

OBJECT

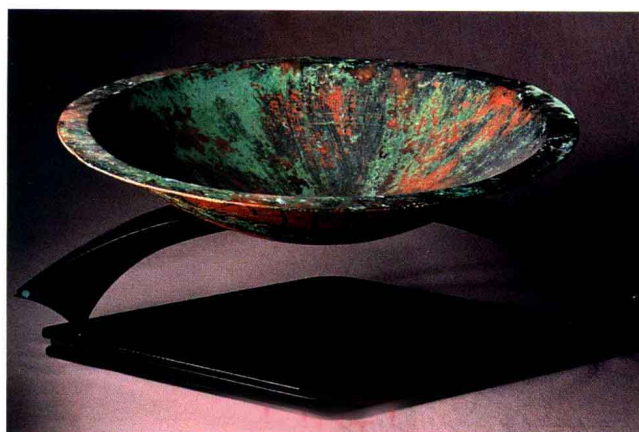
LESSONS



BEAUTY AND MEANING IN ART

OBJECT LESSONS

ORIGINAL ART FROM GUILD ARTISTS



GUILD Publishing
Madison, Wisconsin USA

Distributed by North Light Books, Cincinnati, Ohio

WORKS OF ART SHOWN IN THIS BOOK ARE FROM THE GUILD.COM WEBSITE.
GUILD.COM OFFERS ART BUYERS THE WORLD'S MOST COMPLETE ONLINE
COLLECTION OF ORIGINAL ART. VISIT US AT WWW.GUILD.COM.

FRONT COVER
BRIAN KERSHISNIK,
Still Life with Sleeping Musician,
24.5"H × 20"W.
Giclée print on archival paper.

BACK COVER
JACK MOULTHROP,
Spiral CB with Color Band,
15"H × 20"DIA.
Paddle-formed earthenware
vessel with interior glazing.



CHRISTIAN BURCHARD, *Baskets*. Group of 19 wood baskets made of green madrone. Thin-turned, warped, bleached and sandblasted.

OBJECT LESSONS: Original Art by GUILD Artists

Copyright © 2001 by GUILD, Inc.
"Word of Mouth: On Objects of Oral Delight" Copyright © 2001 by Suzanne Ramljak

Contributors: Glenn Adamson, Karen S. Chambers,
Jody Clowes, Susanne K. Frantz, Lloyd E. Herman, Martha Drexler Lynn,
Suzanne Ramljak, Toni Sikes and Barbara Tober

All rights reserved. Artwork in this publication is protected by copyright and may not be reproduced in any form. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any other information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Chief editorial officer: Katie Kazan

Project manager: Carol Chapin

Production manager:
Cheryl Smallwood-Roberts

Production artist: Bob Johnston

Series design: Lindgren/Fuller Design

Published by GUILD Publishing
An imprint of GUILD, Inc.
931 E. Main Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
TEL 608-257-2590
FAX 608-257-2690

Distributed by North Light Books
An imprint of F&W Publications, Inc.
1507 Dana Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45207
TEL 800-289-0963

ISBN: 1-893164-11-X

Printed in China

FRONTISPIECE
NORMAN FOSTER,
The Sheltering Sky (detail),
56"H × 48"W.
Oil on board.
Photo by Patrick Tregenza.

TITLE PAGE
CAROL WARNER,
The Landing,
9"H × 23"H × 17"H.
Handbuilt copper bowl.
Photo by Warwick Green.

CONTENTS

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: TONI SIKES 7

THE NOBILITY OF BEAUTY: BARBARA TOBER 9

INTRODUCTION: GLENN ADAMSON 12

. . .

