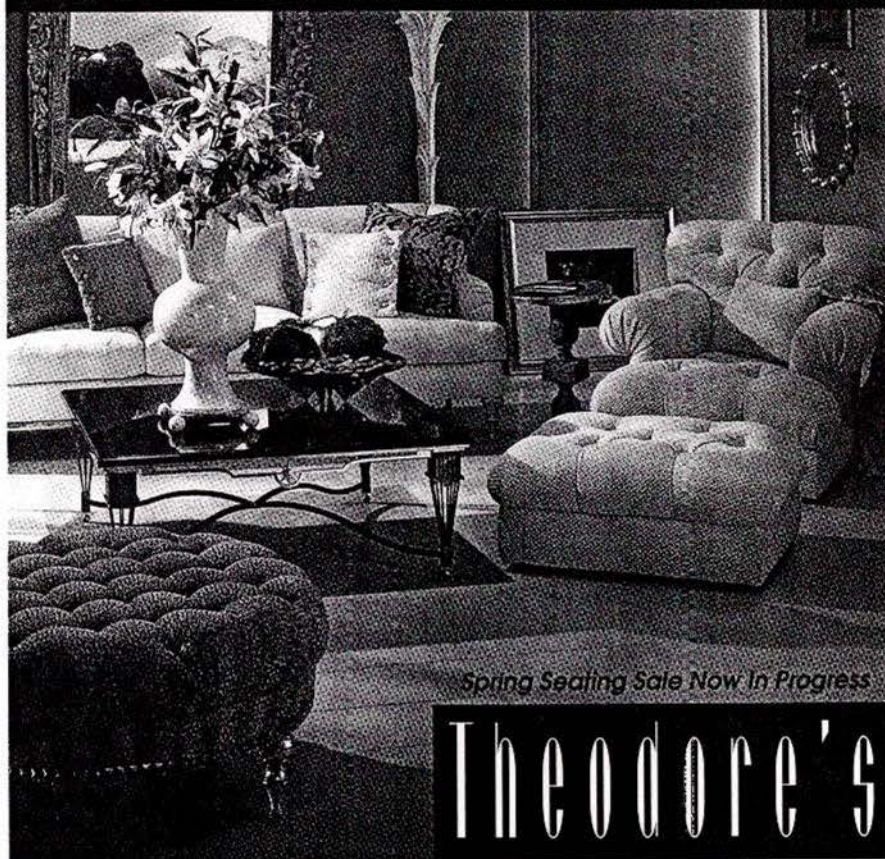


PHOTO © JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR, NYC

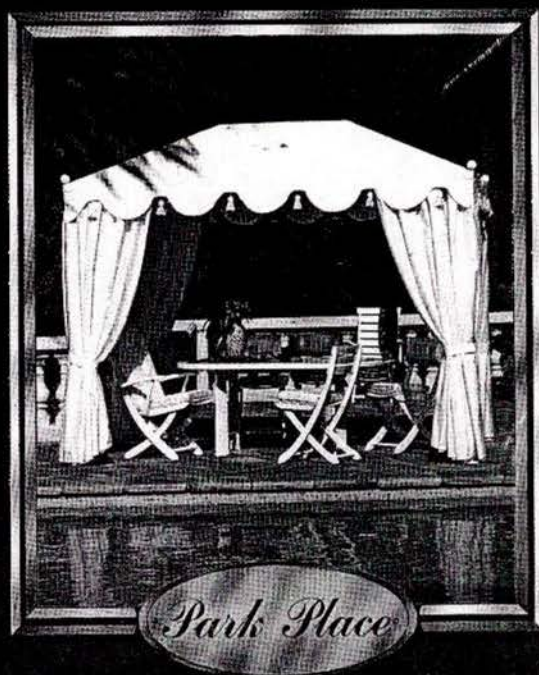
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all of the objects in the collection are on exhibit at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art downtown, through September 4. A book published in conjunction with the exhibit features full-color photos of the objects, including many in the public rooms and private quarters of the executive mansion.

Computer users who have access to the Internet can take a self-guided electronic tour of the crafts collection and learn about the history of the White House room in which each object is installed. The National Museum of American Art's address on the World-Wide Web Home Page is <http://www.nmaa.si.edu>.

Though chances are slim that you'll spot Bill or Hillary during a White House tour, exhibits at the new visitor center provide an inside view of presidential private lives. Photographs catch candid moments of First Families—a grieving Mary Todd Lincoln, the Kennedy kids romping with their pony Macaroni, a portrait of the Ford family which one viewer said reminded him of the Brady Bunch.

Some of the historic objects at the visitor center are on public view for the first time: a Lincoln cabinet table chair, Woodrow Wilson's green typewriter and Jimmy Carter's desk plate with Harry Truman's famous dictum, "The Buck Stops Here."

The White House is the only residence of a head of state open to the public on a regular basis, free of charge. Each presidential family has left its mark, and to the throngs of visitors passing through, the White House is a living museum of American history. "I never forget," said Franklin D. Roosevelt in one of his famous fireside chats, "that I live in a house owned by all the American people and that I have been given their trust."



The White House is open for public tours Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to noon. Visitors enter at the East Gate, next to the Treasury Department. Admission is free, but due to popularity of the tours, tickets indicate the tour time and are issued on a first-come, first-served basis, starting at 8 a.m. on the day of the tour.

Tickets are available at the White House Visitor Center in the Department of Commerce Building at 1450 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, about two blocks from the White House; look for the big blue awnings. Although the center dispenses tickets only on tour days, it is open for information, education and souvenirs daily, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., through May 25. Beginning May 26, the center will be open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily through the Labor Day weekend. For tour information, call (202) 208-1632 or (202) 456-7041; for information about the museum crafts exhibit, call (202) 357-2700.

You may never step foot inside the White House, but you can catch a glimpse of the crafts that adorn its esteemed halls in a presentation of "The



White House Collection of American Crafts," at the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., through September 4. The show highlights seventy-two objects of ceramic, metal, wood, fiber, and glass. Dimitri Michaelides and David Levi contributed the delicate blown-glass vase *Bird Glass* (above, 1993).

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Through June 18

Uncommon Beauty in Common Objects: The Legacy of African-American Craft Art. Renwick Gallery. Billed as the first African-American craft exhibit to travel nationally, this showcase of over 170 contemporary pieces makes its only Mid-Atlantic stop in the nation's capital. Daily, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Free. (202) 357-2700.

Through September 4

The White House Collection of American Crafts. National Museum of American Art. View this exhibit, gathered as part of the 1993 Year of the American Craft, in person at the gallery, or do the '90s high-tech thing by taking a virtual tour of the exhibit via the Internet. Daily, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Free. (202) 357-2700.

American Crafts

Seven Washington artists — all glass artists but one — are represented in a show of The White House Collection of American Crafts that opened Friday at the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C. The collection of 72 objects was created in 1993 in honor of the Year of American Craft and is usually on view at the White House. The Washington artists whose work is in the collection are glass artists Sonja Blomdahl, Dale Chihuly, David W. Levi, Dante Marioni, Dimitri Michae- lides and David J. Schwarz. Port Townsend ceramicist Anne Hiron- delle also has work in the collection.

The show is up through Sept. 4. A virtual tour of the show is available on World Wide Web. The internet address is: <http://www.nmaa.si.edu/WHC/AmericanCrafts>

The first lady's crafty connection



Photos by Jim Brantley/The Washington Times

Esthy Adler, Leo Zickler and Judy Zickler inspect Dale Chihuly's "Cerulean Blue Macchia with Chartreuse Lip Wrap."

For Ohio ceramic artists **Curtis** and **Suzan Benzle**, Thursday's black-tie opening reception at the National Museum of American Art was another perk from their inclusion in the White House Collection of American Crafts.

But for the Benzles' daughter, **Marissa**, it was a chance to snag a handshake with first lady **Hillary Rodham Clinton**.

The 9-year-old managed to thread her way to the front of the capacity crowd for the big clinch.

"It was fun," she said moments later between sips of ginger ale.

Mrs. Clinton, who came to open the exhibition formally, stayed to shake hands for nearly a half-hour after her prepared remarks.

Looking pretty crafty herself in a black tuxedo with a gold collar, Mrs. Clinton praised the collection's 77 artists for their "skill, creativity and vitality."

"It is remarkable how well the collection complements the White House" decor, she added. "I must confess, as I walk down the hallways, I feel a little bereft" since the works were removed.



Hillary Rodham Clinton shakes hands amid a crush of well-wishers.



Kathe Williamson and Margo Kless discuss another work as John Hechinger conducts a silent evaluation.

The 72 donated pieces, including lathed wooden bowls, quilts, baskets and several stunning blown-glass objects, were first displayed at the White House around Christmastime in 1993.

The Clintons came up with the idea for the exhibit to mark 1993 as the Year of American Craft. **Michael Monroe**, curator of the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery, handpicked the artists and solicited the craft pieces.

There was some grumbling among artists that they had to donate their works to the permanent collection.

"It's an honor in the craft world" to be included in such a prestigious display, said basket maker **Kari Lonning** from Ridgefield, Conn. "But you can only donate to so many places, and artists aren't known for being well-off."

But **David Ellsworth**, who contributed a lathed white oak pot to the exhibit, preferred to take the long view.

"That's what an artist does with his work — he gets it in a public place," the Quakertown, Pa., artisan said.

Besides, "I make my living over a body of work, not one particular piece," he added.

Artists and patrons alike hailed the White House collection for raising the profile of the nation's contemporary crafts artists.

The National Museum of American Art "had been looking for a couple of years for the right way to signal the connection between crafts and art," said **Elizabeth Broun**, the museum's director.

Art collectors are finding their way increasingly to the work of craft artists these days, Ms. Broun added.

J. Carter Brown, former director of the National Gallery, stopped by to tour the craft exhibit after the first lady departed and the crowd had thinned.

"I think it's superb," he said. The exhibit, with its blue drapes and white columns "suggests the White House setting without rubbing your nose in it."

— **Laura Outerbridge**

National Museum gets crafty

BY MIKE GIULIANO

VISUAL ARTS

Hillary Clinton is a crafty person. But don't take that as a political statement, because it's just another way of saying she loves American crafts.

Acting on her decorative instincts, she decided the White House would be a perfect showcase for contemporary craftsmanship — its early 19th century furnishings notwithstanding. A collection of 72 objects was brought together in 1993 as a way to acknowledge the Year of American Craft.

The First Lady tapped Michael Monroe, curator in charge of the National Museum of American Art's Renwick Gallery, to collect outstanding examples of craftsmanship in glass, wood, ceramic, fiber and metal. The collection, already displayed at the White House, is

now enjoying a summer-long stay at the National Museum of American Art.

"The 72 pieces in this remarkable collection illustrate the skill, imagination and vitality characteristic of American crafts in the 1990s," said the First Lady at a press conference at the museum last week. "My husband and I have been very small collectors over the years, but very great admirers of craft artisans."

On a more somber note, she observed the importance of responding to national tragedies like the Oklahoma City bombing by emphasizing "the creative, positive spirit" abroad in the land.

"It is important to emphasize the builders among us. For me, what we are celebrating today goes far beyond the 72 pieces or even the individual artists, and maybe perhaps more today, one week after the terrible tragedy in Oklahoma, we

should pause a minute to celebrate those among us who are creators, those who care about the human spirit."

Because crafts often have been treated as a lesser artistic relation, the White House imprimatur is a definite ego boost. And, locally, we can take pride that two Baltimore artists — glassmaker **Anthony Corradetti** and quiltmaker **Adrien Rothschild** — are among the craftspeople so honored.

Corradetti stood by his blown glass creation, "Awakening," at the museum, and recalled his shock when he received the letter from curator Monroe inviting him to contribute to the collection: "I didn't know what to make of it. It took a while for it to sink in."

After it did sink in, he said he took a long time deciding which piece to contribute. Complicating his decision was that his glassmaking had just started moving in a dif-

ferent direction.

"This piece was a new direction for me. Other pieces I had done were transparent glass, but this use of a black surface was a totally new direction for me. I'd been working with clear glass for so many years that I just wanted to work with colored glass. There was a lot of trial and error and surprises, as there are when you do something new."

The black surface of "Awakening" is used as a backdrop for colorful abstract images that have been painted in a swirling manner all around this vase-like form.

The 39-year-old artist grew up in Philadelphia, where he graduated from the Tyler School of Art. He moved to Baltimore in 1980 and lives near Hollins Market in west Baltimore. Locally, he has shown in galleries including Maryland Art Place, the Meredith Gallery, the Gomez Gallery and the Tomlinson Craft Collection. He also runs a small art gallery of his own in his neighborhood.

Corradetti says he loves living in Baltimore and finds it a congenial place to do his glasswork. However, he adds that Baltimore can be a tough town in which to sell his glassware and also run an art gallery. The big collecting dollars tend to go elsewhere.

Upcoming for him is another Washington-related event. He's making 12 pyramid-shaped cast glass pieces to be handed out as awards next month by a presidential council on sustainable development.

Among the other crafts in the White House Collection to really catch your eye are David W. Levi's "Bird Jar," whose bright yellow surface is topped with a tropical blue bird perched up there like a playful riff on a classical, patriotic motif; Josh Simpson's use of multilayered glass in his spherical "Megaworld," which rather resembles our planet viewed from a great height; and the forested mountains evoked by Adrien Rothschild in her quilt "Purple Mountains Majesty."

"The White House Collection of American Crafts" remains at the National Museum of American Art (Washington, 202-357-2700) through Sept. 4.

The work of Baltimore glass artist Anthony Corradetti can be seen in "The White House Collection of American Crafts" remaining at the National Museum of American Art through Sept. 4.



MAY 7, 1995

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LUCE PRESS CLIPPINGS

Museum's exhibit features collection from White House

By BARBARA MAYER
For AP Special Features

An exhibition at the National Museum of American Art in Washington may be just the ticket contemporary crafts needs to move out of the weekend fair ghetto and into major galleries and museums.

The exhibition, a White House Collection of American Crafts, is made up of 72 glass, ceramic, metal, wood and fiber objects. It runs through Sept. 4 and is accompanied by a book published by Abrams, \$35, and a tour on the Internet.

After Sept. 4, the collection will return to the White House and, ultimately, to the Clinton Presidential Library, wherever it may be. The pieces, most donated by the artists, have been displayed on a rotating basis in the Clinton family quarters. A favorite, a glass bowl by Dale Chihuly, stood on a table in the Center Hall.

"Most of the objects are vessels because most of the locations are tables," says Michael W. Monroe,

"We wanted to represent the spectrum of American crafts from blue chip names to emerging artists, a wide geographic area, both genders, youth and age, and many ethnic strains."

Michael W. Monroe, curator
National Museum of American Art's
Renwick Gallery, Washington

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The collection was assembled by Monroe in consultation with Hillary Rodham Clinton in an attempt to demonstrate the diversity of American crafts in the '90s. Indicative of divisions in the American crafts world, it is equal parts functional, quasi-functional and purely decorative.

Some of the craftsmen are self-

IF YOU GO ...

The National Museum of American Art, Eighth and G Streets N.W., Washington, D.C., is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily. Admission is free.

taught. Some learned from a parent or as apprentices. Others went to art school.

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Although this is the first named White House crafts collection, it is not the first time the White House has promoted American crafts. In 1882, President Chester A. Arthur commissioned Louis Comfort Tif-

fany to create a colored glass screen for the Cross Hall. In 1913, Ellen Wilson set up a "Blue Mountain Room" and invited people to come in and place orders for textiles woven in the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee.

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Now, what's this about the Internet?

"Potentially, there are millions of homes that we could reach," Steve Dietz, chief of publications and new media initiatives at the National Museum of American Art, says.

Anyone with a computer, modem and hookup to the Internet through one of the on-line services will be able to access images and text of the exhibition, including a clip about each artist and a history of the White House room where each object is installed. The user may also leave messages for the White House, the curators of the exhibition and the artists.

"The Internet version of the tour is more like an electronic book than it is like a visit to the exhibition," Dietz says. "Ideally, someone will see the show and the Internet."

TODAY'S HOT TICKET

Lecture: Former fighter pilot Quentin C. Aanenson discusses his life during the National Air and Space Museum's 1995 Charles A. Lindbergh Memorial Lecture at 8 p.m. in the museum's Langley Theater, Sixth Street and Independence Avenue SW. Metro station: Smithsonian. 202/357-2700.

Lecture: Ceramicist Laney K. Oxman and metalworker Zachary Oxman discuss their work from "The White House Collection of American Crafts" exhibit at 2 p.m. at the National Museum of American Art, Eighth and G streets NW. Free. 202/357-2700.

Pop: Linda Ronstadt performs at 8 p.m. at DAR Constitution Hall, 18th and D streets NW. \$29.50. 202/628-4780 or 202/432-SEAT.

Pop: The Rhumba Club performs a free Afro-Cuban jazz concert at 12:15 p.m. at the National Building Museum, 401 F St. NW. Free. 202/272-2448.

Theater: "Planet Ionescopade," a musical review of playwright Eugene Ionesco's works, has performances at 7 p.m. today and 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday at the Baird Auditorium, National Museum of Natural History, 10th Street and Constitution Avenue NW. \$24, \$10 students. 202/357-3030.

White House adds cachet to American Crafts

From staff and wire reports

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Wilson residents Dr. Dudley and Lisa Anderson attended the exhibit's opening in April and heard Hillary Rodham Clinton's talk about the exhibit and the contributions of the American craftsman in our lives.

Mrs. Anderson said that although the exhibit isn't comprehensive of the medium because of limitations of the topic she did enjoy it.

"They are wonderful examples," she said. "It's a great show, a wonderful exhibit."

After Sept. 4 the collection will return to the White House and, ultimately, to the Clinton Presidential Library, wherever it may be. The pieces, most donated by the artists, have been displayed on a rotating basis in the Clinton family quarters. A favorite, a glass bowl by Dale Chihuly, stood on a table in the Center Hall.

"Most of the objects are vessels because most of the locations are tables," says Michael W. Monroe, curator in charge of the museum's Renwick Gallery. "We got a photograph of every possible location in the White House — fireplace mantels, coffee tables, secretary-bookcases, occasional tables — and matched them up with pieces that would be appropriate."



Dale Chihuly's blown-glass bowl "Cerulean Blue Macchia" is in the White House Collection of American Crafts.

(Photo courtesy of Renwick Gallery)

The collection was assembled by Monroe in consultation with Mrs. Clinton in an attempt to demonstrate the diversity of American crafts in the '90s. Indicative of divisions in the American crafts world, it is equal parts functional, quasi-functional and purely decorative.

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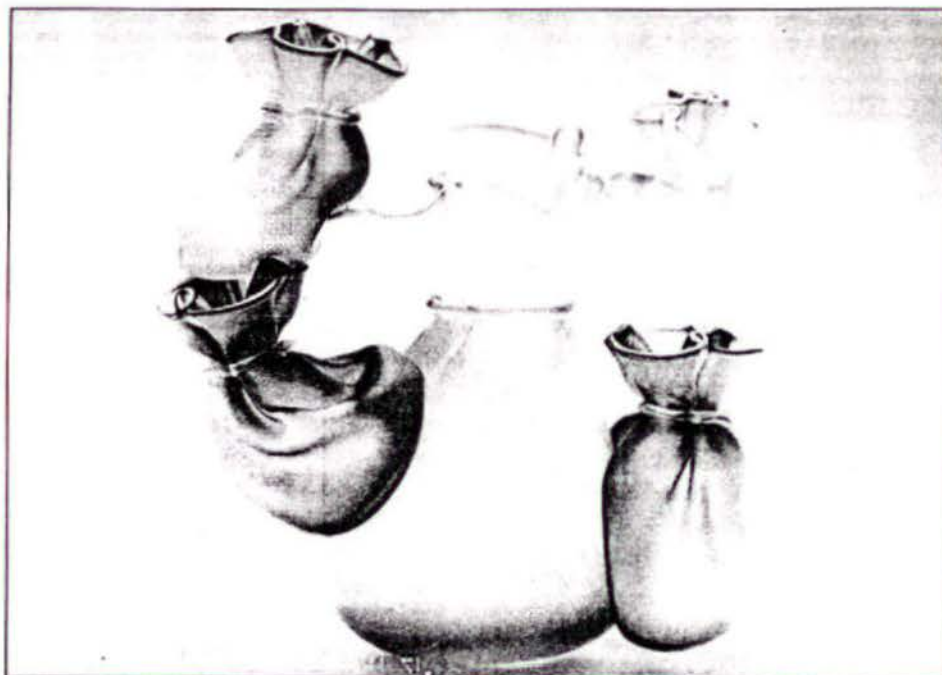
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The National Museum of American Art, Eighth and G Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C., is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily. Admission is free.

