



**SOFA CHICAGO 2006 LECTURE SERIES
SPOTLIGHT ON INTERNATIONAL CURATORS, ARTS SCHOLARS AND ARTISTS**

AUGUST 20, 2006. **The SOFA CHICAGO 2006 Lecture Series** will be held at the exposition Friday, November 10th & Saturday, November 11th and is free to SOFA attendees. 31 presentations by renowned artists, collectors and arts professionals are planned. This year's Series spotlights international curators and scholars speaking on topics related to SOFA CHICAGO 2006 gallery presentations and Special Exhibits from around the world, including the Czech Republic, Ireland, Korea, China and Wales.

Moira Vincentelli, senior lecturer in art history and curator of ceramics at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, will lecture on the subject of *For Love or Money – Women and Ceramics in Wales*. Using findings from her current three year research project and the wider historical context, including the tradition of domestic display, Vincentelli will discuss the issues and concerns for women ceramicists in Wales today with reference to key emerging artists, nine of whose works will be on-view at **The Gallery, Ruthin Craft Centre, Denbighshire, Wales**, booth at SOFA. The author of *Women and Ceramics — Gendered Vessels* (2000) and *Women Potters* (2004), Vincentelli said, “Women’s traditions are characterized by simple technology and a way of working the clay that keeps the maximum closeness between the hand and the material...The hierarchy of the western division between art and craft serves to devalue what women do and associate men with art and women with craft.”

Dr. Christine Nicholls, senior lecturer, Australian Studies, Flinders University, South Australia, a specialist in Australian indigenous arts, will discuss the development and contemporary practice of the ceramics movement in the Aboriginal lands of Australia's remote Western Desert. Nicholls speaks several Aboriginal languages and for ten years lived and worked in a remote Aboriginal settlement. She is a respected activist for the legislative maintenance of Australia's indigenous languages and art, from the historic to the most contemporary. Presented in conjunction with the SOFA CHICAGO gallery presentation of **Australian Contemporary, Adelaide, Australia**.

Dan Klein, visiting professor in glass at the University of Sunderland, UK, renowned author and former director in charge of 20th century decorative arts at Christie's in London, will moderate a panel on North Lands Creative Glass (of which he was a founder) located in a small fishing village on the northeast coast of Scotland. Also participating: **Rose Watban, curator, Applied Art & Design, National Museums of Scotland,** and artists **Steve Klein, Silvia Levenson, Catharine Newell, Ted Sawyer,** all of whom have worked and/or taught at North Lands. Presented in conjunction with **The Bullseye Gallery, Portland, OR,** whose SOFA CHICAGO gallery presentation will feature the works of fifteen Bullseye artists who have been involved with North Lands.

In another Lecture Series presentation, **Klein will speak on artists Stepan Pala and Zora Palova (Galerie Pokorná, Prague)** a husband and wife team from Slovakia, whose long collaboration in glass has won them many accolades in the art world. The couple has shown in over forty solo/group/touring exhibitions across the world since 1994 and has undertaken six major international commissions. Firmly rooted in the Czech/Slovak traditions and working principally in kiln-cast glass, they are credited with further developing techniques initiated by Stanislav Libensky and Jaroslava Brychtova. A major retrospective exhibition of Pala and Palova's work is planned for 2007 in Prague.

Augmenting the SOFA CHICAGO Special Exhibit ***Tradition and Innovation: Korean Contemporary Ceramics*** organized by **The World Ceramic Exposition Foundation (WOCEF)** of Korea, **Judith Schwartz, director, Craft Media Area, New York University Department of Art and Art Professions** will survey the multi-complex of museums, exhibition halls and assemblies that constitute the backdrop for the Korean Biennale, respected international competition for ceramics. Schwartz is a critic, curator and author of national and international articles on contemporary craft issues. She recently curated the exhibition "Confrontational Clay: The Artist as Social Critic" for the Mid-American Arts Alliance which toured ten museums throughout the United States.