THE GIFTS WE GIVE

HANDMADE, HOMEMADE AND OTHERWISE

ESSAY AND COLLECTION BY SUSANNE K. FRANTZ

15

THE SOUND OF ONE HEART POUNDING

ESSAY AND COLLECTION BY JODY CLOWES

49

THE SHAPE OF SHADOWS

ESSAY AND COLLECTION BY LLOYD E. HERMAN

83

CULTURAL CANDY

ESSAY AND COLLECTION BY MARTHA DREXLER LYNN

113

WORD OF MOUTH

ON OBJECTS OF ORAL DELIGHT

ESSAY AND COLLECTION BY SUZANNE RAMLJAK

147

SITTING PRETTY

THE CHAIR AS AN OBJECT OF ATTENTION

ESSAY AND COLLECTION BY KAREN S. CHAMBERS

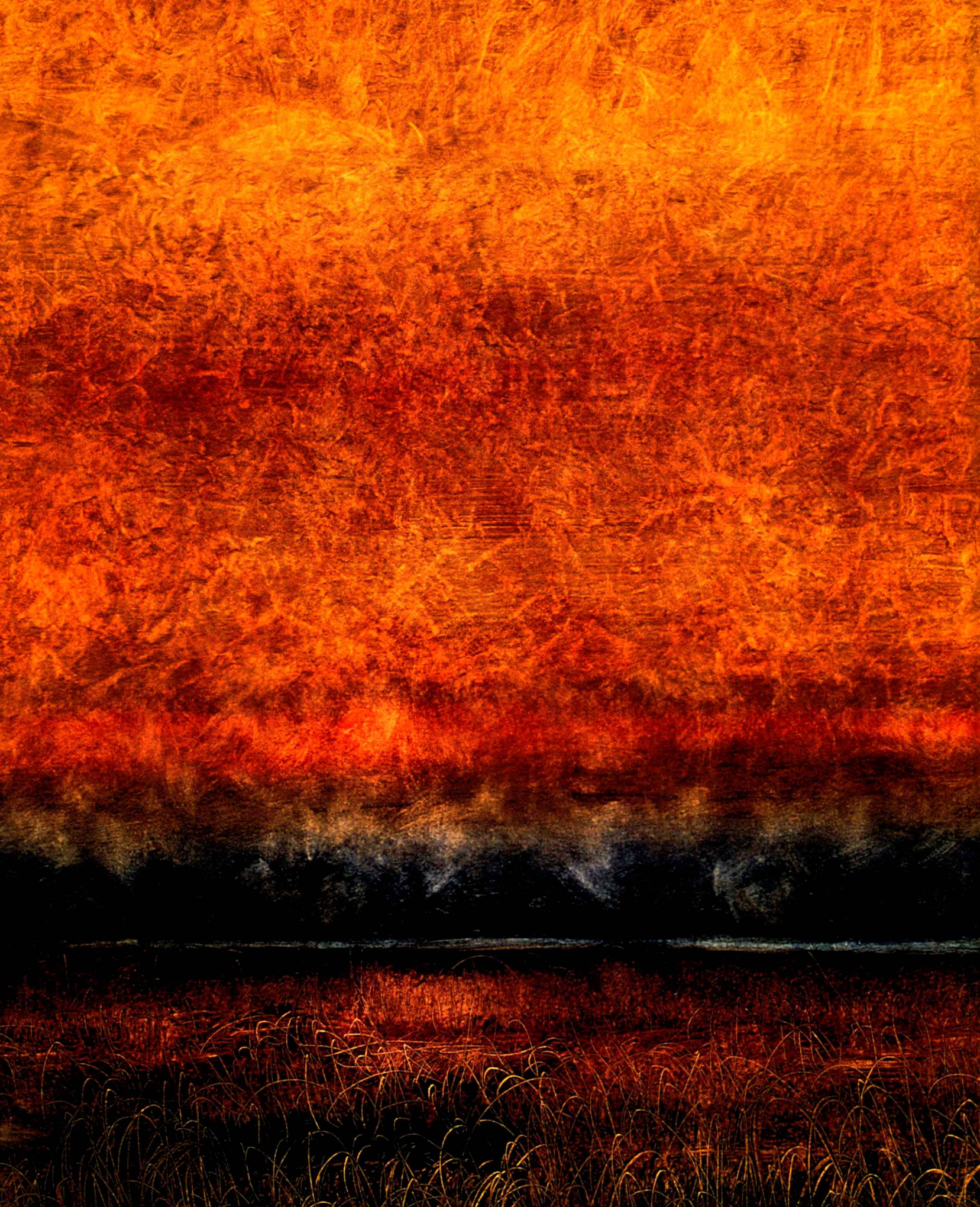
177

. . .