COVER STORY

A&E



Photos courtesy National Museum of American Art

At left, "Imago Bag," an etched, blown glass piece by John Littleton and Kate Vogel, is part of the White House Collection of American Crafts at the National Museum of American Art. Below, "Homage to BB King" by Curtis and Yvonne Tucker, is part of the "Uncommon Beauty in Common Objects: The Legacy of African American Craft Art" exhibit at the Renwick Gallery.

Studio crafts are focus of 3 intriguing exhibits

By JUDY POMERANZ
Special to The Journal

EXHIBITS

Craft lovers rejoice! Thanks to the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art and its partner Renwick Gallery, Washington is currently home to three special exhibitions displaying some of the finest studio crafts from around the country.

The White House has long been a showplace for the best of American arts, both fine and decorative, so it should come as no surprise that the "White House Collection of American Crafts" is a winner.

With the encouragement and support of the Clintons, the collection was assembled in 1993 by the extraordinarily able curator-in-charge of the Renwick Gallery, Michael Monroe, to celebrate the Year of American Craft.

Monroe set out to select objects in a wide range of media by both emerging and established artists, from all parts of the country. He even included works by several parent-child artistic combos to show the transmission of artistry through generations.

But diversity was not his sole aim. The biggest challenge was to find contemporary objects that would fit

White House. Each piece was selected to complement a specific site, and the objects have been on display in their perfect places since the 1993 holiday season.

Until now. Throughout the summer months, the 72 glass, ceramic, fiber, wood and metal objects will be on view at the National Museum of American Art.

As is often the case in craft exhibits, some of the glass objects are particular attention-grabbers. "Imago Bag," a glass work by John Littleton and Kate Vogel, depicts five "sacks" of frosted blown glass in gentle blue, violet and red tones. The hard fragility of the medium is cleverly belied by the soft illusionistic forms. Contrast this with Richard Q. Ritter's "Grail Series No. 6," where the sparkling transparent nature of the glass itself is emphasized in a smooth gem of a piece that traps vivid colors and exciting forms inside it.

David Schwartz combines multiple glass forms and textures with painting in "Z-Axis, Other Facets 2-15-





"Zebra Chair," by Richard Bennett, is part of the "Uncommon Beauty in Common Objects" exhibit at the Renwick Gallery.

Courtesy National Museum of American Art

Unusual objects in trio of exhibits

ART from C3

92," a large sculpted work with images reminiscent of architectural elements and cubist forms shining through and jumping off the glass surfaces.

Among the most technically awesome pieces are the pair of vessels by Mary Ann Toots Zynsky entitled "Beau Couple from the Chaos and Order Series." Created from thousands of brilliantly colored glass threads, these works have the appearance of textile pieces, but with a shimmer and iridescence that makes you stop and take a second look.

Among the ceramic objects, don't miss Cheryl Williams' "Prayer Bows" and Bennett Bean's "White House Bowl," splendidly delicate vessels with gilt interiors. The colored matte glazes and glistening gold combine to create a feast for the eyes.

There are some striking wood objects as well, such as Philip Moulthrop's intriguing "White Pine Mosaic Bowl." Made of small cross sections of white pine suspended in resin, it's polished to a smooth luster that almost begs to be touched.

And Po Shun Leong's "Cityscape Box" is a marvel. This puzzle of intricately carved pieces, inspired by architecture, is made of exotic woods and opens up to expose a series of hidden storage spaces.

There's whimsy in the show too. "A Festival of Light," the Hanukkah menorah by Zachary Oxman, features five dancing men with heels clicking, legs kicking and tailcoats flying. Mara Superior's "Cocoa Pot" is a contemporary piece painted with the decorative detail and charming imagery reminiscent of folk art. The brown specks covering the piece will make you crave that cocoa. And Akira Blount's "Man in Lion Costume" fiber doll is sure to evoke a chuckle.

If you want to see the objects in context without waiting until they're reinstalled at the White House, pick up the lavishly illustrated exhibition catalogue, which shows several of the works in their White House sites.

Or take the Internet tour, accessible from the comfort of your own desk, which allows you to "walk" through the White House and view many of the objects where they belong.

□□□

Two exhibits at the Renwick Gallery are fitting complements to the NMAA show.

"Uncommon Beauty in Common Objects: The Legacy of African American Art" includes an extremely broad range of craft objects, with the dual ethnic background of the 85 artists being the only common element.

The exhibit encompasses all media, the objects from tiny to large and from functional to purely artistic. Many of the works have visible links to traditional African art in material, subject, ideas, imagery or techniques, and some derive clearly from African-American culture.

The duality of cultures can be seen in Acquetta Williams' "African Mask, Gold," which combines glass and beads to create a stylized tabletop facsimile of an African mask. Joyce Scott also uses beads to fashion her work, "Rodney King's Head Was Squashed Like A Watermelon," which does indeed represent a squashed black head.

There are fanciful pieces of furniture, including the "Dream Chair," by Seitu Ken Jones, which conjures up images of Rene Magritte, and Tom Miller's "Mardi Gras King" chair. There are also stunningly decorative furnishings, such as Michael Chinn's sleek wood "Tension Table VIII."

The other Renwick show, "Marriage in Form: Kay Sekimachi and Bob Stockdale," has a narrower focus. The art of the title husband-wife team, he a woodturner and she a fiber artist, is celebrated in this quietly pleasing exhibit. The colors tend toward neutral, the designs tend toward understated, and the quality is superb.

Stockdale's bowls are delicate and breathtaking. Looking at the enormous range of exotic woods alone is a treat and an education. I'm talking about pink ivory, Irish yew, para kingwood, prima vera, thuya burl, cocobolo... way beyond your basic walnut and mahogany.

Sekimachi's pieces include wall-hangings, vessels and sculptures, some of which dangle from the ceiling, made from beautiful papers and textiles.

Despite the different materials and techniques, the works of the two artists are ideal companions for one another.

► "The White House Collection of American Crafts" will be on display at the National Museum of American Art, Eighth and G streets NW, through Sept. 4. "Uncommon Beauty in Common Objects" and "Marriage in Form" will be at the Renwick Gallery, Pennsylvania Avenue at 17th Street NW, through June 18.

MAY 26, 1995

White House adds cachet to American crafts

An AP Special Features

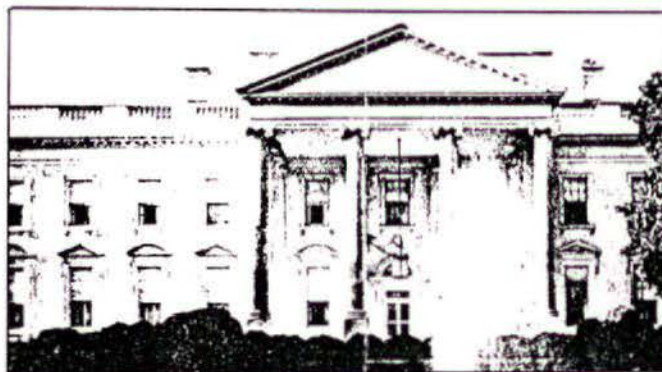
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"We wanted to represent the spectrum of American crafts from blue chip names to emerging artists, a wide geographic area, both genders, youth and age, and many ethnic strains," Monroe says.

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Why leave home, then?

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Insight

May 29, 1995

Smithsonian in Cyberspace

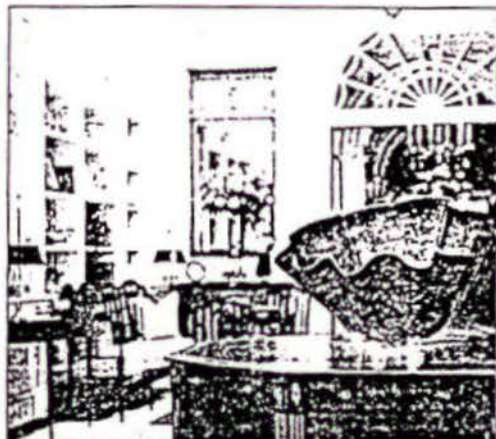
Smithsonian Secretary I. Michael Heyman showed up for lunch at the National Press Club not just to discuss the Enola Gay debacle but also to announce a surprise — the Smithsonian's entry into cyberspace.

The Smithsonian has plugged into the Internet with an up-to-date information service. "This will become a Smithsonian without walls, bringing our vast resources home to Americans and offering a perennial field trip for students, young and old," says Heyman.

The Smithsonian has linked up to the World Wide Web, a massive and (so far) free electronic network of computers around the globe. The address

is: <http://www.nmaa.si.edu/WHC/AmericanCrafts>.

In practice, the web is like a city



'Cerulean Blue' by Dale Chihuly, part of the White House craft exhibit.

springing up in virtual space, where housewives, punk rockers and underground artists pitch their homes next door to government agencies, universities and multinational corporations.

The museum complex made its on-line debut in April when the ambitious "Ocean Planet" exhibit opened at the National Museum of Natural History. "Ocean Planet" is on the web featuring an interactive floor plan of the exhibit and a "resource room" where visitors can post bulletins and gain instant connections with other oceanographic resources.

Many other museums already have begun to display their holdings on the web, including the Louvre, the University of California's Paleontology Museum and Canada's Museum of Civilization.

By Laura Outerbridge

The Arts

White House Showcases Modern Crafts

By Stephen Goode

Despite the perpetual controversy surrounding the public funding of art, even the most strident critic will appreciate the White House crafts collection.

When first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton opened "The White House Collection of American Crafts" exhibition in Washington last month, she said that for many years she and the president had been "collectors in a small way." That changed when they moved into the White House in 1993 — a year already designated by outgoing President Bush as the "Year of American Craft."

The Clintons decided to make their new home a showcase for American artists. To oversee the project, they chose Michael W. Monroe, curator-in-charge of the Renwick Gallery, which specializes in crafts and is across the street from the White House. The result is a collection of 77 works by Americans from all over the country that is now on display at the National Museum of American Art, part of the Smithsonian Institution.

The White House crafts show also is available on the Internet to viewers who want to examine the collection from their homes, part of a project initiated in April to make a number of exhibitions at the Smithsonian available to wider audiences. It can be found on the World Wide Web (see sidebar). The Internet tour features Monroe leading a room-by-room examination of selected works. The artists also discuss their techniques. (Some of them supply their E-mail addresses and invite queries concerning their work.)

For the exhibit, Monroe sought crafts of every medium (glass, wood, metal, fiber and clay) and form (bowls, candlesticks, quilts, bottles and so on). After a U.S. tour that will include Rochester, N.Y., and New York City, as

well as yet-to-be-determined locations, the show eventually will make its home in the Clinton presidential library.

It is an eclectic exhibit, ranging from the very traditional — such as Dante Marioni's stunning chrome-yellow bowls, which have become the symbol advertising the exhibition — to Alira Blount's ragdoll-like "Man in Lion Costume," done in cotton, wool, buttons and beads. Most of the 77 works date from the early 1990s.

There's a father-and-son combination among the craftsmen, Edward and Philip Moulthrop — both of whom work with white pine and maple woods found in their native Georgia — and a mother-and-son duo, Laney K. and Zachary Oxman of Hillsboro, Va. Monroe says that he made such pairings to emphasize the traditional nature of craft art, "that it is often something passed on from one generation to the next."

Joan Mondale, wife of former vice president Walter Mondale and certainly one of the more familiar names, is represented in the show by a wheel-thrown stoneware bowl with shino glaze. But mostly the artists in the exhibit are relatively unknown outside their fields, and they often depend upon local patrons for support.

Much of the work is experimental — craftsmen seeking their individual styles. "I think of my work as a cocktail, a mixture of art as old as the cave paintings and as new as contemporary art," says Mary Ann "Toots" Zinsky of Philadelphia, whose hand-formed, fused-glass bowls are among the most colorful objects in the exhibition.

What Monroe celebrates above all is the skill and dexterity of the artists. "How wonderful it is to be able to earn a living working with my hands — to make things that I enjoy making and other people enjoy having," says 78-year-old Sam Maloof, quoted in the exhibition catalogue. Maloof's 1982 rocking chair is the oldest piece in the show.

At the exhibition's opening, a doubtful art critic asked if viewing crafts on the Internet wasn't a useless and futile task since three-dimensional works on the computer screen show up flat, and the viewer can't experience the materials the works are made of — essential, he argued, to appreciating them.

But 41-year-old Nathan Youngblood of the Santa Clara pueblo in New Mexico, one of the exhibition's craftsmen, responded by saying that as a child and a teenager he had pored over art books in which everything was two-dimensional. Those books, he said, had whetted his interest in seeing the real thing and in doing art. Youngblood said he had no doubt that the Internet could accomplish similar tasks for the young today.

Harvey Littleton, the founder of the modern studio-glass movement in the United States, is represented by a three-part blown-glass sculpture at "The White House Collection of American Crafts," showing through September 4 at the National Museum of American Art.



sights & events

National Museum of American Art

The National Museum of American Art provides a panorama of America's artistic heritage from its Colonial beginnings to the 20th century. 8th and G sts. NW. Gallery Place Metro station. Daily, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Free. (202) 357-2700.

- Through May 21 **Jim Nutt**, expressive imagist style associated with Chicago artists of the 1960s.
- Through July 4 **Will Barnet**, key paintings, prints and newly acquired drawings.
- Through Sept. 4 **The White House Collection of American Crafts**, representing the extraordinary beauty and diversity of American craftsmanship.



This Tricentennial "Easter Egg" was a gift from Emperor Nicholas II to his wife, Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, in 1913. Inside, a revolving globe shows Russia's borders in 1613 and 1913. Internet users can now view the egg on the Florida International Museum's virtual tour of its "Treasures of the Czars" exhibit.

Florida International Museum in St. Petersburg is offering virtual tours on the Internet of its "Treasures of the Czars" exhibit through a partnership with a local newspaper, the *St. Petersburg Times*. The exhibition includes 265 works of art from Moscow's Kremlin Museums depicting the lives of the Romanov czars and czarinas who ruled Russia for 300 years. On display are coronation uniforms, crowns, a throne, ornamental crucifixes, and suits of armor. The exhibit opened in January and will run through June 11. There are more than 100 screens available, featuring approximately 140 graphics and photographs. Users can see artifacts, read about Russian history, hear a recorded message from the Russian ambassador, and play czar-related trivia games. Featured are a timeline tracing the reign of the czars from the 1600s through the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, and photographs of St. Petersburg, Fla., and St. Petersburg, Russia. To take the tour, you need access to the Internet and a browser that allows you to see the pictures and

graphics. The Internet address is <http://www.times.stpete.fl.us>

National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., is accompanying its exhibit, "The White House Collection of American Crafts," with a virtual tour on the Internet. The exhibit displays 72 objects collected in 1993 with the encouragement of President and Mrs. Clinton to honor the Year of the American Craft. Works made of glass, ceramic, fiber, wood, and metal were selected for the White House by curator Michael Monroe of the museum's Renwick Gallery. Electronic visitors click on a small photograph of an object and can either hear or read Monroe's comments about it. In many cases, a video clip of the artist is also available. Users can read about the history of the White House room where the object has been installed, while simultaneously viewing a full-screen image of the work. Visitors can also leave messages for the White House, the curator, and the artists. The virtual tour is scheduled to run indefinitely on the

Internet after its April 28 opening date. The Internet address is <http://www.nmaa.si.edu>

The New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx this winter became the first major botanical institution to offer a complete and fully searchable library catalog on the information superhighway. The catalog is called CATALPA, an acronym for Catalog for Library Public Access and also the name for a small genus of American and Asiatic trees. Researchers may search for a publication using the name of an author, a title, or a subject. Users can also take a virtual stroll through the stacks, browsing through the collection by call number or "shelf list" order. More than 250,000 volumes are represented in CATALPA, including nearly 110,000 books and journals on botany, horticulture, landscape design, and related fields. The library's telnet address is libris.nybg.org or 192.77.202.200

The Getty Art History Information Program (AHIP) in Santa Monica, Calif., now offers access via the Internet to art

historical information from its bibliographic and research databases. Founded in 1983, AHIP uses computer technology to make art historical information more available to scholars and researchers than traditional methods of research. AHIP's home page on the World Wide Web makes available on a trial basis nearly 500,000 records from the Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals, the International Repertory of the Literature of Art (IJLA), and the Provenance Index. Users can also obtain detailed information about AHIP's programs, projects, and publications. AHIP established the Web site in part to test how large collections of information can be gathered, stored, processed, and distributed across national and international boundaries. The Internet address is <http://www.ahip.getty.edu/ahip/home.html>

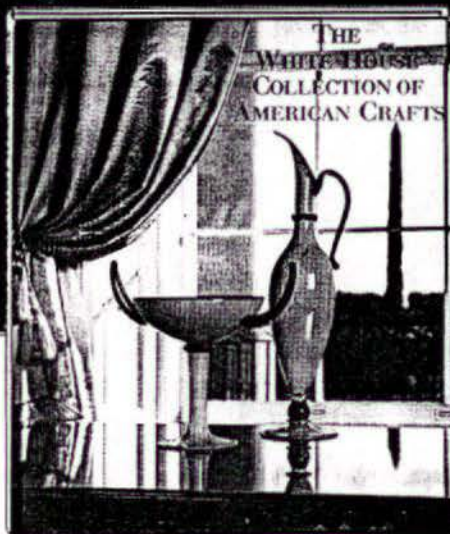


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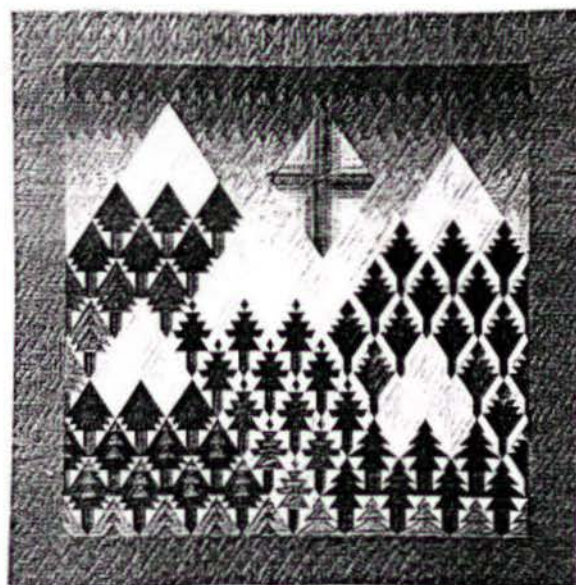
THE WHITE HOUSE COLLECTION OF AMERICAN CRAFTS

by Michael W. Monroe

With an Essay by Barbaralee Diamonstein

Foreword by Elizabeth Broun

Photography by John Bigelow Taylor



NO ONE WILL EVER FORGET FIRST LADY JACQUELINE BOUVIER Kennedy's efforts to restore the White House and furnish it with original American works of art. And thanks to her influence in establishing the White House Historical Association, succeeding administrations have been able to add to the White House collections by purchasing new works by skilled American artists and artisans. President and Mrs. Clinton have been especially enthusiastic collectors of American crafts.

