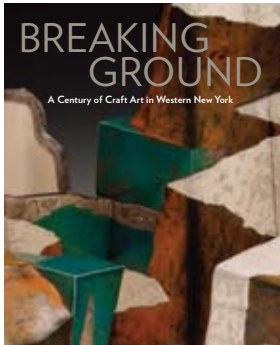




NEW MEMORIAL ART GALLERY BOOK SURVEYS CRAFT ART IN WESTERN NY March 21 Unveiling Includes Book Signing, Panel Discussion by Five Featured Artists



ROCHESTER, NY, March 1, 2010 — The Memorial Art Gallery today announced the publication of *Breaking Ground: A Century of Craft Art in Western New York*, the first book to fully explore the history of the craft movement within the region. Richly illustrated with vintage and contemporary photography, the 156-page publication surveys the work of early pioneers as well as current artists.

Breaking Ground features original interviews with four contemporary masters—Wendell Castle (wood), Albert Paley (metal), Michael Taylor (glass) and Wayne Higby (clay). It concludes with 50 pages of striking art by 25 other contemporary artists who live in the region (complete list below).

On **Sunday, March 21**, the Gallery presents “Craft Art: Looking Back, Looking Forward,” a panel discussion with Castle and Higby; three other featured artists, Robin Cass, Linda Sikora and Leonard Urso; Paul J. Smith, director emeritus of the American Craft Museum; and moderator Suzanne Ramljak, editor of *Metalsmith* magazine. The program begins at 2:30 pm in the auditorium and is included in Gallery admission. A book signing follows.

“New York City may be the cultural center of the state, but it was in the small towns of western New York that a craft movement took root, producing some of the most important schools and artists in the nation-wide studio craft movement,” says Rochester native Barbara Lovenheim, who initiated the book and edited it with Smith and Ramljak.

Printing of *Breaking Ground* was underwritten by Xerox Corporation. Editorial and design were underwritten by the BIL Charitable Trust; the Gallery’s Mabel Fenner Lyon Fund provided additional support. “To bring the vibrant artwork to life we used our flagship digital color production system, the Xerox iGen4™ press, to produce more than 2,000 books. The final product is amazing,” said John Conley, vice president, Publishing Graphic Communications, Xerox Corporation. “The opportunity to print *Breaking Ground* demonstrates Xerox’s long-term commitment to support the local community, the fine arts and the publishing business.”

“We are delighted to have been a partner in this significant venture,” says MAG director Grant Holcomb. “Western New York has long played a pivotal role in the development of American craft art and design. As this book points out, we continue to be enchanted and enriched by some of America’s leading artists.”

Featured artists

Furniture: Andy Buck, John Eric Byers, Wendell Castle, John Dodd, Bill Keyser, Richard Scott Newman, Rich Tannen

Metal / Jewelry: Juan Carlos Caballero-Perez, Tom Markusen, Albert Paley, Leonard Urso

Glass: Robin Cass, Stephen Dee Edwards, Concetta Mason, Jackie Pancari, Angus Powers, Michael Rogers, Michael Taylor

Clay: Anne Currier, Val Cushing, Andrea Gill, John Gill, Wayne Higby, Rick Hirsch, Nancy Jurs, Walter McConnell, Stephen Merritt, Linda Sikora, Bill Stewart

The rise of craft art in western New York

In the early 1900s western New York became a hub of the Arts and Craft movement with the founding of the Roycroft community in East Aurora, Gustav Stickley’s furniture workshops in Syracuse, and Steuben Glass in Corning. It was

also during this period that Charles Fergus Binns developed the New York School of Clay-Working and Ceramics at Alfred University, which quickly became the leader in its field.

In 1950 the School for American Craftsmen (now the School for American Crafts) moved to the Rochester Institute of Technology, further establishing the area as a nexus of craft activity. Founded by Aileen Osborn Webb, a major patron of the craft movement, SAC became renowned for its comprehensive programs and its outstanding faculty.

Western New York still abounds with educational programs and professional artists who are breaking ground in the craft media, making the area a vital community for the arts.

About the editors

Barbara Lovenheim, a journalist and author, has written on the arts and lifestyle for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The International Herald Tribune and many national magazines. She has edited and produced books for the American Folk Art Museum, The Museum of Jewish Heritage and the New York City Ballet. Born in Rochester, she received her Ph.D. in English Literature from the University of Rochester and taught at the City University of New York. Her last book, *Survival in the Shadows: Seven Jews in Hitler's Berlin*, was published in London and Berlin.

Suzanne Ramljak, an art historian, curator and writer, is editor of *Metalsmith* magazine. Previously, she was a curator of exhibitions at the American Federation of Arts; the editor of *Sculpture* and *Glass Quarterly*, and an associate editor of *American Ceramics*. She is the author of *Crafting a Legacy: Contemporary American Crafts in the Philadelphia Museum of Art*, and she has contributed to numerous publications on craft and on the arts.

Paul J. Smith, director emeritus of the American Craft Museum (now Museum of Arts and Design) has been involved with the craft and design field for more than 50 years. Appointed director of the museum in 1963, during his 24-year tenure he expanded the public appreciation of art, craft and design through his creative programming. He now maintains an active consulting service in the field and serves on numerous boards and committees. He was born in western New York and attended the Art Institute of Buffalo and RIT's School for American Crafts.

How to purchase

Breaking Ground is co-published by Hudson Hills Press and is available for pre-order in the Memorial Art Gallery Store for \$45 (softcover \$30); wholesale discounts are also available. To order, contact Colleen Griffin-Underhill, 585-276-9012 (cunderhill@mag.rochester.edu).

About the Memorial Art Gallery

With its permanent collection spanning 50 centuries of world art, the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester is considered one of the finest regional art museums in the country. Among its treasures are works by such artists as Monet, Cézanne, Matisse, Homer and Cassatt. Highlights include the recently reinstalled American collection and the new Helen H. Berkeley Gallery of Ancient Art. On the second floor, North America's only full-size Italian Baroque organ is on permanent loan from the Eastman School of Music. [Visit our website](#)

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Images (press only)

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