ABOUT THE ARTISTS 206

OBJECT LESSONS

ORIGINAL ART FROM GUILD ARTISTS



OBJECT LESSONS

ORIGINAL ART FROM GUILD ARTISTS



GUILD Publishing
Madison, Wisconsin USA

Distributed by North Light Books, Cincinnati, Ohio

WORKS OF ART SHOWN IN THIS BOOK ARE FROM THE GUILD.COM WEBSITE.
GUILD.COM OFFERS ART BUYERS THE WORLD'S MOST COMPLETE ONLINE
COLLECTION OF ORIGINAL ART. VISIT US AT WWW.GUILD.COM.

FRONT COVER
BRIAN KERSHISNIK,
Still Life with Sleeping Musician,
24.5"H × 20"W.
Giclée print on archival paper.

BACK COVER
JACK MOULTHROP,
Spiral CB with Color Band,
15"H × 20"DIA.
Paddle-formed earthenware
vessel with interior glazing.



CHRISTIAN BURCHARD, *Baskets*. Group of 19 wood baskets made of green madrone. Thin-turned, warped, bleached and sandblasted.

OBJECT LESSONS: Original Art by GUILD Artists

Copyright © 2001 by GUILD, Inc.
"Word of Mouth: On Objects of Oral Delight" Copyright © 2001 by Suzanne Ramljak

Contributors: Glenn Adamson, Karen S. Chambers,
Jody Clowes, Susanne K. Frantz, Lloyd E. Herman, Martha Drexler Lynn,
Suzanne Ramljak, Toni Sikes and Barbara Tober

All rights reserved. Artwork in this publication is protected by copyright and may not be reproduced in any form. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any other information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Chief editorial officer: Katie Kazan

Project manager: Carol Chapin

Production manager:
Cheryl Smallwood-Roberts

Production artist: Bob Johnston

Series design: Lindgren/Fuller Design

Published by GUILD Publishing
An imprint of GUILD, Inc.
931 E. Main Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
TEL 608-257-2590
FAX 608-257-2690

Distributed by North Light Books
An imprint of F&W Publications, Inc.
1507 Dana Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45207
TEL 800-289-0963

ISBN: 1-893164-11-X

Printed in China

FRONTISPIECE
NORMAN FOSTER,
The Sheltering Sky (detail),
56"H × 48"W.
Oil on board.
Photo by Patrick Tregenza.

TITLE PAGE
CAROL WARNER,
The Landing,
9"H × 23"H × 17"H.
Handbuilt copper bowl.
Photo by Warwick Green.

CONTENTS

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: TONI SIKES 7

THE NOBILITY OF BEAUTY: BARBARA TOBER 9

INTRODUCTION: GLENN ADAMSON 12

. . .