The *White House Collection of American Crafts* is a deluxe, full-color companion volume to the first official showcase of American crafts in the White House, which is being presented at an exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art.

Among the fine crafts you'll find reproduced here are a brilliant-yellow-and-blue lidded glass jar by glassblower David W. Levi, a sterling-silver punch bowl by silversmith Dawn Kiilani Hoffmann and a walnut rocking chair by furniture-maker Sam Maloof.

With more

than 70 contemporary American craft artists represented here in works of glass, ceramic, metal, wood and fiber, *The White House Collection of American Crafts* is a singular celebration of the inventiveness and creative spirit of American artisans, and a tribute to our rich and diverse artistic heritage. 128 pages, 93 full-color photographs, biographies, 8 1/2" x 11".

94-8373

Publisher's price \$35

Dividend Price:

2 Credits + \$16.95



Left to right: terra-cotta pitcher by Andrea Gill, 1991; cocoa pot by Mara Superior, 1990; wood and ink vase, inspired by the designs of Apache baskets, by Lincoln Seltzman, 1992.



Above: "Purple Mountains Majesty" quilt by Adrian Rothschild, 1991. Cover: In the Red Room of the White House, a bowl hand-carved from a single burl of redwood by Ronald F. Fleming, 1993.

PHOTOS BY JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR



The Integration of Art & Architecture

IT IS HIS experience in architecture which sets the work of Po Shun Leong apart from other pieces in Arthur and Jane Mason's collec-

tion. "I started out making simple boxes with lids, but I noticed everyone else doing that, too," he says. Gradually, Po Shun began utilizing hidden drawers and moving parts that make his sculptures more than just inanimate objects—they are interactive.

After receiving a degree in architecture from the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London, Po Shun was awarded a scholarship to study in France with Le Corbusier. At this time he traveled, viewing the many structures—both ancient and modern—that Europe has to offer. Most importantly, Le Corbusier taught Po Shun that things look different every time you look at them. He learned that if an object is interesting at fifty feet, then it should be even more interesting up close. "It shouldn't be the same," he stressed.

It is this attention to detail that adds a theatrical quality to Po Shun's work. Instead of planning an entire piece from start to finish, he begins with the floor, and adds "a piece here, and a piece there," until the sculpture is complete. This keeps the process as interesting as the finished product.

Working without formal plans also allows Po Shun to make use of materials that other artists might discard. When he creates sculpture inspired by lost civilizations or imaginary places, Po Shun uses the faults in the wood and the natural grain to indicate geological faults or broken columns. "[The cracks] ask the viewer to participate by bringing his or her imagination to the work," Po Shun says. "The implied can often times be more powerful than the actual physical presence."

Today, Po Shun Leong lives and works in Canoga Park, California.

One of the artist's Cityscape Boxes is currently on display:

Now through September 4, 1995

THE WHITE HOUSE CRAFT COLLECTION

National Museum of American Art

8th and G Streets, NW

Washington, DC 20560

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EVENTS,

FAIRS, GALLERIES & MUSEUMS

DATEBOOK

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Now-July 4, 1995

Will Barnett: An Intimate View from the Museum's Collection.

Six decades of Barnett's work and several of the styles he explored are featured in this small installation of key paintings, prints, and newly acquired drawings. National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 202-357-2247

Now-August 27, 1995

The Color of Abstraction.

Colorfield abstraction, particularly paintings by Washington DC-based artists such as Sam Gilliam, Paul Reed, Leon Berkowitz, and Alma Thomas. National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 202-357-2247

Now-September 4, 1995

The White House Collection of American Crafts.

Seventy-two works of glass, metal, wood, and fiber by artists from across the nation in recognition of the Year of American Craft (1993). National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 202-357-2247

August 25, 1995-January 1, 1996

Rick Dillingham (1952-1994): A Retrospective.

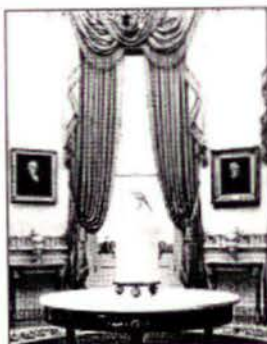
Rick Dillingham, former archaeologist with his own unique ceramic style that suggest the archaeologist's reconstructed vessels. Renwick Gallery, Washington, 202-357-2247

August 25, 1995-January 1, 1996

Nancy Crow: Improvisational Quilts.

More than 30 quilts which trace Nancy Crow's experimentation with traditional quilting patterns. Use of hand-dyed fabrics brings a unique richness to the works. Renwick Gallery, Washington, 202-357-2247

The White House Collection of American Crafts

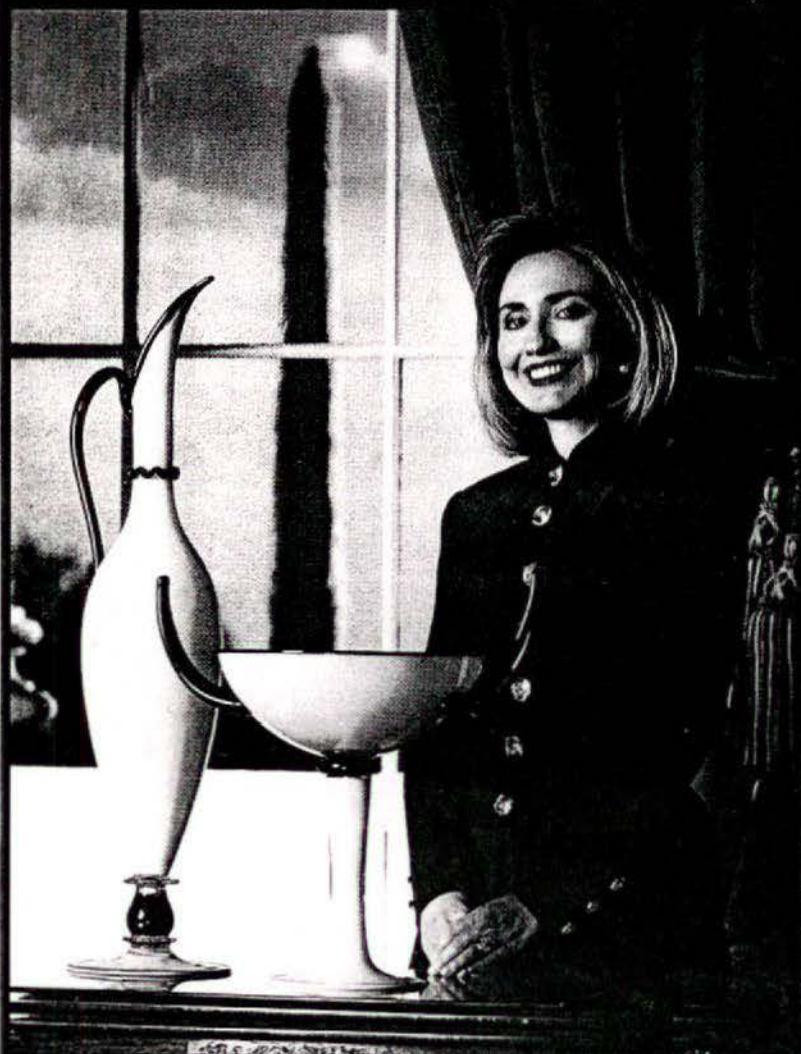


David W. Levi's "Bird Jar" is featured along with 72 other contemporary craftsmen in this exhibit.

Now-Sept. 4, 1995

National Museum of American Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, DC 202-357-2247

CONTEMPORÂNEA DA "WHITE HOUSE"



A Casa Branca em Washington (o seu verdadeiro nome é "Executive Mansion"), palácio onde residem os presidentes dos Estados Unidos da América desde os finais do século XVIII, abriu os seus salões privados aos jornalistas, pela primeira vez, no acto inaugural da exposição intitulada: "The White House Collection of American Crafts". Esta mostra teve a duração de dois dias passando de seguida para o "National Museum of American Art". Aos jornalistas convidados foi-lhes dada a oportunidade de poderem admirar algumas obras notáveis de grandes artistas americanos - no campo das artes decorativas - e, simultaneamente, de visitarem a zona íntima da "White House". A revista "Moda & Moda" foi uma das publicações estrangeiras convidadas para o evento que decorreu no passado mês de Abril.

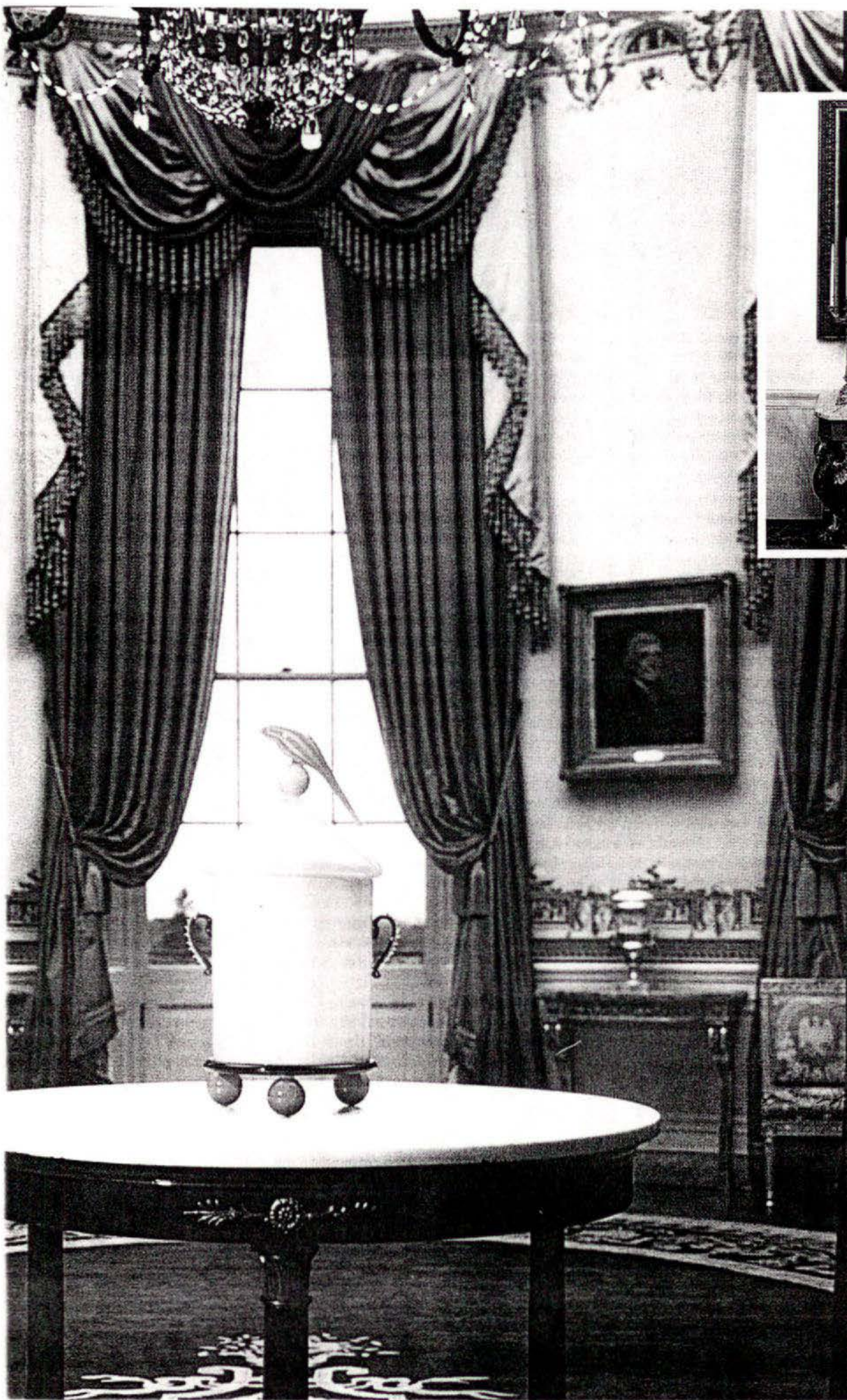
A exposição "The White House Collection of American Crafts" foi inaugurada, como é natural, pela mulher do Presidente dos E.U.A., Sr^a Hillary Clinton. Nesse dia os magníficos salões da Casa Branca estavam sobriamente decorados com arranjos florais e as peças expostas enquadravam-se perfeitamente no ambiente. Muitas salas foram propositamente remodeladas para o efeito.

Durante a recepção aos jornalistas, Hillary Clinton declarou: "Tanto eu como o Presidente sentimo-nos extremamente felizes e orgulhosos por esta magnífica colecção de artes decorativas americanas, oriundas das diversas regiões do nosso país e que em breve estarão no "National Museum of American Art". Estas obras de arte evidenciam a beleza, criatividade e mestria dos nossos artistas. É nosso objectivo que esta exposição desperte o público de modo a que as diversas áreas das artes decorativas tenham no nosso país um mais justo reconhecimento."

Elizabeth Broun, directora do "National Museum of American Art" que na ocasião também usou da palavra, manifestou o seu contentamento pelo facto da Casa Branca ter escolhido o seu museu, já que a instituição que dirige sempre teve um grande apreço pelas artes decorativas. Segundo Elizabeth, tanto o presidente como a sua mulher tiveram um especial e carinhoso interesse pela exibição destas peças, disponibilizando os objectos que decoram a residência até Setembro de 1995, data do termo da exposição.

O conjunto que engloba setenta e duas obras, a maior parte delas oferecidas pelos próprios artistas, foi conseguido graças ao entusiasmo do casal Clinton, o qual, em 1993, em consideração ao "Ano das Artes Decorativas Norte-Americanas", resolveu convidar Michael W. Monroe - Conservador do "National Museum of American Art's Renwick Gallery" - para o seleccionar. Nele incluem-se várias áreas das artes decorativas objectos em vidro, cerâmica, textéis, metais, mobiliário, entre outras peças artísticas.

Para a mostra, Michael W. Monroe escolheu peças de vários artistas, todas elas demonstrativas da evolução das suas carreiras no campo da criatividade e das técnicas utilizadas. São peças originárias de todos os estados Norte Americanos abrangendo vários géneros de peças: das utilitárias às puramente decorativas.



1. Hillary Clinton junto de duas
peças de Dante Marioni

2. PHILIP MOULTHROP
"White Pine Mosaic Bowl",
1993 (em cima)

Peça em pinho e resina
RON KENT, 1993 (em baixo)

Peça em pinho do Norfolk
As peças foram fotografadas
na Grande Escadaria da Casa
Branca.

Colecção da "White House"

3. DAVID W. LEVI

"Bird Jar", 1993

Vidro soprado

Peça fotografada na Sala Azul
da Casa Branca

Colecção da "White House"



4. DALE CHIHULY

"Cerulean Blue Macchia with Chartreuse Lip Wrap", 1993
Vidro soprado

Peça fotografada no segundo andar do "Center Hall" da Casa Branca

Colecção da "White House"

5. WENDELL CASTLE

"Presence Clock", 1990

Em mogno, bronze, cobre e latão.

Peça fotografada no segundo andar no "Central Hall" da Casa Branca

Colecção da "White House"

6. DANTE MARIONI

"Yellow Pair", 1993

Vidro soprado

Peças fotografadas na Sala Oval Amarela da Casa Branca
Colecção da "White House"

7. RONALD F. FLEMING

"New Beginnings", 1993

Peça em madeira de sequóia esculpida em forma de folhas
Peça fotografada na Sala Vermelha da Casa Branca.

Colecção da "White House"

A colecção é composta por nove exemplares em metal (prata, cobre, ouro e bronze); três colchas; dezassete taças em madeira trabalhada; dezoito taças em cerâmica; bules e jarros; dezasseis peças em vidro soprado; três peças de mobiliário em madeira; três cestos; uma peça têxtil adornada com figuras; e uma jóia. Todos estes trabalhos se distinguem pela sua notável singularidade e, em alguns casos, por um toque de humor.

Na colecção de bules destacam-se o de Ralph Bacerra, em cerâmica colorida (vermelho intenso) com a forma de um tronco de árvore com galhos, assente num arranjo geométrico em ouro de 24 quilates.

Uma das peças mais curiosas é um pote para guardar cacau, executado por Mara Superior, e inspirado nos qualidades gráficas dos bordados, com os seus característicos e detalhados desenhos e ainda decorado com inscrições, galões e salpicado por pintas castanhas a sugerirem grãos do cacau.

De James Watkins vimos a peça em cerâmica denominada - "Ritual Display". Feita em roda de oleiro com a forma de um caldeirão, bastante espessa, maciça, sugere as paredes interiores, ressequidas e queimadas, de velhos canhões.

Evidenciamos também um par de castiçais em aço moldado, de Albert Paley, comprovativos da sua habilidade na obtenção de formas fluidas, sensuais e flexíveis com um material conhecido por todos pela sua dureza.

O "OBOR 1 Coffee Server" de Susan Ewing, é uma obra admirável da mostra. Trata-se de uma cafeteira em cobre, com um banho de ouro de 24 quilates.

A "expressiva" colcha com ourela, trabalho de Judy Dales intitulado "Spirit Flight", combina uma diversidade de textéis, de cores suaves, que criam uma corrente de cor na qual uma figura etérea flutua num céu estrelado.

Dona Look, é outra artista que criou um cesto com vides e fio de seda, ao qual deu o nome: "Basquet".

Um par de taças em vidro de formas livres, executado por Ann Toots Zynsky, com inúmeras camadas de fios de vidro em cores bri-

lhantes, fundidas e envolvidas entre si a altas temperaturas, deixaram-nos extasiados.

"Cerulean Blue Macchia with Chartreuse Lip Wrap", é uma taça de formas exuberantes em vidro, da autoria de Dale Chihuly, parece pulsar de vida nas suas formas ondulantes com bolhas que mudam constantemente de tonalidades conforme a incidência da luz.

A madeira é um dos materiais, muito representado em variadíssimos objectos onde se incluem a "White Pine Mosaic Bowl", um trabalho de Philip Moulthrop em forma de esfera, executado em pinho e resina.

Assinado por Wendall Castle, o "Presence Clock" trata-se de um relógio em mogno e bronze assente num pedestal assimétrico. Os seus ponteiros têm uma forma invulgar representativa do "cansaço" do tempo.

Joan Mondale, ceramista, e mulher do Vice Presidente dos Estados Unidos, Walter Mondale, tem reunido, para a residência dos vice-presidentes, algumas peças de artes decorativas. Para esta colecção contribuiu agora com uma taça em faiança pintada, de carácter expressionista e decorações caligráficas.

Entre os vários artistas presentes na "The White House Collection of American Crafts" contam-se: Laney K. Oxman; Zachary Oxman; David W. Levi; e ainda Harvey Littleton, o fundador de um moderno movimento de "studio-glass".

O interesse pelas Artes Decorativas na Casa Branca data de 1882 quando o Presidente dos Estados Unidos encomendou a Louis Comfort Tiffany um biombo em vidro colorido para o "Cross Hall". As primeiras damas dos Estados Unidos que mais promoveram estas artes foram Ellen Wilson, Eleanor Roosevelt e Rosalyn Carter.

A colecção agora patente no "National Museum of American Art", criada por artistas americanos, seleccionados especialmente para decorar e enriquecer a Casa Branca, mostra o grande empenho do Casal Clinton em elevar as artes decorativas americanas ao nível das Belas Artes.

THERESA BÊCO DO LOBO



The White House Collection of American Crafts at the National Museum of American Art through September 4, 1995

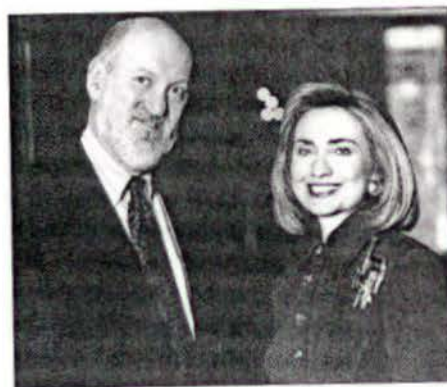
"The President and I like to think of the White House as the American people's house. Not only is it a place where the executive branch conducts the people's business, it is also a 200-year-old living museum of American art and history. Thousands of visitors tour the building each day, taking in the elegant simplicity of James Hoban's architecture, the natural beauty of the gardens,

and the grandeur of the formal rooms. Visitors leave with a new appreciation of the rich culture that links our past, present, and future as Americans.

In January, 1993, when the President and I moved into the White House, we became guardians of this living museum and the traditions it represents. We wanted to make sure the White House continued to reflect the vital role that art and culture have played in our democracy for more than two centuries. And with our nation just beginning to celebrate the "Year of American Craft," it seemed only fitting to make the "people's house" a showcase for one of our nation's oldest cultural forms.

Crafts have been an integral part of American life since Colonial times, as objects of utility and as aesthetic additions to our daily surroundings. But there is also a human dimension that connects us in a special way to American crafts. These artists create with their hands. And they pass on their skills from generation to generation: from fathers to sons, mothers to daughters, and grandparents to grandchildren. As a result, what might have been a dying art form after the Industrial Revolution is today one of our most vibrant, creative forms of cultural expression.

The idea of displaying American crafts in the White House began long before our celebration of the Year of American Craft. For example, First Lady Ellen Wilson decorated rooms in the private quarters with weavings from Tennessee and the Carolinas. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt furnished an upstairs bedroom with crafts from her Val-Kill project and from the Works Progress Administration. Presidents and First Ladies often have displayed crafts at holiday celebrations and as table centerpieces at White House functions.



First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, wearing William Harper's cloisonné brooch from The White House Collection of American Crafts, with Michael W. Monroe, Curator-in-Charge of the Renwick Gallery.

The Year of American Craft in 1993 presented us a wonderful opportunity to display contemporary American crafts in the formal public rooms of the White House.

To help assemble a collection, I turned to one of the nation's experts, Michael W. Monroe, Curator-in-Charge of the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art. His idea was to identify works of leading artists as well as those who are just

emerging. The 72 objects he selected come from all regions of the country and include works in wood, glass, metal, fiber, and clay. All were donated by the artists or their patrons.

I only wish every one of our citizens could have seen these exquisite works displayed at the White House, along with craft ornaments decorating the many Christmas trees on view that first holiday season. Thousands of Americans shared in their beauty over the holidays, and more than 1.5 million others have had a chance to enjoy them while visiting the White House in the months since then.

The President and I are delighted that this magnificent White House collection of American crafts will now be on display at the National Museum of American Art and available to an even wider audience. The pieces represent the extraordinary beauty and diversity of American craftsmanship as well as the generous spirit of our artists. It is our hope that the exhibition, along with this book and a "virtual tour" on the Internet, will help further appreciation of crafts as an essential part of our cultural life."

Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Reprinted with permission from the book, The White House Collection of American Crafts, published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

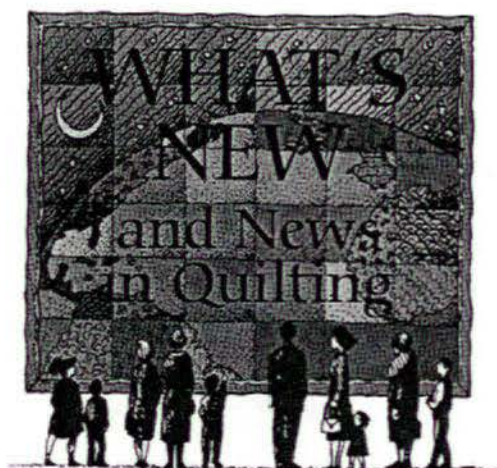
First lady comes to NMAA

Hillary Rodham Clinton spoke to a packed press conference at American Art on the morning of April 26 to help open the new exhibition "The White House Collection of American Crafts."

"The pieces in this exhibition represent the extraordinary beauty and diversity of American craftsmanship, as well as the generous spirit of our artists," the first lady said.

This one-of-a-kind collection of 72 objects was formed in 1993, with the encouragement of the first family, in honor of the Year of American Craft. Contemporary glass, ceramic, fiber, wood and metal works were selected for the White House by Michael Monroe, curator-in-charge of the Renwick Gallery.

One of the highlights of Clinton's visit was an introduction to the new NMAA World Wide Web site that features a "virtual tour" of the exhibition. Her guide on the virtual tour was Vinton Cerf, one of the originators of the Internet.



by Barbara Smith

We are always interested in hearing about what goes on in your part of the quilt world and sharing it with our readers. Please send your information, inquiries, and photos to News Editor, Quilter's Newsletter Magazine, Box 4101, Golden, CO 80402-4101 (303-278-1010).

SMITHSONIAN EXHIBITS WHITE HOUSE CRAFT COLLECTION

The entire White House Craft Collection from the Year of American Craft (1993) is being exhibited at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art (Calendar, page 14). The collection contains three quilts. One by Judy Dales is this issue's Photo Finish. Adrien Rothschild and Ellen Kochansky made the other two quilts.

After the exhibit, individual pieces may be displayed periodically at the White House until the end of the Clinton Administration. The collection is then expected to be transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration and eventually to the Clinton Presidential Library, where it may be made available for loan.

AMERICAN CRAFTS
at the
Smithsonian



Photo by Gene Young

A sampling from the shop at the National Museum of American Art, representing the White House Collection of American Crafts now on exhibit through September 4.
Visit the Museum Shops at American Art, American History and the Renwick Gallery and choose from a variety of crafts including ceramics, textiles, glass and jewelry by contemporary American artists.

National Museum of American Art
8th & G Streets, NW
Museum Shop: 202.357.1545

 **SMITHSONIAN**
Museum Shops

dustrialist Charles Lang Freer served the artist as patron and pallbearer and eventually donated his collection of Whistlers and Oriental art to the Smithsonian museum which bears his name. Permanently installed at the Freer is the Peacock Room, an extraordinary environment inspired by oriental porcelain and lacquerware, created by Whistler as the dining room for a London townhouse.

The current show, entitled *Whistler and Japan*, features 31 paintings, drawings and prints produced during the 1860s and 1870s. Among them are several from his *Nocturnes* series, incandescent nightscapes of sailboats and fireworks. Works from the Japanese holdings are juxtaposed with Whistler's to show the influences of Eastern art on the artist's development. In other galleries are paintings of women by Japanese artists and 18 more paintings by Whistler, including the atmospheric *The Thames in Ice*.

The National Portrait Gallery, like a good portrait painter, aims to capture the spirit of the man. Its show, *In Pursuit of the Butterfly*, scans 83 images of Whistler—from a childhood photograph taken in St. Petersburg and likenesses by fellow artists to vitriolic and affectionate caricatures. Add to these the many self-portraits, and Whistler becomes "the most depicted artist of the 19th century."

Each of these shows gauges the artist who, in effect, facilitated the birth of modernism. Some of the works recall other farsighted artists like J.M.W. Turner who created harborscapes of "tinted steam." Almost all anticipate 20th-century concerns. Several prefigure the color field painters or, like *Nocturne: Blue and Silver—Chelsea*, contain brush strokes as gestural as any by the abstract expressionists. In a century that wanted art to provide stories and nature's beauty and easy sentiment, Whistler insisted that art was really about problems of light, color, structure and line.

In 1855, just before Whistler left his homeland for good, he worked briefly and unenthusiastically in Washington. At the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, he made etchings for government maps and topographical studies. Now, 92 years after his death, Whistler returns in triumph, himself the object of a grand and loving survey.

The National Portrait Gallery show runs through August 13 at Eighth and F streets NW, Gallery Place Metro. The Freer Gallery of Art show runs through January 1, 1996, on Jefferson Drive at Twelfth Street NW, Smithsonian Metro, (202) 357-2700. At the National Gallery of Art, the large show continues through August 20, and a show of prints by Whistler and his contemporaries opens June 16 and runs through September 24. Both are in the West Building on Constitution Avenue at Fourth Street NW, (202) 737-4215. ■

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Life & Arts

D

SECTION

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

EXHIBITS

By MARY DANIELS
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

With the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art right across the street from the White House, it was quite natural for Hillary Rodham Clinton to turn to her neighbor for help when she decided to form the first official White House Crafts Collection, says Michael W. Monroe.

He is the curator in charge of the Renwick Gallery, which exhibits American craft of all periods and collects 20th-century American craft.

Clinton asked Monroe "to find works that would work with the architecture of the White House," he says.

It was a major undertaking done in record time, one that has resulted in an exhibit (which opened April 28 at the National

Bird Jar, right, blown glass by David W. Levi



MADE



IN

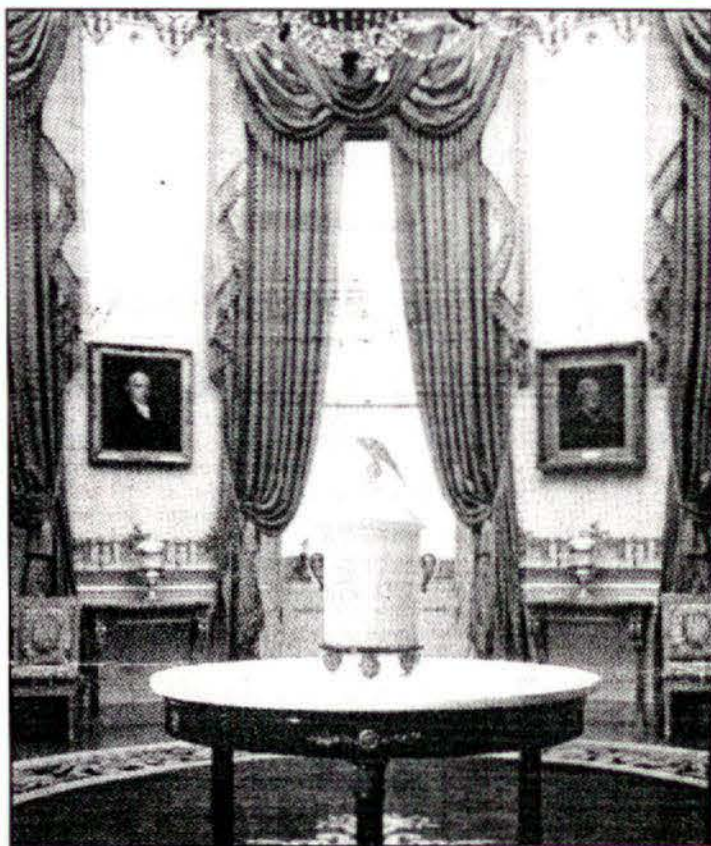
Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C.) and a book. Both reflect the powerful, visionary work being done in fine craft across America today.

Until Sept. 4, the public can see 72 contemporary craft objects, by 77 artisans, that have been displayed on a rotating basis in the Executive Mansion's public and private spaces since 1993.

If a trip to the nation's capital is out of the question, craft lovers still can see the pieces in the book *The White House Collection of American Crafts*, by Michael W. Monroe (Harry N. Abrams Inc., \$35). The well-illustrated volume was published

to coincide with the opening of the exhibit. It contains an essay by Barbara Lee Diamonstein, a noted arts commentator and former White House staff assistant, and 92 color

More on CRAFTS on Page 2



National Museum of American Art/JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR

Centerpiece Bowl, top, by Randy Stromsoe. Bird Vase, middle, by Dimitri Michaelides and David W. Levi

AMERICA

White House collection highlights crafts

Crafts

Continued from Page 1
photographs cataloging the exhibit.

The endeavor began serendipitously in 1993, when the White House participated in the celebration of the Year of American Craft. The Clintons invited more than 3,000 craft artists from across the United States to create ornaments with an angel theme for the official White House Christmas tree. When it was discovered that the Christmas tree needed a new skirt, Monroe says, quilters from each state were asked to do a segment depicting characteristics of their home state.

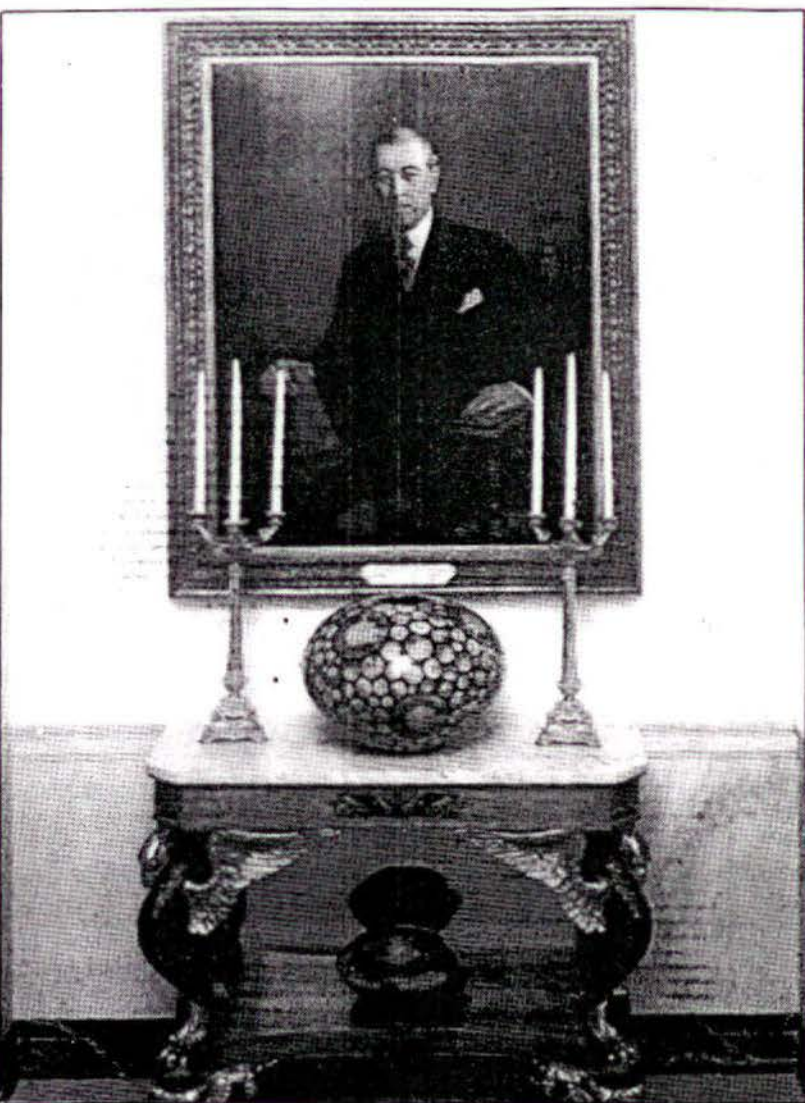
These craftspeople's contributions convinced the first lady that American crafts could be displayed in many other areas of the White House.

More than 1 million visitors annually tour the White House to view the many historical paintings, sculptures and other pieces of decorative art that have been collected in it. "The White House is filled with furniture, china, glassware, carpets, drapes, settees, sofas, which are exquisite examples of historical craftsmanship," Monroe says.

Today's crafts could be displayed on mantels, tables and bookshelves throughout the residence, Monroe says. His task was to find works appropriate to those spots.

Judging by the book, he made good matches. For example, the curator points out a work called *New Beginnings*, a redwood bowl carved from a burl of redwood by Tulsa woodworker Ronald Fleming, in a design of individual overlapping leaves. Monroe says of the bowl, placed in the Red Room with its mahogany furniture, "You can see how that piece echoes against the carvings in that room."

Monroe also points out the abundance of gold leaf in the White House, noting that the craft collection includes several pieces that incorporate the same material. The *Prayer Bowls* of Cheryl



White Pine Mosaic Bowl, white pine and resin by Philip Moulthrop, and Translucent Wood Bowl, Pacific Norfolk pine by Ron Kent, adorn a console table under a portrait of President Woodrow Wilson on the grand staircase in the White House.

C. Williams, a ceramist from Eugene, Ore., are among them.

Apart from texture and color, shapes were another consideration. Beneath an elongated portrait of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis in the Vermeil Room, Monroe has placed the *Incandescent Bottles* of North Carolina artist Michael Sherrill. Monroe describes the bottles as "extenuated, long, tall and elegant vessels."

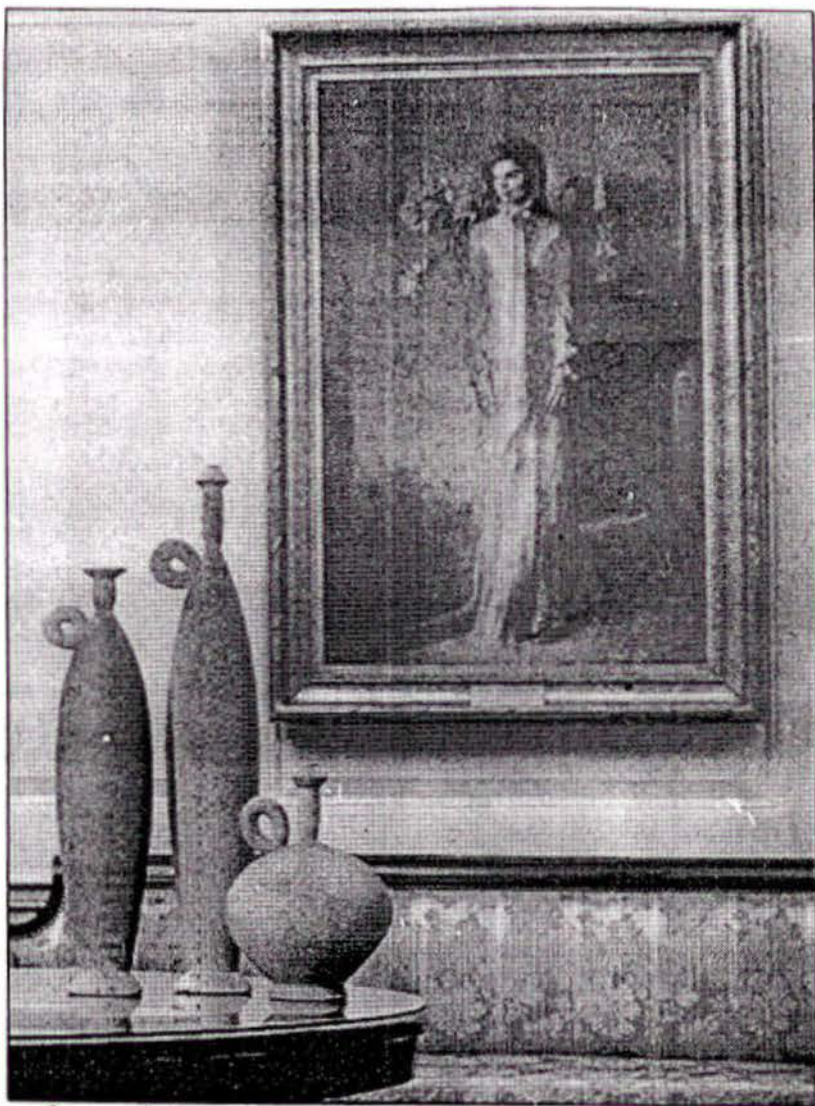
When choosing items for the collection, Monroe says he looked "not only for ideals of craftsmanship, but extraordinary vision" in the artists.

To show a full range of media, he

covered five categories: clay, wood, fiber, glass and metal.

The collection indicates the continuity of craft from one generation to another: for example, a glass sculpture by Harvey Littleton of North Carolina, who is credited with reviving contemporary glass blowing, and another by his son John Littleton and John's wife, Kate Vogel, also North Carolina glass blowers.

Monroe also wanted to represent the many ways that artists learn their crafts. For example, Native American Nathan Youngblood of Santa Clara Pueblo, N.M., who donated a carved black jar to the col-



National Museum of American Art/John Bigelow Taylor

The elongated shapes of Michael Sherrill's *Incandescent Bottles* reflect the proportions in the portrait of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis in the Vermeil Room.

lection, learned by the apprentice system, Monroe says. "Other people have gone to the highest, most sophisticated art schools," he says.