THE GIFTS WE GIVE

HANDMADE, HOMEMADE AND OTHERWISE

ESSAY AND COLLECTION BY SUSANNE K. FRANTZ

15

THE SOUND OF ONE HEART POUNDING

ESSAY AND COLLECTION BY JODY CLOWES

49

THE SHAPE OF SHADOWS

ESSAY AND COLLECTION BY LLOYD E. HERMAN

83

CULTURAL CANDY

ESSAY AND COLLECTION BY MARTHA DREXLER LYNN

113

WORD OF MOUTH

ON OBJECTS OF ORAL DELIGHT

ESSAY AND COLLECTION BY SUZANNE RAMLJAK

147

SITTING PRETTY

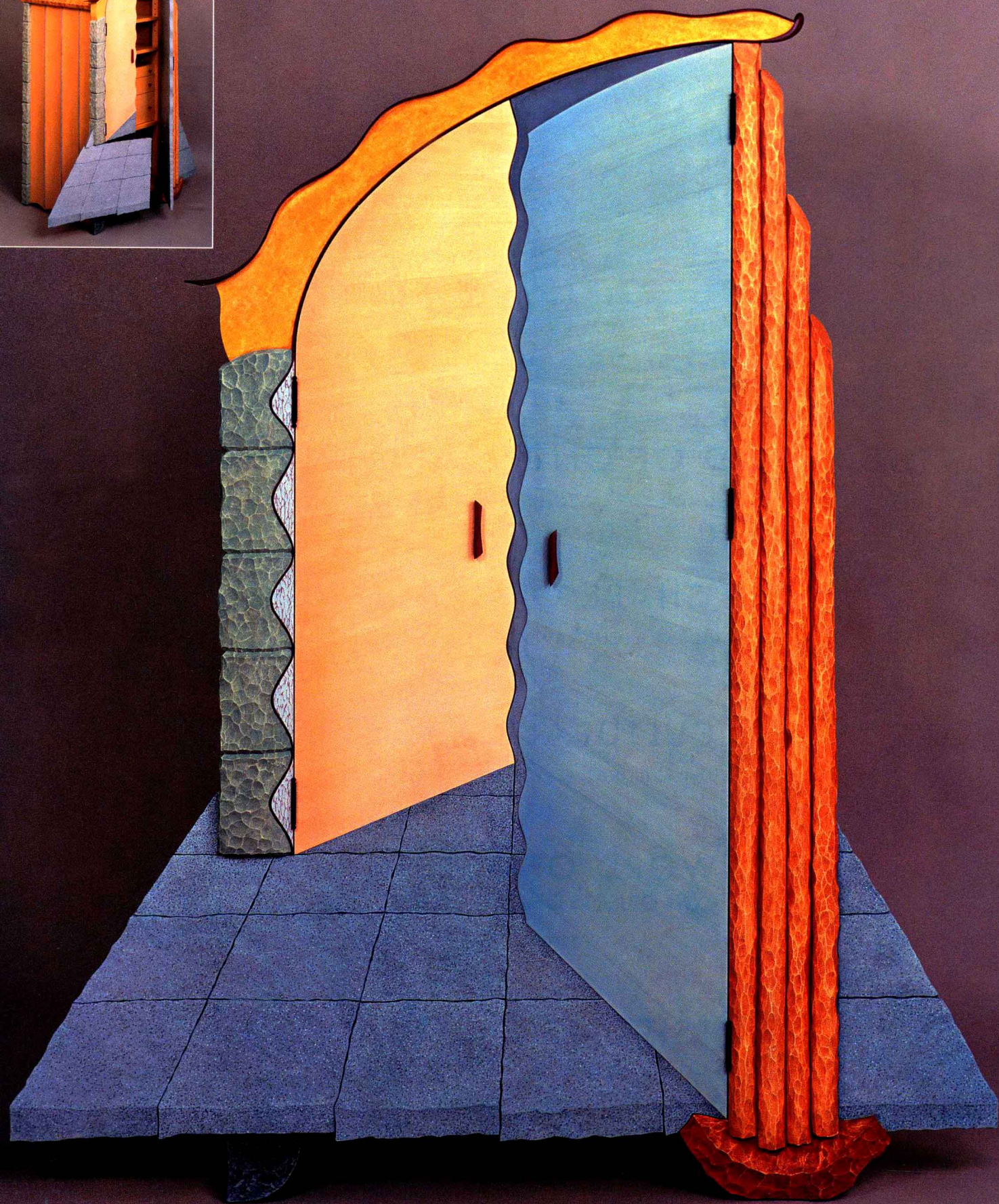
THE CHAIR AS AN OBJECT OF ATTENTION

ESSAY AND COLLECTION BY KAREN S. CHAMBERS

177

. . .