Both men and women and a range of ages are represented, from self-taught California furniture-maker Sam Maloof, who still is producing in his 80s, to 27-year-old Zachary Oxman of Virginia, who donated a bronze, granite and marble menorah.

"I wanted to do the whole spectrum, from extremely established to midcareer to emerging people," Monroe adds. "I tried to reflect the great diversity of craftsmanship that exists in this country."

Geographic diversity is represented, too; artists were chosen from across the country. James Watkins of Lubbock, who makes large stoneware vessels, is the only Texan among them.

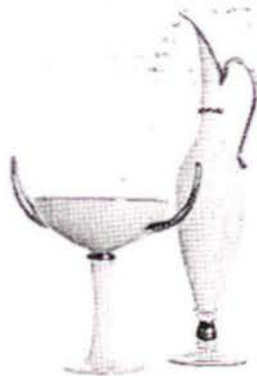
Most artists donated their pieces to the White House. Because of the short time frame (the book was started around Thanksgiving), few of them created special pieces for the collection, Monroe says. Two who did are Sidney Hutter of Massachusetts, who created *White House Vase 1* in cut, ground and polished plate glass; and Bennett Bean of New Jersey, who made a white earthenware vessel with a 24-karat gold interior called *The*



Beau Couple, hand-formed glass by Mary Ann "Toots" Zynsky.



Imago Bag, blown and etched glass by John Littleton and Kate Vogel.



Yellow Pair, blown glass by Dante Marioni.

White House Bowl.

Many of the pieces in the exhibit already have been used as centerpieces for state dinners in the White House. Monroe says it was a special moment for him when he was "fortunate enough to be invited to one of those dinners and saw it for myself."

The artists, too, are pleased about the collection. Cheryl Williams went to the White House last year to see her work. "It's great the craft collection is in newspapers and magazines, giving people an overview of what's going on in the crafts world," she says. Whereas the work of relatively few craftspeople is included in the show, she says, "there are thousands of artists out there."

Wood turner Ronald E. Kent of Honolulu says he is "overwhelmed

to be in the White House Collection. My knees got weak just getting an invitation from the first lady.

"It is wonderful recognition of the fine craft movement and of the blurred distinction between wonderful craftsmen and craft artists, the indeterminate feeling of soul some work has that others, no matter how technical, never achieve."

Craft collection

The White House Collection of American Crafts is on view from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily through Sept. 4 at the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Eighth and G streets N.W., Washington, D.C. Admission is free. For information, call (202) 357-2700.

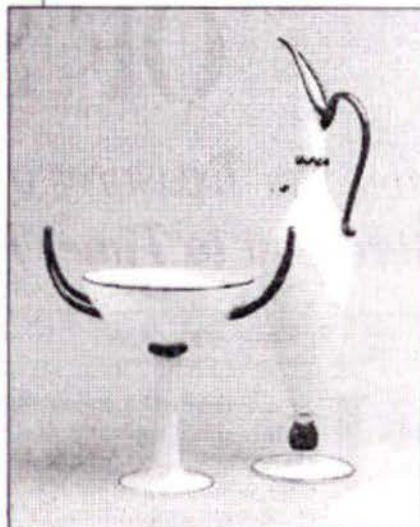
HERE & NOW

ART

AT LEAST ONE OF THE THREE bite-size shows on the third floor of the National Museum of American Art is bound to sate any taste. For lovers of graphic arts, there's a one-gallery installation of recently donated drawings, prints and paintings by beloved American intimist Will Barnet, now 84. No retrospective, it nonetheless sketches Barnet's journey from '30s realism to '50s abstraction and on to the distinctively flat, patterned style that makes this artist's tranquil images of his wife, daughter, family cats and birds so widely collected and admired. Nearby, "The Color of Abstraction: Revisiting the Washington Color School" marks the 30th anniversary of this city's distinctive contribution to 20th-century abstract painting. But best of all—especially for anyone discouraged about the state of the arts in America—is "The White House Collection of American Crafts," a splendid array of vessels, bowls, candlesticks and other forms in glass, wood and ceramic that easily cross the line from craft into the realm of expressive sculptural form and, thus, art.

—Jo Ann Lewis

At the National Museum of American Art. The Barnet show closes July 4, the Color School Aug. 20 and "The White House Collection" Sept. 4. Open daily 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. 202-357-2700.



© JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR, NYC

Left, Will Barnet's "Study for Self-Portrait" (1982-83). Above, blown-glass "Yellow Pair," by Dante Marioni.

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JUN 4, 1995

Wood sculptor no longer going against the grain

By MYRA YELLIN OUTWATER

As an art student at the University of Colorado in the early 1970s, David Ellsworth was forced to major in sculpture because there was no accredited major in wood turning. "You could not show wood turning as an art student," said the 51-year-old Ellsworth. "It was considered a craft, not an art form."

No longer. The Haycock Township resident's work can now be found in the permanent collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Fine Arts, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Ga., the American Museum of Crafts in New York City, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and National Gallery of American Art in the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. He is represented nationally by galleries in Santa Fe, Phoenix, Los Angeles and New York.

Three years ago Ellsworth was asked to donate one of his hollowed-out vessels to the newly established White House Collection of American Crafts. In April, Ellsworth and his wife, Wendy, were invited to a dinner in Washington honoring those whose works were part of this collection. The dinner coincided with the official opening of the exhibition "The White House Collection of American Crafts" now on display through Labor Day at the Smithsonian's National Gallery of American Art. Ellsworth's work also has been included in a new book, "The White House Collection of American Crafts" (Harry Abrams; \$35; 128 pp.), which was published this spring.

"This show [The White House Collection of American Crafts] is exciting for us as artists because it is the first time that a major politician has shown an interest in arts and crafts in this manner," said Ellsworth during an interview in his woodland studio. "It has been a great honor to be part of this collection, especially since Hillary [Clinton] has been using a lot of the pieces as centerpieces for official White House dinners. The key to successful marketing of art is who you show with and where."

The idea for the exhibition came about after the Clintons declared 1993 the year of the American Craft. Michael Monroe, the curator of the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art,

The Better

was told to select the works of established and emerging artists working in five mediums — glass, fiber, clay, wood and metal.

Said Monroe, "David has established a reputation because of his unique shapes and forms and because of his presence in so many prestigious museum and private collections. Wood-turning has been around for a long time, but it has just become popular in the last 10 years. David has been doing it for more than 20 years and is considered one of the top turners in the field. His vase in the White House is a perfect meshing of form and material."

When Ellsworth looks at his wood, he talks of it poetically. He uses the word "translucence" to describe the sensuous satiny finish. He describes a bowl that sits on a shelf, slightly off balance, as sassy. He uses the word "chatoyant" when referring to the changeable lustre of his pieces as they shimmer and reflect the light.

Ellsworth's works exude a serenity, a natural grace and an elegant simplicity. Design and texture are fused together to simulate the qualities of ceramics. In fact it was ceramic forms that first influenced Ellsworth when he began to work with his industrial lathes to create his signature thin-walled polished vessels.

"My original aim was to reinterpret ceramic designs in wood, but most wood workers in those days either made furniture or created functional vessels. There wasn't much of an appreciation of a purely decorative wooden object. Today crafts are pushing their boundaries into fine arts. ... I consider myself an artist who works in a craft medium."

It was in the late '70s that Ellsworth first began to get national critical recognition after years of selling his objects at craft shows. In 1981 he left Colorado, where he had spent most of his life, and bought 20 acres outside Quakertown, where he now works and holds classes in wood-turning. "I realized that living in Colorado gave me no credibility in the art world. I chose this area because I could retain my privacy and still be accessible to New York and other metropolitan centers."

Ellsworth still harvests most of his wood himself from his land. Occasionally he will buy special pieces from dealers. He begins with a chain saw and then refines his pieces on a lathe. To create his spectacular shapes and forms he invented his own set of bent tools.

"Like many men of my era I began to work with wood in a high school shop," said Ellsworth. "Today I can read wood so well by its grain, color and texture that I know what the final piece will look like before I even begin."

"The White House Collection of American Crafts" continues through Sept. 4 at the National Museum of American Art in the Old Patent Office Building, Eighth and G streets NW, Washington D.C. Hours are 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. daily. Information: 202-357-2700.

Myra Yellin Outwater is a freelance writer.

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JUN 9, 1995

NATIONAL CRAFTS

The **White House collection of American crafts** will be on display at the National Museum of American Art through Sept. 4. The exhibit will be accompanied by a virtual tour on the Internet and fully illustrated book.

This collection of 72 objects was formed in 1993 with the encouragement of Bill and Hillary Clinton in honor of the "Year of the American Craft."

Admission is free. For more information, call (202) 357-2700.

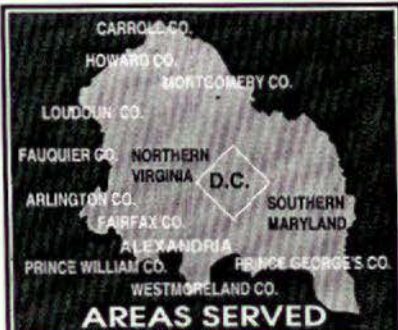
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imaging the Politics, Culture, and Events of Our Times



JUNE 30, 1995 50¢

HAPPY 219TH BIRTHDAY, AMERICA



P.J. Robinson
Metro Herald Contributing Editor

As we celebrate our two-hundred nineteenth year of independence as a nation, we should assume a "Janus" attitude: one that looks back at how far we have come in those two-centuries-plus of freedom; and one that looks ahead, as we teeter on the brink of the 21st century—the next millennium.

We can get the best of both perspectives culturally thanks to a comprehensive "virtual tour" on the Internet's World Wide Web, which features—online—the National Museum of American Art exhibition,

Continued on page 44

The White House Collection of American Crafts. A fully illustrated book with especially commissioned photographs of the objects in the White House public and private rooms, published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., in May, accompanies the exhibition.

The nation's First House, owned and maintained by each of us taxpayers, returns the favor to us in this breathtaking exhibition by lending some of the works from the best and the brightest artisans housed at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue to the museum-going public—or to cybernauts, who prefer to let their fingers/mice do the "walking" via the Internet.

The unique collection of crafts that is the subject of this Internet virtual tour was formed in 1993 with the encouragement of President **BILL CLINTON** AND First Lady **HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON** in honor of the Year of American Craft.

"The President and I are delighted this magnificent White House collection of American crafts [is being] exhibited at the National Museum of American Art," said the First Lady.

"The pieces represent the extraordinary beauty and diversity of American craftsmanship and the generous spirit of our country's artists," she concluded. Most of the works were donated by their makers; four are gifts of artists' patrons.

Taking advantage of the newest and fastest growing part of the Internet, the World Wide Web site combines video, audio, texts,

and color images to give electronic visitors an expansive window on the ideas and techniques of the 77 American craft artists whose work is on loan to the museum. It also provides users the opportunity to see many of the works in their White House settings as well as the museum installation.

The tour address is <http://www.nmaa.si.edu/whc/americancrafts>.

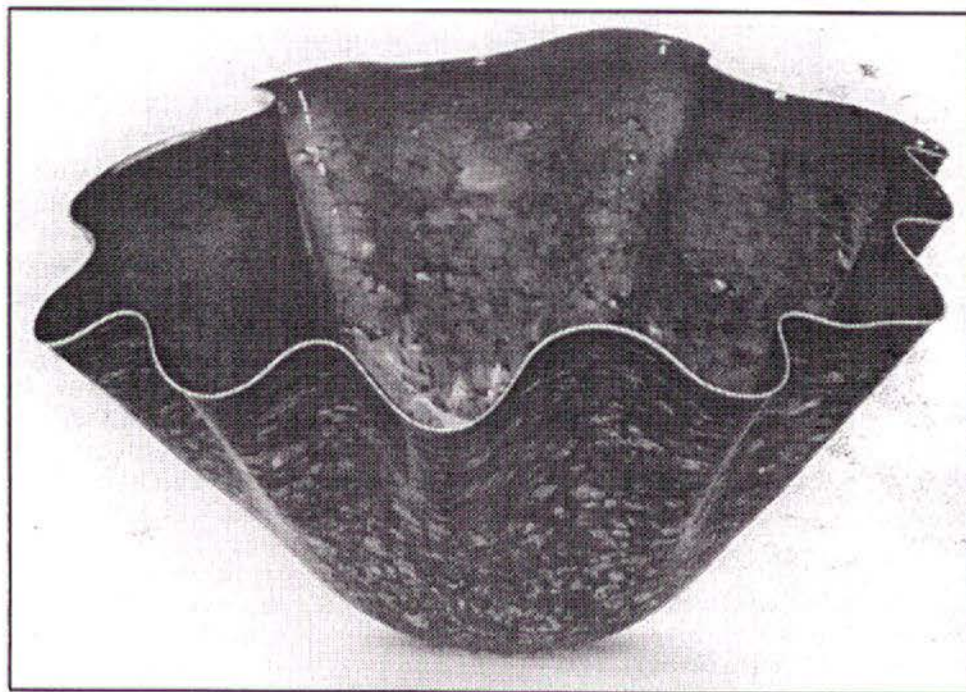
The exhibition was organized by the National Museum of American Art. The accompanying virtual tour on the Internet was made possible by a gift from MCI.

"This is an exciting moment as well as a significant one for the [museum] and everyone interested in crafts. The President and Mrs. Clinton have taken a special interest in our nation's craft art, reflected in their efforts to collect and display these objects at the White House. We are [also] pleased to have the support of MCI to make possible a virtual tour of the show on the Internet," National Museum of American Art Director **ELIZABETH BROWN** said. "Focused largely on the craft artists themselves, [the] electronic tour will be enriching for people around the world who cannot come to the museum, as well as for visitors to the exhibition, who cannot visit the artists in their studios."

"We are very pleased to be able to offer our support to a program that potentially can give millions of citizens an online glimpse of the White House Collection of American Crafts," said **BERT C. ROBERT, JR.**, MCI Chairman and CEO.

"The Internet tour is organized to allow visitors to pursue their own interests among the objects in the show, their makers, and the context of their display at the White House and now at the National Museum of American Art," said **STEVE DIETZ**, chief of publications and new media initiatives for the museum. "The tour will grow and become richer over time as we add new video clips, status reports of works in progress, guest comments, and other information."

From the opening screen, which offers the option of a video introduction to the tour by Brown, one begins the tour by selecting from three basic categories: object pages, artist pages, and an "in virtu" tour of the White House.



Cerulean Blue Macchia with Chartreuse Lip Wrap, 1993, Dale Chihuly; blown glass, 22" x 31" x 30"; lent by the White House, gift of the artist.

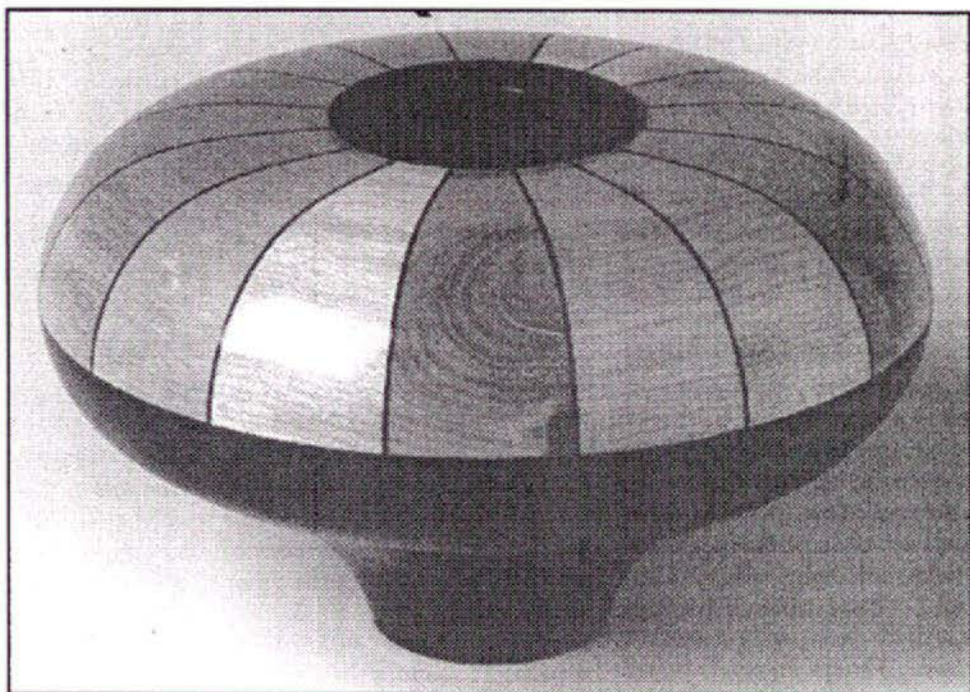


Ian in Lion Costume, 1993, AKIRA BLOUNT; cotton, wool, buttons, and beans; stitched and painted (man's face), 24" x 8-1/2" x 11-1/2"; lent by the White House, gift of the artist.

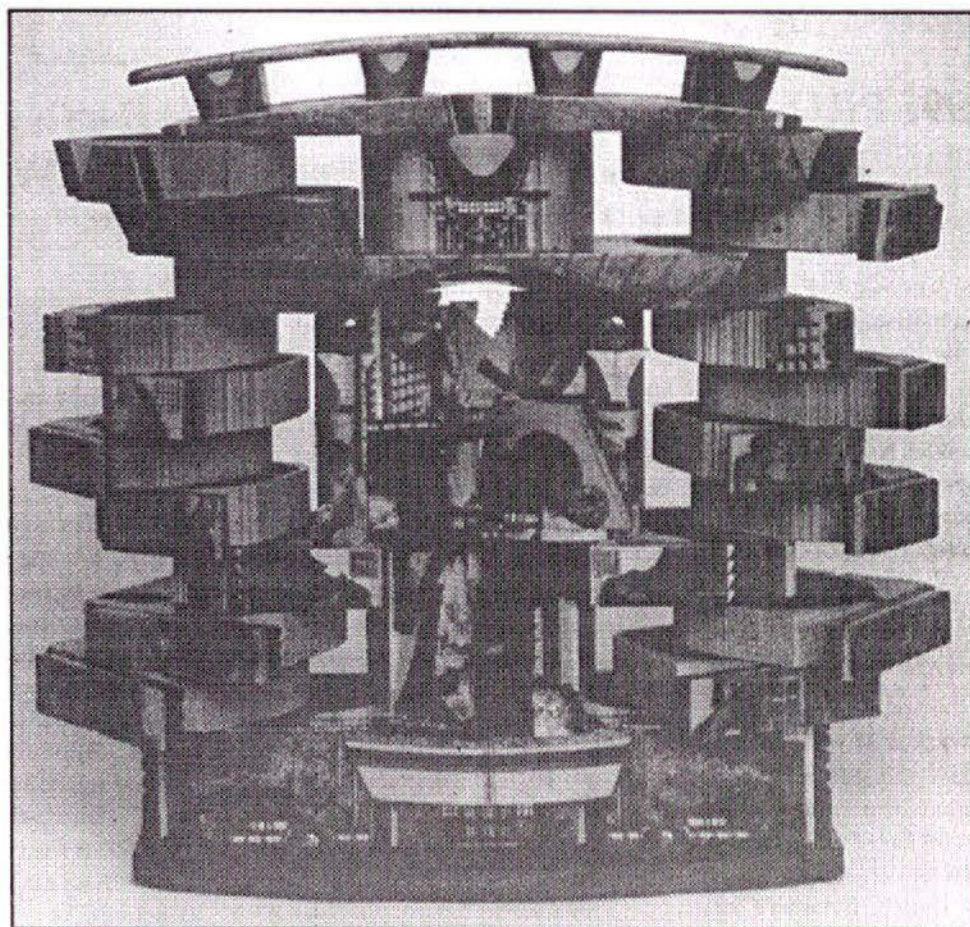
All of the works are shown in full and with a detail that reveals texture, patterning, and color. Nine video clips feature **MICHAEL MONROE**, curator-in-charge of the museum's Renwick Gallery, who assembled the collection for the White House, examining unusual features of some objects such as the intricate compartments of **PO SHUN LEONG**'s "Cityscape Box."

Studio visits take Internet users behind the scenes to discover how crafts are produced. Artists in all five media—glass, wood, clay, metal, and fiber—demonstrate and discuss what tools they use, how they work their materials, and what distinguishes their approach to their craft. Personal philosophy and insights are woven in.

Quilter **ELLEN KOCHANSKY**



Longitudinal II, 1993, BOB HAWKS; purple heart and yellow boxwood; segmented and lathe-turned; 4-7/8" x 7 7/8"; lent by the White House, gift of the artist.



Cityscape Box, 1993, PO SHUN LEONG; birds eye maple, eastern hard maple, black walnut, and cherry; band-sawn and carved, 24" x 20-1/4" x 9"; lent by the White House, gift of the artist.

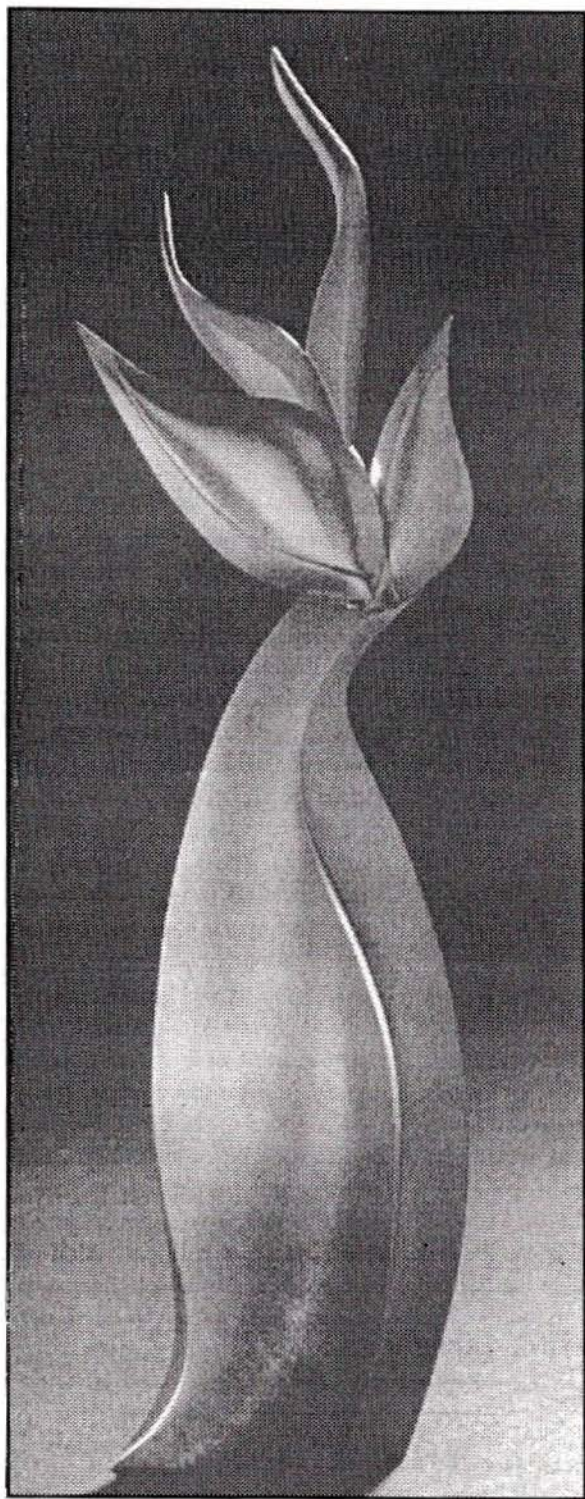
explains, "I take cloth and I paint with it and I find that it has a kind of character which

affects people very deeply because it is pre-verbal. Everybody has associations with cloth, which are indescribable but very powerful."

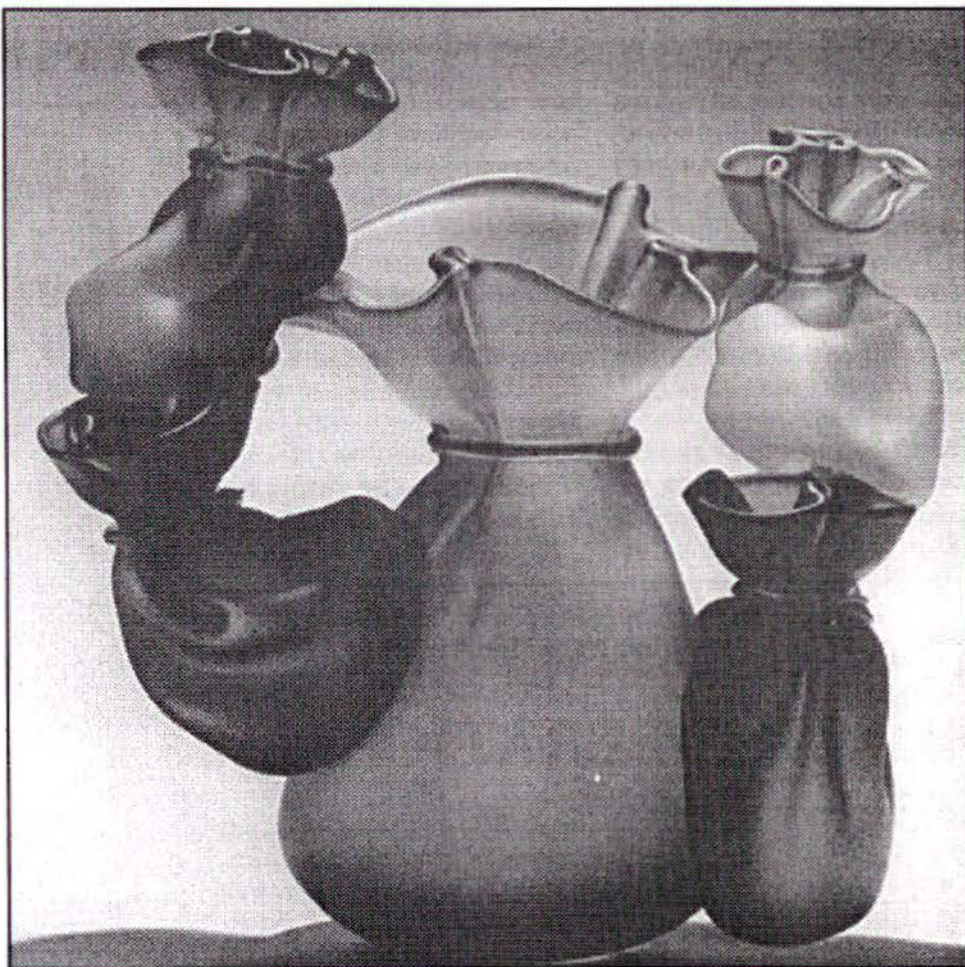
About 50 of the artists responded to a questionnaire for the Internet tour that explores issues such as where they get their inspiration, the most exciting and difficult parts of creating for them, what technology they use in working, if they wish to share a "secret of the trade" that makes their work successful, and their attitude towards technology.

In the "works in progress" section of the tour, two dozen artists share new works as they are being made, allowing repeat visitors to watch the evolution of objects. The "in virtu" tour shows 21 crafts installed in public rooms in the White House. Internet users hear or read short comments on the significance of the crafts in those particular settings from Monroe, whose 30-second video clips open with views of the White House exterior that peel back to reveal striking interior shots where the crafts were installed among elaborate and often historically important furnishings. A piece made of contrasting purple and black woods by **PETER PETROCHKO**, for example, echoes linear patterning suggestive of the topography of a nearby rare 1775 version of a map charted by **PETER JEFFERSON**, the father of **THOMAS JEFFERSON**.

The National Museum of American Art has provided electronic access to its collections and resources since September 1993, when it became a "virtual museum" on the commercial online service, America Online. The museum significantly expanded its electronic presence by opening a gopher site on the Internet in late January 1995 featuring more than 600 digital images of art and artists as well as an array of educational and research texts, publi-



Flora, Scent Bottle, 1993, Suzanne L. Amendolara; sterling silver and 24k gold; smithed, fabricated, hydraulic-pressed, and dye-formed; 9-3/8" x 2-1/2" x 1-5/8"; lent by the White House, gift of the artist.



***Imago Bag*, 1993, JOHN LITTLETON and KATE VOGEL; blown glass; etched, 13-3/4" x 12-1/2" x 9 1/2"; lent by the White House, gift of the artist.**

cations, and general information. The World Wide Web site now going online contains similar material in more complex format, combining text and graphics.

For the non-cybernauts among us, the exhibition will be on display at the National Museum of American Art—the nation's first federal art collection—through **September 4**. Located in the historic Old Patent Office Building at Eighth and G Streets, NW, the museum is above the **Gallery Place Metro**

station.

Hours: **10:00AM-5:30PM** daily except Christmas Day. Admission is *free*.

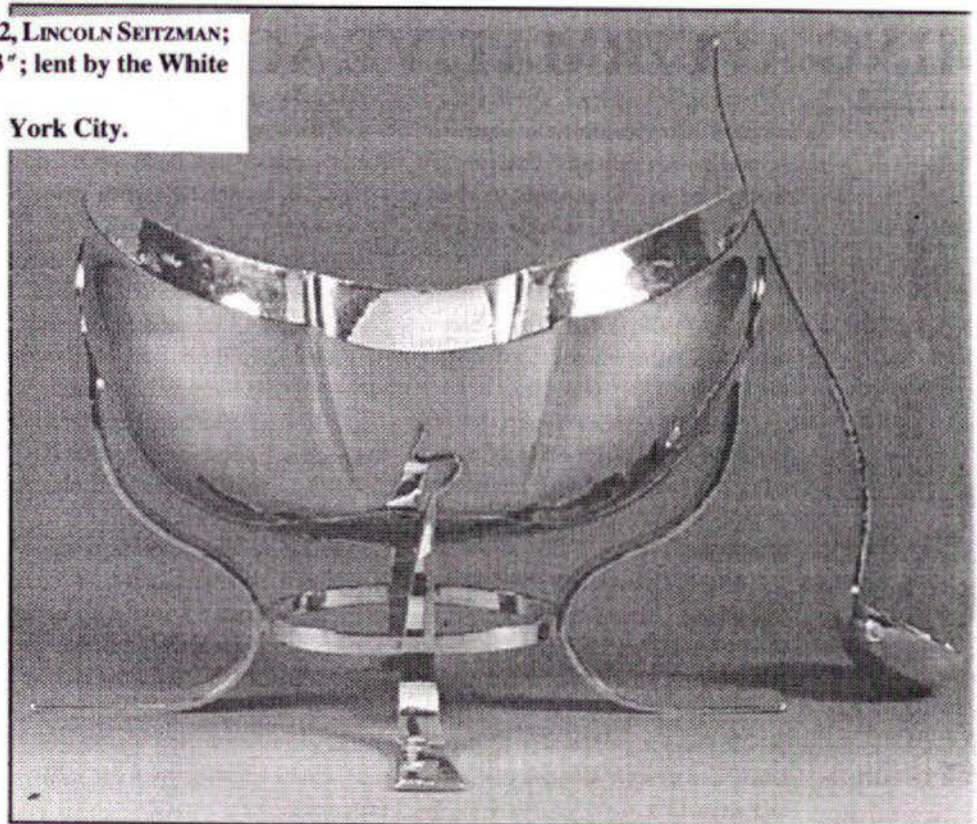
FOR MORE INFORMATION: 202•357•2700, 202•357•4522 (TTY), 202•633•9126 (SPANISH RECORDING).

***Cover photo: A Festival of Light*, 1993, Zachary Oxman; bronze, granite, and marble; cast; 15" x 23-3/4" x 17"; lent by the White House, gift of the artist.**



White Mountain Apache Olla Basket Illusion, 1992, LINCOLN SEITZMAN; guatambu wood and ink, lathe-turned, 21" x 13"; lent by the White House, gift of the artist.

All photographs © JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR, New York City.



Oval Punch Bowl and Ladle, 1993, DAWN KIILANI HOFFMANN; sterling silver; raised and forged, 10-1/2" x 15" x 12-1/4"; lent by the White House, gift of the artist.

what's up!

in June & July

museums and galleries

THE ARCHITECTURE OF BRUCE GOFF, 1904-82

A survey of Bruce Goff's work includes about 100 sketches of noted projects,



such as the Ruth Ford House in Aurora, Illinois, and the Pavilion for Japanese Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Four models of projects designed by Goff but never built have been commissioned. *Composition; watercolor on paper. "Design for the Continuous Present,"* The Art Institute of Chicago (312-443-3600), June 9-September 4.

A CENTURY OF SILVER

More than 150 examples of serving pieces in varying shapes, sizes, and patterns demonstrate the evolution of silver production and marketing in America. Manufacturers include such companies as Reed & Barton, Tiffany & Co., and Gorham. "Silver in America, 1840-1940: A Century of Splendor," Milwaukee Art Museum (414-224-3200), June 16-August 13.

THE FABRIC OF JAPANESE LIFE

Forty garments and textiles created in rural areas of Japan bring to light a folk-craft movement led in the 1920s and '30s



by philosopher Yanagi Muneyoshi. *Bedcover (futonji); cotton and ikat, late-19th to early-20th centuries. "The Fabric of Life: Japanese Folk Textiles,"* Los Angeles County Museum of Art (213-857-6000), May 3-August 20.

CLAES OLDENBURG

Humorous monumentality characterizes the artist's collages and soft sculptures from the past 35 years. Plus sketches of never-realized projects (a giant pair of scissors, a melting ice-cream bar, among others). *Mu-Mu; muslin soaked in plaster over wire frame, painted with enamel, 1961. "Claes Oldenburg: An Anthology,"* The Museum of Contemporary Art at California Plaza, Los Angeles (213-626-6222), July 2-September 3.



MATERIAL WORLD

More than 100 objects and materials used in industrial design—woods, plastics, glass, and metals—have been manipulated and modified by artists from around the world. Among the futuristic prototypes, all created within the last ten years, are a carbon-fiber airplane, liquid-plastic swimmer's fins, and ceramic razor blades. *Tan Delta Force Fin, Bob Evans; liquid-cast heat-curved Uniroyal flexible polyurethane, 1994. "Mutant Materials in Contemporary Design,"* Museum of Modern Art, New York (212-708-9480), May 25-August 27.



last chance

TREASURES OF THE SULTANS

Jewelry, weapons, ceramics, and textiles from the Ottoman Empire are exhibited in conjunction with the Houston International Festival, which celebrates the art of Turkey this year. *Shield; wicker with silk and silver embroidery, steel inlaid with gold, mid-16th century. "Masterpieces from the Topkapi Palace, Istanbul, Turkey,"* Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (713-639-7300), through June 11.



JAPONICA MAGNIFICA

An exhibition of Japanese botanicals is on view at the PaineWebber Art Gallery in New York through June 30. For information, call 212-713-2885.

FIVE DECADES OF FIBER

The American Craft Museum in New York traces the evolution of fabric. Materials range from silk and linen to telephone wire and wood. Through June 25. For information, call 212-956-3535.

SIGMAR POLKE'S MAGIC LANTERNS

An exhibition of works by German artist Sigmar Polke begins with a chronological survey of his editioned creations with Mylar, laser-jet prints, and collage from 1966 on. Fifty-two panels of his "Magic Lantern" paintings—double-sided images on stretched translucent polyester—form a 200-foot maze of folktales and visual puns. In addition, six of Polke's largest transparent paintings from the past four years are grouped together to elucidate his technique. *Camp; artificial resin, lacquer on synthetic fabric, 1994. "Sigmar Polke: Illumination,"* Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (612-375-7622), May 6-September 17. Plus, for the first time, an outdoor installation of figurative work by Joel Shapiro in the Sculpture Garden.



antiques shows and sales

- *Sotheby's sales:* Dr. and Mrs. Henry P. Deyerle's Americana furniture and decorations at the Boar's Head Inn, Charlottesville, VA, May 26-27; call 212-606-7130. Bid for Life auction, June 26, honors Robert Woolley, head of the decorative arts division, with a fund-raising benefit for AIDS-related organizations; call 212-606-7100.
- *Olympia Fine Art and Antiques Fair,* June 8-18. More than 400 international dealers at the Grand Hall Olympia, London; call 44-71-370-8186.
- *The Grosvenor House Art & Antiques Fair,* June 15-24. Vetted antiques, paintings, and decorative art at Grosvenor House, London; call 44-71-499-6363.

take note

- *Annie Laurie Aitken Galleries,* showcasing 17th- and 18th-century English decorative arts, open June 6 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (212-535-7710).
- *Comité Colbert Festival in New York,* June 5-10. Saks Fifth Avenue and other companies, including Bernardaud and Chanel, host in-store events. Call 212-737-3872.
- *White House Collection of American Crafts,* until September at the National Museum of American Art (202-357-2700).

Teapots with Attitude

Though they will never pour tea, Michael Sherrill's undulating sculptures crackle with energy

by Liz Seymour

VISUAL ARTS

This is where I was 10 years ago," says Michael Sherrill, lifting down an oatmeal-colored teapot from a shelf by the wood stove. Serviceable and well-balanced, the teapot is an exercise in basic shapes.

"But I was interested in doing more with the surface, so I moved into something like this," he says, setting a second pot down on the red-and-white-checked kitchen tablecloth. This one, in porcelain, is still conventional and functional but is embellished with a slip-painted brown tree. "Then I showed this one to a dealer I knew, and he said, 'Michael, you've got a great sense of form, so why do you want to paint all over it?' I thought about that a lot and eventually I ended up"—Sherrill crosses the room and returns with a third pot—"here."

Here is radically different from anything that went before. The piece is still recognizably a teapot, but a teapot that is pockmarked, flattened, folded, and stretched, undulating at the spout, and crackling with energy. No longer a pot that will ever pour tea, the ewer-shaped vessel has



ABOVE: A trio of bottles commissioned for the White House collection of American crafts was exhibited in the Verneil Room in front of the official portrait of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Made four years ago, the barium-glazed pieces are forerunners to Sherrill's current colorful, angular style.

(more)

become a sculpture of a teapot, a treatise on the nature of pots, animated with the kind of exuberance and daring that is bringing the 40-year-old Sherrill a national reputation as a master innovator.

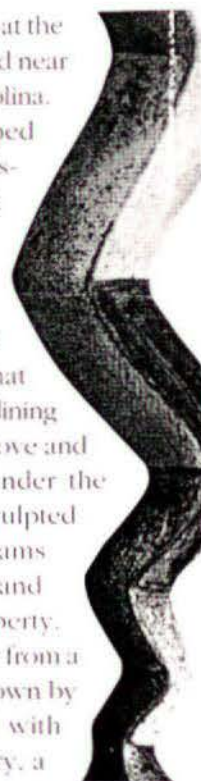
"There is a real sense of presence in Michael's pieces," says Michael Monroe, director of the Renwick Gallery. "He has done what every artist aspires to do: taken a form and made it distinctly his own."

In the last few years, Sherrill's pots and bottles and jugs have been displayed at the Mint Museum in Charlotte, the Gibbes Museum in Charleston, the American Craft Museum in New York, the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., and at the White House. Sold through some of the most discerning galleries and most distinguished craft shows in the country, Sherrill's work has begun to command prices that move into the thousands of dollars.

It was Monroe who chose Sherrill's work to be included in the Smithsonian's permanent collection; two years ago, he returned to Sherrill and invited him to donate a trio of bottles to the newly established White House craft collection. That collection, on view this summer at the National Museum of American Art, is showcased in a new book, *The White House Collection of American Crafts*, published this April by Harry N. Abrams; Sherrill's willow bottles were photographed in the Vermeil Room of the White House in front of a Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis portrait.