ABOUT THE ARTISTS 206



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

TONI SIKES

The objects we live with tell stories; what we must do is learn to listen. Often their stories are told in the faintest of whispers, through fragments of explanation and flashes of illumination.

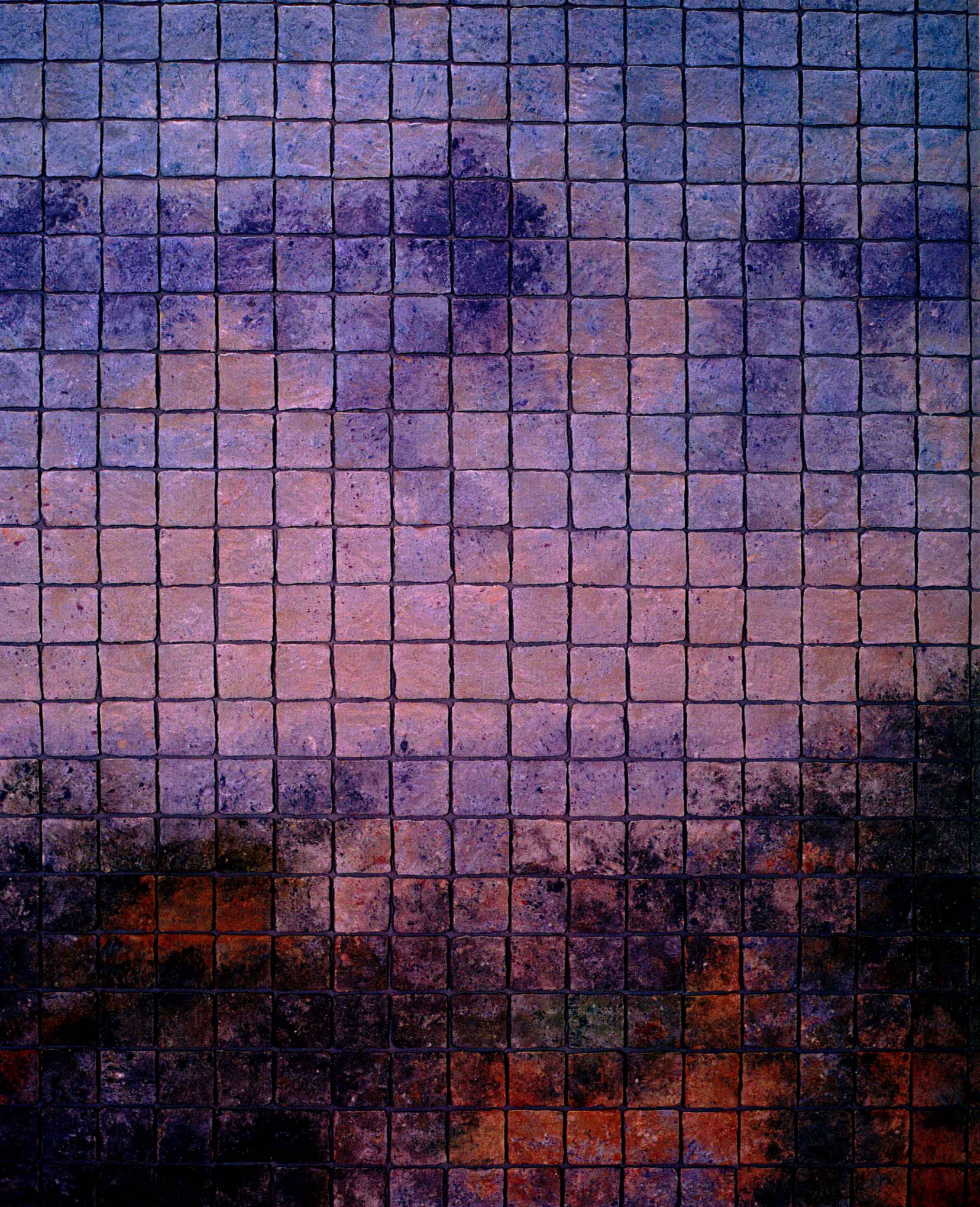
The objects become our preface. They speak to us; they move us. We take them home and live with their story and add our personal embellishments along the way.

The works of art found within the following pages speak volumes, and it is up to each of us to seek the lessons offered. We invite you to lean forward and listen a little harder . . .

OPPOSITE

JAMIE ROBERTSON, *Media Cabinet*, 63"H × 51"W × 24"D.

Cabinet carved from limewood, mahogany and holly and painted with a trompe l'oeil facade. Photo by Robertson & De Rham.



THE NOBILITY OF BEAUTY

BARBARA TOBER

*“Every year of my life I grow more convinced that it is wisest
and best to fix our attention on the beautiful and the good,
and dwell as little as possible on the evil and the false.”*

— Richard Cecil

There is something noble in the pursuit of beauty now. A kind of “in-your-face” ugliness and violence are fashionable in the art world, and conscientious objectors are made to feel out of step with the times. This phenomenon seems to coexist with the population explosion, the throbbing rhythm of our cities and the decline of nature as forests, plains, wild animals, exotic species and ocean creatures not so slowly disappear. We — Homo sapiens — are the juggernaut. And how frightening that as we prevail, our desire for aesthetics — if that be the correct term — echoes the worst of our culture. “What is art if it doesn’t shock . . .” said one young viewer at a recent X-rated exhibition in New York. And indeed that is the attitude of many patrons of contemporary works that include offensive installations, disgusting videos and other noisome manifestations of the current mode.

Yes, one can argue that much of religious art has been brutal. Certainly the countless images of St. Sebastian are archetypal, as are so many tales from the Bible meant to set a terrifying example for those who would transgress. Centuries of war have been glorified by gallons of paint and tons of bronze in order to instill a sense of awe and duty as the mighty and their minions battled one frontier against another in an agrarian age. But violence doesn’t seem to end with war, as we court vicarious thrills today in film and video games and on canvas, paper and any media we can utilize. We are addicted — in living Technicolor — to the daily reenactment of our wildest nightmares.

Is there surcease? Luckily, yes! For an increasing number of collectors and art lovers, the world of nature, of form and function, of pleasing and evocative shapes and colors — which can range aesthetically from calm to

OPPOSITE

ELIZABETH MACDONALD, *Landscape*, 40"H × 40"W × 1"D.
Ceramic tile created by layering ceramic powders on thin pieces of textured clay. Photo by Bob Rush.

exciting — not only exists but beckons. There are artists living today, in America and around the world, who have in their mind's eye and in their hands and hearts the ability to bring us to joyful tears. To see Dale Chihuly and his colleagues, such as Lino Tagliapietra, and their apprentices create great glistening chandeliers, “Venetian” vases, seaforms and the like from simple rods of glass in a red-hot furnace is to watch one of life's greatest dramas in craftsmanship. Equally impressive are the sculptures by William Morris, whose blown and pâte de verre reflections of the ancient world are treasures that can partner antiquities with dignity and grace.

How moving it is, too, to witness a potter smooth clay on a wheel with the deft hands of a dancer, or ceramists, such as Bennett Bean or Michael Lucero, build graceful sculptures that are timeless yet utterly new in concept and execution. Let us also applaud the talents of the Moulthropes — father and son — for whom wood is the muse. Their signature forms in polymer-infused woodgrains have a fluidity and a tactile quality that raises tree-hugging to new heights. For these and other artists of their ilk, every millimeter of a tree's growth over time is a signal for his or her expertise — molding and integrating the whorls, burls and natural colors into disciplined and exquisite forms that become museum-quality collectors' treasures.