Sherrill's own home sits at the end of a narrow gravel road near Hendersonville, North Carolina. Tall and haphazard, topped with a tin roof, the moss-green house leans against a wooded hillside; Sherrill built it himself with a \$7,000 investment 15 years ago. Inside, sunlight floods the long space that encompasses living room, dining room, and kitchen. The stove and refrigerator sit tucked under the wide shelter of a hood sculpted out of red clay; the beams overhead are white pine and poplar cut from the property. Two rangy dogs lap water from a pair of ceramic bowls thrown by Michael and decorated with roses by his wife, Margery, a handsome dark-haired woman he met five years ago when she enrolled in his ceramics class.

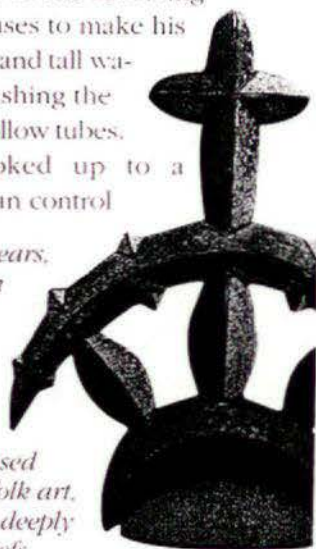
Downstairs in the studio, a flock of white bottles and teapots sits on rough shelves waiting to be glazed and fired. In the slanting sun, they almost look as though they have been interrupted mid-conversation. Sherrill has started selling his bottles in groups, and the relationships between them are nearly as interesting as the pieces themselves. One grouping he calls "Bottles with Attitude"; another series is named "Baby Snap Bead Bottles" for its colorful segmented shapes. Some have the dignity of Greek amphorae, some writhe and coil with antic energy, and some sit like stolid onlookers.



"We are all surrounded every day by things that show the measure of a human being," says Sherrill. A compact man with eyes the color of well water, Sherrill moves around the studio in an old sweatshirt and clay-spattered jeans. Diagnosed several years ago as dyslexic, he listens omnivorously to books on tape—mysteries, thrillers, philosophy, history. Like many people who learn best with their hands, he is fascinated by the way things work. "When we drive into New York, I don't look at the skyline," he says. "I think about the structures that keep the city going, all the miles of piping and underground wires, the girders and struts and cables and I beams, all the mechanisms that make it go. I can't stop thinking about it."

Right now, he is busy devising an improved version of the revolving extruder that he uses to make his serpentine spouts and tall wavering bottles, pushing the clay out in long hollow tubes. His kiln is hooked up to a computer so he can control

RIGHT: In recent years, Sherrill has begun adding other shapes to his long-standing repertoire of pots and bottles. Rising Cross, infused with the spirit of folk art, speaks to his own deeply held religious beliefs.



TIM BARNWELL

precisely the time and temperature at which he fires each piece. "I'm making pots in ways that I never dreamed I'd ever be making pots," says Sherrill. "My first ceramics teacher in high school told me never to use a non-clay tool on clay. I spend my whole life breaking that rule."

"Michael has pushed the edge of the envelope," says Andrew Glasgow, assistant director of Asheville, North Carolina's Blue Spiral 1 gallery. "It would be a misnomer to say that he's at the top of his field, because there isn't a single top, but he has taken things to a new level in everything he does."

In practical terms, Sherrill's growing success means a greater measure of security for himself and his family. Son Micah, 18, himself beginning to win awards for his artwork, will be going off to college in the fall; daughters Havilah, 16, and Asia, 14, are nearly grown themselves. Michael and Margery work sporadically on a cabin they are renovating, where they will one day live and where Michael will have a place to invite collectors to see his work.

And in the studio, there are always new puzzles to solve, new ways of manipulating the clay, new things to learn about color and texture and form. But even as he strains forward, Sherrill remains true to the familiar forms of teapot, vase, and bottle. A deeply spiritual man, Sherrill has accepted the task set before him—to celebrate "the measure of a human being" in everything he does.

"It's impossible to separate Michael and his work," says Glasgow. "It's very much a part of his being, and he's very much part of it. The balance is nearly even."

For his own part, Sherrill says simply, "I know how fortunate I am; I pinch myself every day that I am able to make a living making art." ♦

White House adds cachet to American crafts

The Associated Press

An exhibition at the National Museum of American Art in Washington may be just the ticket contemporary crafts needs to move out of the weekend fair ghetto and into major galleries and museums.

The exhibition, a White House Collection of American Crafts, is made up of 72 glass, ceramic, metal, wood and fiber objects. It runs through Sept. 4 and is accompanied by a book published by Abrams, \$35, and a tour on the Internet.

After Sept. 4 the collection will return to the White House and, ultimately, to the Clinton Presidential Library, wherever it may be. The pieces, most donated by the artists, have been displayed on a rotating basis in the Clinton family quarters. A favorite, a glass bowl by Dale Chihuly, stood on a table in the Center Hall.

"Most of the objects are vessels because most of the locations are tables," says Michael W. Monroe, curator in charge of the museum's Renwick Gallery. "We got a photograph of every possible location in the White House — fireplace mantels, coffee tables, secretary-book-

cases, occasional tables — and matched them up with pieces that would be appropriate."

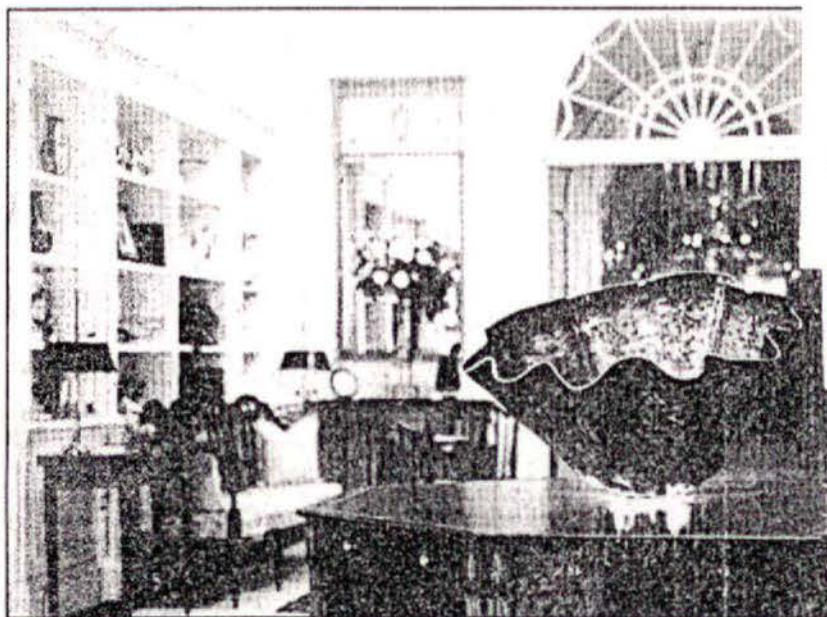
The collection was assembled by Monroe in consultation with Hillary Rodham Clinton in an attempt to demonstrate the diversity of American crafts in the '90s. Indicative of divisions in the American crafts world, it is equal parts functional, quasi-functional and purely decorative.

Some of the craftsmen are self-taught. Some learned from a parent or as apprentices. Others went to art school.

"We wanted to represent the spectrum of American crafts from blue chip names to emerging artists, a wide geographic area, both genders, youth and age, and many ethnic strains," Monroe says.

Although this is the first named White House crafts collection, it is not the first time the White House has promoted American crafts. In 1882, President Chester A. Arthur commissioned Louis Comfort Tiffany to create a colored glass screen for the Cross Hall. In 1913, Ellen Wilson set up a "Blue Mountain Room" and invited people to come in and place orders for textiles woven in the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee.

In 1927, Eleanor Roosevelt furnished a bedroom with colonial revival pieces made by a small



The Associated Press

Cerulean Blue Bowl by Dale Chihuly is one of 72 pieces in the White House Collection of American Crafts on view through Sept. 4 at the National Museum of American Art in Washington. The blown glass bowl was photographed in the center hall of the White House family quarters.

workshop in Hyde Park, N.Y., known as Val-Kill Industries. In 1977, Rosalyn Carter used hand-crafted tableware for the Senate wives' annual luncheon. When George Mondale was vice president, his wife, Joan, a potter, filled their official residence with crafts. She is among craftsmen represented in the White House show.

Now, what's this about the Internet?

"Potentially, there are millions of homes that we could reach," Steve Dietz, chief of publications and new media initiatives at the National Museum of American Art, says.

Anyone with a computer, modem and hookup to the Internet through one of the on-line services will be able to access images and text of the exhibition, including a clip about each artist and a history of the White House room where each object is installed. The user may also leave messages for the White House, the curators of the exhibition and the artists.

Why leave home, then?

"The Internet version of the tour is more like an electronic book than it is like a visit to the exhibition," Dietz says. "Ideally, someone will see the show and the Internet."

The National Museum of American Art, Eighth and G Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C., is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily. Admission is free.

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☛ Museums ☛

Thomas Jefferson's Rough Draft at the Library of Congress

BY SUSAN DAVIDSON

• **Corcoran Gallery of Art**, 500 17th Street, Northwest (202/638-1439); open Monday and Wednesday to Sunday 10 to 5 (Thursday to 9). Alfred Stieglitz's "Camera Notes" closes July 9. Sculpture by Margeaux, Ann Messner, Elizabeth Newman, and Lucy Puls closes September 10. "American Politicians: Photographs," July 14 to September 4.

• **Freer Gallery of Art**, Jefferson Drive at 12th Street, Southwest (202/357-2700); open daily 10 to 5:30. "Whistler & Japan" closes January 1. "On the River," Chinese scrolls and fans from the 13th through 19th centuries, closes January 1.

• **Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden**, Independence Avenue at 7th Street, Southwest (202/357-3091); open daily 10 to 5:30. "The Collection Reviewed: Thomas Eakins's Portrait of Frank Hamilton Cushing," June 30 to January 7. "Directions—Martin Kippenberger," July 20 to October 22.

• **Library of Congress**, 101 Independence Avenue, Southeast (202/707-8000); open Monday through Friday 8:30 to 9:30, Saturday 8:30 to 6. "Featuring the Funnies: 100 Years of the Comic Strip" closes August 12. Thomas Jefferson's rough draft of the Declaration of Independence, June 29 to July 4.

• **National Air and Space Museum**, 6th Street and Independence Avenue, Southwest (202/357-2700); open daily 10 to 6:30. "Building the Arsenal of Democracy: World War II Photographs From the National Air and Space Museum Archives" closes October 2. "Flight Time Barbie" closes September 4.

• **National Archives**, between 7th and 9th streets, on Constitution Avenue, Northwest (202/501-5000); open daily 10 to 9. "The Faces of War" closes September 18. "World War II: Personal Accounts: Pearl Harbor to V-J Day" closes November 12.

• **National Gallery of Art**, Constitution Avenue at 4th Street, Northwest (202/737-4215); open Monday to Saturday 10 to 5, Sunday 11 to 6. East Building: "Imitation



The White House's collection of American Crafts is on display at the National Museum of American Art through September 4.

and Invention: Old Master Prints and Their Sources" closes August 6. "Piet Mondrian: 1872-1944" closes September 4. "Arshile Gorky: The Breakthrough Years" closes

September 17. West Building: "James McNeill Whistler" closes August 20. "Prints by James McNeill Whistler and His Contemporaries" closes December 31.

Coming Up...

- **Nancy Crow's Improvisational Quilts** opens August 25 at the Renwick.
- **"Think Tank,"** an exhibit on animal thinking, opens in September at the National Zoo.
- **"Winslow Homer"** opens October 15 at the National Gallery.

• **National Museum of African Art**, 950 Independence Avenue, Southwest (202/357-2700); open daily 10 to 5:30. "Ancient Nubia: Egypt's Rival in Africa" closes September 4.

• **National Museum of American Art**, 8th and G streets, Northwest (202/357-2700); open daily 10 to 5:30. "The Color of Abstraction" closes August 20. "The White House Collection of American Crafts" closes September 4. "Secrets of the Dark Chamber: The Art of the American Daguerrotype" closes October 29. "Gene Davis in Black and White: Drawings From the Fifties and the Eighties," July 14 to January 7.

• **National Museum of Natural History**, 10th Street and Constitution Avenue, Northwest (202/357-2700); open daily 10 to 6:30. "Exploring Marine Ecosystems," a new permanent exhibit. "Ocean Planet" closes January 2. "The Royal Tombs of Sipan" closes September 4.

• **National Portrait Gallery**, F and 8th streets, Northwest (202/357-2700); open daily 10 to 5:30. "Majestic in His Wrath: The Life of Frederick Douglass" closes November 19. "From Truman to Clinton: Presidents on Time" closes January 1. "In Pursuit of the Butterfly: Portraits of James McNeill Whistler" closes August 13. "The Passionate Observer: Photographs by Carl Van Vechten" closes August 13.

• **Phillips Collection**, 1600 21st Street, Northwest (202/387-2151); open Tuesday to Saturday 10 to 5 (Thursday to 8:30), Sunday noon to 7 (weekends \$6.50; seniors \$3.25; under 18 free). "Photographs by Esther Bubley" closes October 1. "Dorothea Lange: American Photographs" closes August 27.

• **Arthur M. Sackler Gallery**, 1050 Independence Avenue, Southwest (202/357-2700); open daily 10 to 5:30. "A Basketmaker in Rural Japan" closes July 23. "Paintings from Shiraz" closes August 27. "Monsters, Myths, and Minerals" closes September 24. "Painted Prayers: The Ritual Art of Indian Women," July 23 to January 1.

Master craftsman

Smithsonian curator and Racine native winds up museum career helping the Clintons decorate their home with functional American art

JIM KNEISZEL *Journal Times*

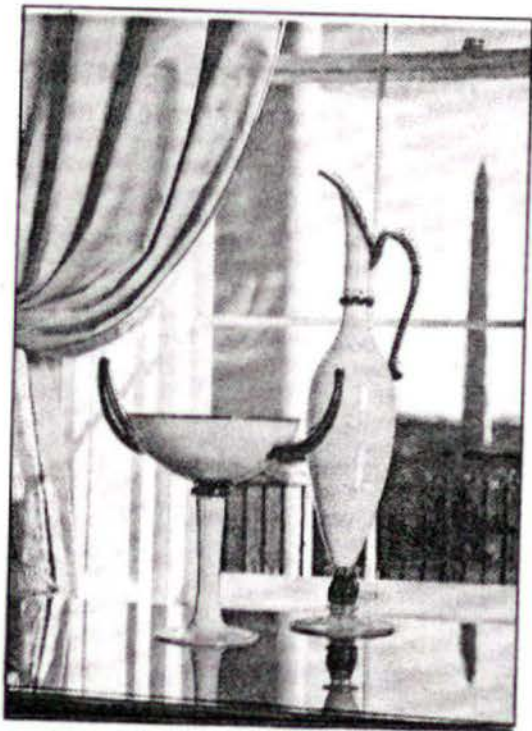
It's not often that the Washington Post publishes an editorial bemoaning the retirement of a Racine native. It doesn't happen too often that a local gets into the White House inner sanctum to help several first ladies decorate their digs, for that matter.

In fact, this local-boy-makes-good story includes vociferous praise from the current residents of the White House and writeups in newspapers that wouldn't typically focus so much attention on a born and bred Racinian.

The New York Times, the Christian Science Monitor, USA Today ... It's about time we add a few lines about Smithsonian Institute Curator Michael Monroe in his hometown *Journal Times*.

It's a long road from pre-school art classes at the Wustum Museum of Fine Arts to the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art. But Monroe — who last lived here in the late '60s teaching art at Case and Horlick high schools — made the impressive trip.

Monroe, son of Wesley and Margaret Monroe, 600 Carlton Drive, caused quite a stir when he announced retirement plans recently from his post as curator-in-charge at the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery. He stepped down after setting up a crafts display with Hillary Rodham Clinton at the White House and writing an impressive hardbound book covering the 72 exhibit pieces.



▲ These blown glass pieces by Dante Marioni, entitled 'Yellow Pair,' are pictured in the Yellow Oval Room of the White House.

(MORE)

"He was invaluable in his guidance to Mrs. Clinton," Neel Lattimore, Clinton's deputy press secretary told the Washington Post. "He helped pull together a collection that is superb, and many of the pieces are on display in both the private and public areas of the White House."

The First Lady also credited Monroe with the exhibit, which celebrated the Year of the American Craft in 1993.

"I only wish every one of our citizens could have seen these exquisite works displayed in the White House," she wrote in an opening statement in Monroe's book. "To help assemble the collection, I turned to one of the nation's experts, Michael W. Monroe ... His idea was to identify works of leading artists as well as those who are just emerging."

Monroe, 55, was clearly at the pinnacle of public museum service when he retired to take a post as curator for the trendy Peter Joseph Gallery on New York City's Fifth Avenue.

In 21 years at the Smithsonian, he advised Barbara Bush when she decorated the White House Christmas trees with needlepoint ornaments. He chose place settings for an executive "do" for Roselyn Carter and the Senate wives. For the Mondales, he filled the vice president's mansion with American crafts.

Monroe also built the Smithsonian's fledgling craft collection, leaving 450 pieces, including handmade glass, pottery, turned wood bowls and quilts. Art world observers claim Monroe has done a lot to elevate the status of crafts.

"It helped legitimize the medium and helped people think about crafts as art objects," said Wustum Director Bruce Pepich of Monroe's leadership in the White House collection. "He is a legend in the community. People constantly talk about him and remember him from when he was a young boy."

It wasn't so long ago that he was hanging around at Wustum, 2519 Northwestern Ave., soaking up as much art education as he could from former museum directors Sylvester and Cherry Jerry. From age four in 1944, Monroe took every art class scheduled there. He remembers his parents encouraging his insatiable interest in art.

"I marched in the front door and stayed there till age 25," he recalled during a phone interview from northern Wisconsin, where he's spending most of the summer before moving to New York. "I took about every class they offered. Long before it was fashionable, they had a very strong program in exhibitions and education."

In 1957, Wustum received its first craft exhibit, and Jerry, who didn't have a handle on how to display the three-dimensional pieces, turned to 17-year-old Monroe for help. Working with the crafts and the influence of the Jerrys set Monroe's career goals, and he went on to earn a master's degree in fine arts from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan.

"They were a remarkable couple who supported a lot of people with the kind of emotional and artistic encouragement that artists need,"

Monroe said of the Jerrys. "They changed my life, but they did so for a great number of people in the community."

When Monroe arrived at the Renwick, the Smithsonian didn't have a craft collection and a serious craft artists' movement was in its infancy. The medium has blossomed, he said, and support from the Clintons and others ensures its strong future.

"I took a lot of craft books with little postups on different pages to give Mrs. Clinton an idea of the type of things that might be appropriate," Monroe said. The Clintons have a small collection of crafts they've bought in their travels over the years, he noted, and enjoyed displaying the items.

"She's an eloquent spokesperson for the crafts as well as the artists themselves. She's been enormously helpful and supportive in all respects."

The exhibit includes several pieces donated in Monroe's honor, including a series of abstract silver, gold and limonited topaz brooches by artist Eleanor Moty. They were donated by Racine's Karen Johnson Boyd. In another Wisconsin connection, Harvey Littleton, who founded the contemporary studio glass movement in Madison, has a large glass sculpture in the collection.

The White House exhibit, the book and an interactive Internet program dedicated to the crafts "broaden exposure and respect for the work," Monroe said.

"In a world where things become more depersonalized, the appeal of having an object made by hand is ever increasing. Oftentimes a craft is an object that you can use, a chair you can sit in, a bowl you can put fruit in. You can pick it up and touch it. There is an intimate physical connection with the object and the maker."

The Wustum began specializing in crafts several years ago, and Pepich is impressed with the respect the White House show is generating for the art form. He viewed the exhibit earlier this year at the Renwick and hopes it makes it to the Midwest later this year.