Starting with the earliest stone tool, we have the first craftsman and the first entrepreneur. He (probably male, for prehistoric females had their own problems) made an object that — by virtue of the barter system — enabled him to earn food, water, and perhaps shelter. Just as it has been for centuries, metalwork in all its diverse forms is art — from Albert Paley's gates of grandeur for a university, to the miniature sculptures by artists such as William Harper, Andreas von Zadora and Michele Oka Doner that

we collect as contemporary jewelry. These wearable art forms are growing in demand because they are imaginative, unique, fluid and appealing in their artistry . . . and body friendly.

Textile or fiber art — how ancient is this field with its historic tapestries and quilts, mummy wrappings, Greek and Roman fragments, gilded Peruvian wall panels that are echoed by artist Olga de Amaral, woven fantasies and textured wall sculptures from all over the world. Fiber art pieces made now, such as those created by Sheila Hicks, can soften and humanize the most contemporary spaces. Fiber art includes the making of paper sculpture in sensual and compelling new textures, mixed media, and a plethora of feathers, beads, twine, leaves, twigs and the like. These “paintings” without paint, “Spirits of the Cloth” as we called them at the American Craft Museum, can reward us with a lifetime of visual pleasure.

Building a collection of beautiful objects is both an exciting adventure and an exercise in connoisseurship. One begins slowly, finding something graceful or charming that is pleasing to look at. Perhaps one meets an artist, seeing him or her at work, enjoying the fruits of this meeting for their aesthetics as well as the connection and the memories. As the collection grows, other factors enter



YOSHIKO YAMAMOTO,
Facade,
2"H × 1.25"W × 0.25"D.
Mustard opal set in a
textured 20K gold brooch
with two carnelian
gemstones.

in. Books, articles, lectures and symposia stimulate awareness of the craftsmanship behind the object, the cultural significance, the rare or precious materials, the almost unbelievably difficult process that brought this or that object into the world. Some of these works of art are so emotionally compelling that one catches one's breath when seeing them. Yet for the knowledgeable collector with an "eye," the search becomes an intellectual exercise as well.

That's when the real passion for collecting begins . . . along with a philosophy. For my husband and me, the philosophy is the continuum of man's awesome ability to create beautiful things. We juxtapose an early Greek rhyton of an exquisitely shaped ceramic bull's head with William Morris's powerful minotaur. We hang Kiyomi Iwata's giant "pillows" of gold-and-copper-leafed metal mesh on the wall behind a sofa heaped with its own fluffed-up squares of chintz. One of Chihuly's famous Venetians, a huge vase of coils and silver-spangled lilies, which we watched being made at UrbanGlass in Brooklyn, sits between two Grinling Gibbons carved and gilded wood swags — fruit and flowers in deep relief. Both have the same exuberance, but they are some 250 years apart in time.

Our proclivities tend toward figurative work, so wit and humor also enter the picture. The early Sichuan "entertainer" in terra cotta, his (now lost) stick poised to beat his drum dances in the foyer, while Lucero's *Woman as Vessel* holds her "head" high in the living room. A bronze airborne dancer leaps below a watercolor of fruit and flowers. Vases for flowers are often works of glass art



GEORGE WESTBROOK, *Stone Vessel*, 3.5"H × 5.5"DIA.
Lathe-turned alabaster vessel with an African wonderstone rim.
Photo by Kevin Shields.

themselves, doubling the impact of the arrangement. The apartment is a tribute to the history of craftsmanship. And there are books piled everywhere attesting to the skills of this or that artist. No wonder we love being there . . . and other people do, too.

There are many ways to bring beauty into your life, and our culture has the ability to provide them — at all price levels. Beautiful food, clothes, interior decorations, even penmanship, speech, a pleasing voice, good manners . . . these constitute an elegance and a joyous aesthetic to which many aspire. Art is simply the next step, and the beginning of a lifelong journey of visual pleasure and rewarding relationships.