"Americans take the White House very seriously," Pepich said. "It is sort of the nation's living room and to have these objects put in its collection along with portraits of presidents and first ladies really gives a legitimacy to this style of work."

(MORE)

Monroe is a credit to his parents and the community where his abilities were encouraged and honed, Pepich added.

"As is often the case of Racine, we take a lot of pride in the children who are raised here even if 90 percent of their adult accomplishments occurred away from here," he said.

Apart from Monroe's professional success, Pepich said he's a success as a person.

"The bottom line is that he is terribly honest and he has a sense of integrity that everybody knows about and he is a warm human being," he said. "This man has had a very good upbringing in his family and his community and he's carried it through his professional life."

This blown glass piece by Dale Chihuly, entitled 'Cerulean Blue Macchia with Charteuse Lip Wrap,' is pictured in the second floor Center Hall of the White House.



How you can see the exhibit

You can see the crowning achievement of Michael Monroe's Smithsonian career without leaving your home computer screen.

The White House Collection of American Crafts display has moved from the first family's residence across Pennsylvania Avenue to the Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art. It can be viewed there through Sept. 4.

For \$35, art enthusiasts can purchase a color illustrated hardcover book of the exhibit published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Or you can fire up the personal computer, key in the Internet password and view each piece in the collection. You'll see Monroe give a video introduction to the exhibit and guide viewers through the White House, showing each piece as he and First Lady Hillary Clinton chose to display it.

The clips include interviews and demonstrations from several artists who donated works to the collection. Going one step further, the Internet tour gives E-mail addresses for the artists in case you want one of their works in your living room.

This is the first full-scale Internet production from the art museum, and it is visited by an astounding 10,000 people daily, Monroe said. It opens the White House exhibit — viewed by 1.5 million people in 1993 and 1994 — to everyone, including classrooms of students across the country, Monroe said. And

unlike the book, the Internet tour is frequently updated with new clips.

"It's been wildly successful," he said of the Internet experiment. "People can continue to go visit back to the Internet because it's continually changing. You can go at your own pace or with what your own interests are."

What do you need to access the Internet Smithsonian gallery?

A multimedia-capable computer, a phone line and the password. Once you have the first two, here's the access code: **HTTP://WWW.NMAA.SI.EDU**

The code will get you into the Smithsonian education files, where you will find the file and key in **/WHC/AMERICANCRAFTS**.

The White House collection is also slated for display at galleries in Rochester and New York, N.Y., and Springfield, Mass., through June 1996.

"The craft is such a universal expression shared by all cultures," Monroe said. Worldwide access to the White House exhibit will raise awareness of the craft mediums and help link artists and collectors.

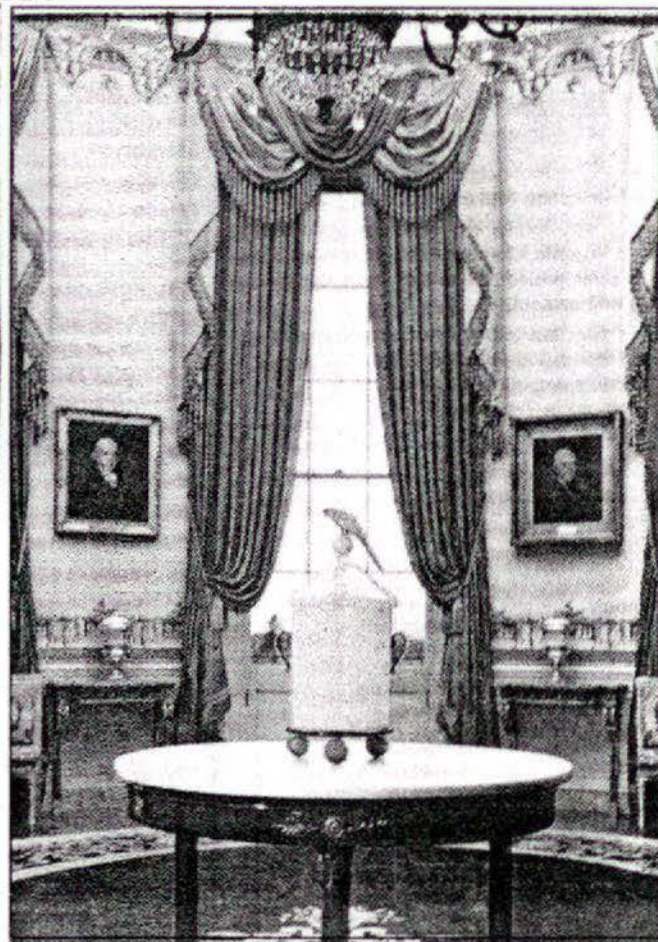
"Now it's possible for a glass blower in Athens, Greece, to communicate with a glass blower in Seattle, Washington, and have a discussion about their shared common interest."

(MORE)



MARK HERTZBERG
Journal Times

▲ **Michael Monroe, seated,** with his parents, Wesley and Margaret at his parents' home in Racine. Michael caused quite a stir when he announced retirement plans recently from his post as curator-in-charge at the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery. He stepped down after setting up a crafts display with Hillary Rodham Clinton at the White House.



▲ **This brilliant** yellow and blue lidded jar, entitled 'Bird Jar,' unites artist David W. Levi's love for classical container forms with his contemporary feeling for intensely saturated colors. The piece is pictured in the Blue Room of the White House.

White House Collection of American Crafts, at National Museum of American Art, 9th & G St., NW, through September 4. Assembled in 1993 by First Lady Hilary Clinton to help make the White House a showcase for the finest contemporary crafts, these works are displayed in the public rooms on a rotating basis and used as centerpieces at Presidential dinners. The show opens with the stunning *Yellow Pair*, glass pieces in precise shapes of ancient Greek *kylix* and *oinochoe* by Dante Marioni, and continues with many imaginative objects, some usable and others purely decorative. Philip Moulthrop's *White Pine Mosaic Bowl* excites wonder, as does Dale Chihuly's *Cerulean Blue Macchia with Chartreuse Lip Wrap*, a multi-colored blown-glass shell form. Laney Oxman's *Feminine Nostalgia* tureen could probably be used for soup, but it's more fun to look at the romantic Baroque gold designs inside. My favorite for elegance is the very usable *Oval Punch Bowl and Ladle* by Dawn Kiilani Hoffmann. Nathan Youngblood's *Black Carved Jar* is tops in abstraction, as is the astonishing glass creation of David J. Schwarz, *Z-Axis, other Facets 2-15-92*, blown glass ground, polished, sand-blasted and painted to create illusions of space within a curved universe. [TP]

COUNTRY BUZZINGS

The dedication of the Korean War Veterans Memorial at the west end of the National Mall in Washington, D.C., will take place on July 27. Other events will include laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a memorial ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, and a Presidential salute. If you would like more information regarding the happenings surrounding the dedication, call (800) 840-8856.

In 1993, in honor of the Year of American Craft, 72 contemporary American glass, ceramic, wood, metal, and quilted works were selected to form the White House Collection of American Crafts. Having been integrated into the White House's rooms of antiques and historical memorabilia for the past year and a half, the objects are now on view at the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D.C., through September 4. The exhibition is accompanied by a self-guided tour on the Internet and a fully illustrated book published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc. (\$35).



Spotlight ~ *Crafts at NMAA—the handprint of all cultures*

By PEGGY LANGRALL
OPA Staff Writer

The sparkling variety and elegant artistry of "The White House Collection of American Crafts" can be enjoyed at the Museum of American Art through Sept. 4. The 72 objects were originally selected and assembled in 1993 for display in the White House, in recognition of the congressionally designated "Year of American Craft: A Celebration of the Creative Works of the Hand."

Knowing that the Renwick Gallery housed a contemporary collection of American crafts within its historic building, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton naturally invited Curator-in-Charge Michael Monroe to curate the exhibition of crafts for the White House. "I'm a White House neighbor," Monroe says. "I was next door, willing to undertake the assignment, and time tables were very tight."

The first thing that Monroe did was to go through the White House with a photographer who took pictures in all the rooms where crafts would be displayed. "It was a real challenge to mesh contemporary crafts with the different time periods represented in the stately rooms' furnishings," Monroe says.

"There is a lot of gold leaf, gleaming silver, fine china," he adds, "as well as exotic marquetry at the White House, for example, but these refined traditions carry over into contemporary crafts. As I studied the photographs, I began responding to the possibilities for meshing styles, taking into consideration colors of walls, textures and the scale of the rooms and how they are used."

"What seemed discordant at first, turned out to fit in with astonishing effect," Monroe says, "and well over 1 million visitors to the White House enjoyed the effect."

For the April 1995 installation of the craft collection at American Art, a feeling of the White House is preserved in NMAA's spacious, airy, third-floor exhibition galleries, where columns were incorporated as gracious design elements that frame the dis-



This bronze, granite and marble menorah, called "Festival of Light" and made by Zachary Oxman, is one of the objects on view in "The White House Collection of American Crafts" exhibition at American Art. (Photo by John Bigelow Taylor)

plays. Working with Monroe, Val Lewton, NMAA's chief of design and production, and Senior Exhibits Specialist Robyn Kennedy produced the installation.

"The pieces within the collection illustrate the skill, imagination and vitality characteristic of craft in the 1990s," Monroe writes in the exhibition catalog. "Using glass, fiber and metal, these artists reveal their ability to manipulate materials in inventive ways, expressing their creative vision in objects of startling beauty."

Monroe sought out key pieces from an outstanding group of craft artists from all parts of the United States, choosing them for their vision and technique. "Among the richest areas of current craft expression is

the vessel form," he says, "and it can be fashioned from all craft mediums."

One master of the form is Edward Moulthrop, who is known for his astonishing, gargantuan, turned wood bowls. In crafting them, Moulthrop cleverly adapts a method developed by U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers to protect Army gun stocks from temperature changes. According to Monroe, "The polyethylene glycol solution in which his vessels are soaked for three months stabilizes the wood so that it will not shrink, crack or split."

Among the many strikingly beautiful glass objects in the exhibition is Sidney Hutter's clear purple vessel "White House Vase #1," another example of ways in

which some of today's artists exploit technology to develop new skills. Taking advantage of a technique originally developed for the electronics and glass industries, Hutter used adhesives cured with ultraviolet light to bind pieces of cut and polished plate glass into the rhythmically graceful form of this vessel.

A more traditional artist, potter Joan Mondale, wife of former Vice President Walter Mondale, contributed one of her earth-toned stoneware bowls that features a splash of calligraphic brushstrokes. All of the artworks were donated to the collection by the artists themselves or by their patrons.

One of the loveliest of the fiber works on display is a quilt called "Spirit Flight," made by Judy Dales. Dales made it in loving memory of her mother while grieving over her mother's death. Its irregular contours symbolize falling tears, and its multitude of printed fabrics in subtle colors and patterns include a mystical image of her mother's spirit rising through a starry sky.

Exhibition viewers experience an entirely different emotion when they come across "A Festival of Light," a menorah created by metalsmith Zachary Oxman. The piece depicts five men in tailcoats dancing for joy as they lift their candles to heaven.

All of these craft objects can be seen in a "virtual tour" of the exhibition on both America Online and the recently launched Smithsonian Home Page on the World Wide Web. Electronic visitors will have a choice of hearing or reading Monroe's comments about the works, and they can see video clips of many of the artists at work.

"It is very exciting that people worldwide can share this experience," Monroe says. "As the most industrialized century of our history draws to a close, this collection stands as testimony to a belief in the value of works of the hand. Despite our increasing reliance on computer technology, the intimate and physical qualities of the handmade object have never had more appeal."

National Museum of American Art (8th & G Sts., NW; 357-3176 / Daily, 10am-5:30pm).

An extraordinary aspect of the current showing of the "White House Collection of American Crafts" is that it was instigated by the First Lady and featured her very direct involvement. It was Hillary Clinton's brainchild to ask then NMAA's Renwick Gallery Curator-in-Charge, Michael W. Monroe, to solicit the crème de la crème of craft artists for works to be permanently donated to the White House and to then be available for showings in museums around the country.



Sidney R. Hutter, "White House Vase #1," plate glass; cut, ground, polished, laminated and ultra-violet curing adhesive (1993).

At the press preview last April 26, Mrs. Clinton, who was dressed in black and on her way to the funeral service for the Secret Service agent who had been killed in the Oklahoma City bombing, commented with words to the effect that while we are often mindful of atrocities like the Oklahoma bombing, we need to remember that there are people who get up every day to build or create something beautiful.

She spoke about how she and her husband had long collected craft work in Arkansas. "We wanted to make sure the White House continued to reflect the vital role that art and culture have played in democracy for more than two centuries. And with our nation just beginning to celebrate 'The Year of American Craft,' it seemed only fitting to make the People's House a showcase for our nation's oldest art form."

Another aspect of the exhibition—not necessarily so appealing, depending on your point of view—is that all the displayed objects are also accessible on the Internet by accessing the "tour address": <http://www.nmaa.si.edu/whc/americancrafts>.

The exhibit's very first room is devoted to two computer screens and mice. By moving the cursor to the different images, information about the works will be displayed. Sometimes many images share a screen. Of course, there's no substitute for the real thing, curators, artists and viewers agree. Here, thanks to MCI, you are encouraged to leave messages for the White House, to contact the artists, and to ask questions about the works, as well as to be able to read explanatory texts.

Somehow, though, something reeks terribly unaesthetic about all this. The images are ugly compared with the real things. Even schools are losing contact with the real thing in teaching. Computers are relied upon heavily over first-hand sensation. I mean, we're already a nation of couch potatoes; now we're becoming instant couch potatoes.

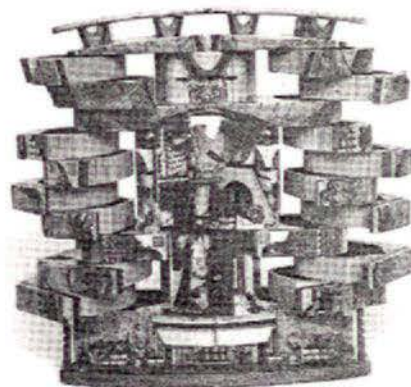
I asked one of the participating artists in the show, potter Nathan Youngblood of the Pueblo Nation, how he felt at a gut level about his work being on the Net. His response was that he would surely prefer to see his work in person, but, "If it helps get people interested, then, great." He commented that for him, at least, browsing through art books often inspires him to seek out the actual work of many of the artists that he encounters in such books.

After the exhibit had been open for several weeks I returned and encountered a young woman artist from Switzerland, Regula Stuecheli. I asked her how she felt about the Internet images and accompanying information. Her response was simply, "You can get more information with this than from a book or guide, maybe." Turns out she will soon be participating in a group art show back in Zurich which another participating artist has been enthusiastically pushing be entered onto the Net.



Zachary Oxman, "A Festival of Light," bronze, granite and marble; cast (1993).

You may find some kitsch in this show—but it's good kitsch, as with Zachary Oxman's *A Festival of Light* in which the seven branches of a Menorah are held in the arms of folk-dancing men in tuxes and tails. Then there is a work by Po Shun Leong. Almost furniture and chest-like, but not quite, it's more like highly imaginative sculpture; *Cityscape Box* of maple and other woods, band-sawed and carved, opens up to reveal half-covered drawers.



Po Shun Leong, "Cityscape Box," birds eye maple, eastern hard maple, black walnut and cherry; band-sawed and carved (1993).

The handsome exhibit catalog shows how these objects of craft art appear in their White House settings, explaining, perhaps, why the collection appears to favor vessels. Through September 4.

The White House has a very nice collection of American crafts. Among them are quilts: *Spirit*

Flight by Judy Dales, *Counterpane* by Ellen Kochansky and *Purple Mountains Majesty* by Adrien Rothschild. These quilts will be on display at the National Museum of American Art through Sept. 4.

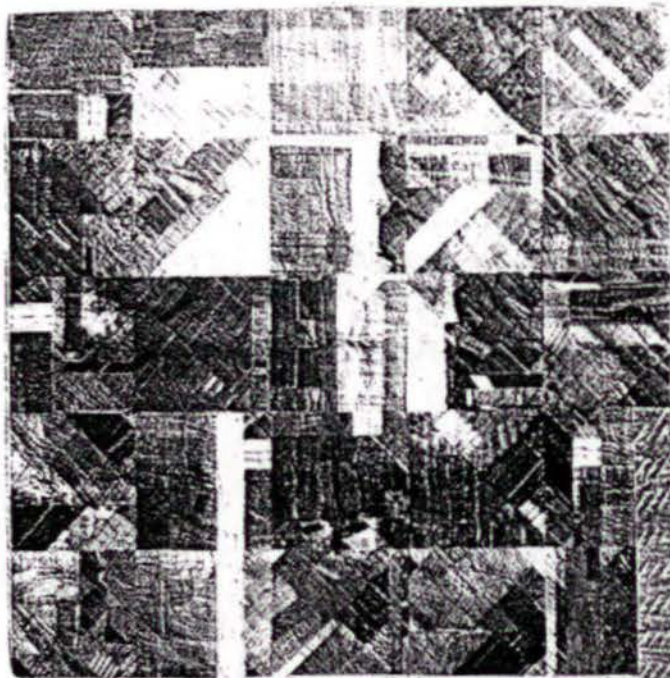
The 72-object exhibition is accompanied by a state-of-the-art tour on the Internet and a fully illustrated book. A series of free lectures on the developments in contemporary crafts is part of the show.

The Clintons' interest in our nation's craft art is reflected in their efforts to collect and display objects at the White House. When the exhibit is over, these items will be back on display at the White House where visitors can enjoy them in the future.

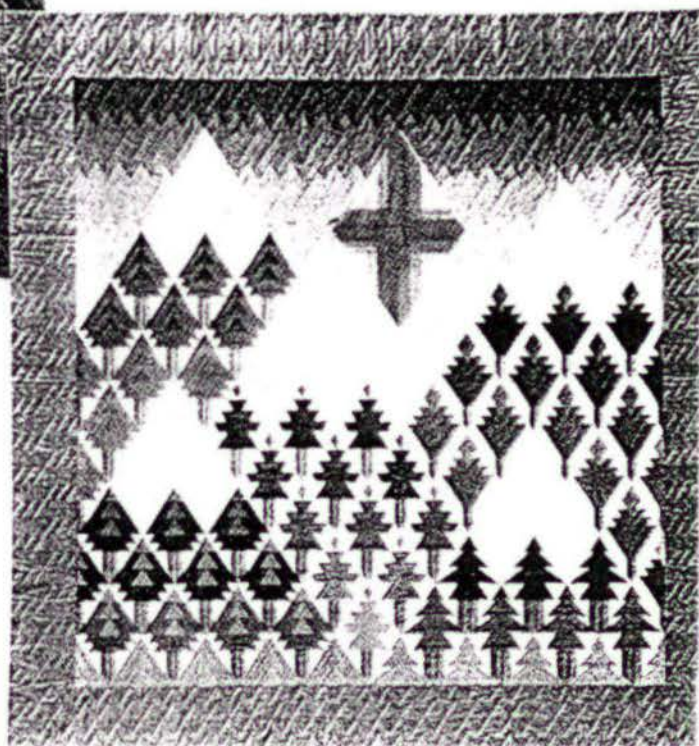
If you are in the Washington, D.C., area, be sure to check out this outstanding dedication to our cultural art forms.



Spirit Flight by Judy Dales is one of the quilts on display at the National Museum of American Art. It is part of the White House collection of American crafts. Photo by John Bigelow Taylor, NYC.



Counterpane by Ellen Kochansky is one of the quilts on display at the National Museum of American Art. It is part of the White House collection of American crafts. Photo by John Bigelow Taylor, NYC.



Purple Mountains Majesty by Adrien Rothschild is one of the quilts on display at the National Museum of American Art. It is part of the White House collection of American crafts. Photo by John Bigelow Taylor, NYC.