Barbara Tober is chairman of the board of governors of the American Craft Museum in New York. She also serves as president of Acronym, Inc., a venture capital firm that invests in craft-related projects, and she funds educational arts projects for children nationwide through her foundation. Prior to her career in craft art, she worked in the advertising and magazine world, serving as editor-in-chief for *Conde Nast's BRIDE'S Magazine* for almost 30 years.

INTRODUCTION

GLENN ADAMSON

It's easy to fall in love with an object. Perhaps it happens to work perfectly for your body — a chair that fits your frame or a cup handle that meets the curl of your fingers just right. Maybe the object has a sentimental meaning for you, or maybe you just think it's beautiful. All of us experience these connections routinely, so much so that we tend not to think about them much. And that's too bad. For these intense relationships between ourselves and objects can be a powerful way to learn, every bit as enlightening as our relationships to other people.

This book was designed, first, to showcase objects that have the power to provide such insights. But it also has a secondary purpose: to give some great writers the opportunity to consider the attractions and potential of objects in an unusually general way. Most essays written in the field of craft and art criticism tend toward the specific: they are studies of particular exhibitions or artists. The essays in this book, by contrast, are quite wide-ranging. Each of the six writers was asked to select

objects from the website of GUILD.com and then craft an essay around his or her collection of choices. Under the encompassing rubric of “Object Lessons,” the six contributors arrived at very different approaches. As editor, I have taken the liberty of organizing these disparate essays into three thematic pairs: social value, narrative content, and functionality. These strike me as the most important (if not the only) categories that we might use in analyzing our relationship to the handmade objects around us.

The first pairing combines an essay by glass expert Susanne Frantz with one by Jody Clowes, a specialist not only in contemporary craft but also in older American decorative arts. Both authors investigate the role that handmade objects play in the larger society. Frantz considers the crucial, but frequently overlooked, distinction between the professional “handmade” object and the domestic “homemade” one. As she demonstrates, this line is important to a historical understanding of the development of fine craft. It also has an impact on the



JOHN CHILES, *Organic Bottles*, 9.5"H to 11.5"H. Blown glass bottles with stoppers.

culture of gift exchange that drives the making and selling of handmade objects. Clowes's essay is a paean to the social and personal values of the handmade. As an antidote to a world increasingly characterized by sameness, she champions the imperfection and individuality of the contemporary crafted object.

The next two essays embrace two distinct forms of content: narrative and reference. Both writers in this section are veterans of the museum world, which perhaps accounts for their interest in subject matter — curators commonly tie very different artworks together through the connecting of threads of shared content. Lloyd Herman, who was for a long time the director of the

Renwick Gallery in Washington, DC, tackles the thorny issue of narrative imagery and its emotional resonance. Martha Drexler Lynn, who spent ten years as a curator at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, addresses the equally broad topic of artistic reference to cultural or natural source material.

The final pair of essays centers on use: the way that function serves to link our minds and our senses to the things around us. Karen Chambers focuses on a particular furniture form, the chair. She finds it to be a rich format for physical and psychological engagement, particularly in the social relationships between people that seating furniture can suggest. For the objects in her collection, she has chosen not only chairs, but also images and objects that resonate with the notion of the chair, through either their content or their material. Suzanne Ramljak's essay employs the theories of Freud and other thinkers to discuss what she calls "oral objects" — things we touch directly with our mouths. Ramljak argues that this category of functional forms provides some of our most intimate and personal connections with the inanimate world.

As varied as these writings may be, they offer one thing in common: new ways of thinking about objects, and the lessons they have to offer. Each essay, read in conjunction with the images in each author's collection, suggests a single avenue between art and ourselves. Hopefully, this book will only be a prompting for its readers: by suggesting a few ways to think about the things around us, it may open up a whole world of insights.

Glenn Adamson graduated from Yale University with a doctorate in art history; his studies focused on the history of post-World War II craft. As a curator at the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he teaches at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and organizes exhibitions for the Milwaukee Museum of Art.