National Craft Gallery Curator of projects for The Crafts Council of Ireland, Brian Kennedy will make a presentation on the SOFA CHICAGO Special Exhibit he curated, ***Forty Shades of Green, A Convergence of Irish Art and Craft,*** featuring the work of

40 Irish makers across the fields of craft, fine art and literature. In 2005 Kennedy organized *Forty Shades of Green* in collaboration with CORK2005, European Capital of Culture. Kennedy will discuss "the ideas behind and the work in *Forty Shades of Green*; and in this, Ireland's first year at SOFA, give an insight into the contemporary craft scene in Ireland." A former lecturer at Crawford College of Art and Design, Cork, Ireland, Kennedy is currently working on a new Crafts Council of Ireland exhibition entitled *Mythology, Ecology, Technology*, a survey of contemporary concerns within Irish craft and design scheduled for 2007. First-time SOFA exhibitor, **National Crafts Gallery, Ireland**, will present Irish artwork for sale in its gallery presentation.

Author, critic, and former curator of modern glass at the Corning Museum of Glass, Suzanne K. Frantz will moderate the panel, ***Contemporary Chinese Sculpture in Glass***, surveying the vibrant glass art scene in Shanghai with a focus on the work of **Qin Wang** and **Laam Lam, Jaffa** (both represented by **Galerie Vee, Hong Kong**). Qin Wang is a Chinese sculptor working in cast glass, and lecturer in the glass department of Shanghai Fine Arts University. SOFA CHICAGO 2006 is the first time Wang's work will be seen in the United States. Jaffa Lam Laam is a well-known Hong Kong sculptor, and lecturer at The Art School of The Hong Kong Arts Centre. Working predominantly in wood and metal, Lam has recently been drawn to include elements of glass in her work, which is included in the permanent collection of Hong Kong Museum of Art.

Hal Nelson, Director of the Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA since 1989 will moderate a panel in conjunction with The Collectors of Wood Art's Special Exhibit at SOFA CHICAGO, ***The Presence of Absence: Exploring the Void in Contemporary Wood Sculpture***, which he curated. Nelson and artists **Mark Lindquist, Gyöngy Laky** and **William Hunter**. will discuss aspects of negative space and the influence of Asian art and aesthetics in their works and others presented in the Special Exhibit. Nelson said, "While some artists have emphasized the substance of their medium, its weight, bulk and mass, others have investigated its opposite – the pure empty space surrounding form. Turners, in particular, who typically remove mass to create shapes that contain empty space – vessels – are keenly aware of the inter-relationship of solid and void, a relationship that results from the dynamic process of turning wood." Presented by Collectors of Wood Art.

Hal Nelson will also chair a panel on a major traveling retrospective opening this fall at the Long Beach Museum, *Transforming Vision: The Wood Sculpture of William Hunter 1970-2005*. **Bill Hunter** is one of very few American artists working today who entered the field of contemporary wood sculpture in its formative stages in the early 1970s, and whose early forms exploited wood's rich expressive potential and advanced a new direction for the entire field. Hunter will participate in the panel with **independent curator Kevin Wallace** of *Transforming Vision*. **William Hunter, represented by del Mano Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, is the 2006 recipient of the annual Collectors of Wood Art's Lifetime Achievement Award, to be presented at SOFA CHICAGO.**

Acclaimed artists participating in the SOFA CHICAGO Lecture Series include:

- **Michael Taylor (Leo Kaplan Modern, New York, NY)** renowned for his non-representational, constructivist-inspired geometrical compositions. His work is in many international collections including the Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Corning Museum of Glass, Notojima Museum of Glass, and the Royal Ontario Museum. For 25 years, Taylor was a professor and head of the Glass Department in the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences at the Rochester Institute of Technology. He currently is professor at the New University of Lisbon, College of Science and Technology, Portugal.
- **Bettina Speckner, (Sienna Gallery, Lenox, MA)**, independent jeweler who lives in Munich, Germany. Speckner often uses photographs as a starting point for her jewelry, transferring them to zinc or enamel. She was one of 120 international artists featured in the National Gallery of Australia's recent exhibition, *Transformation: the Language of Craft (2005-2006)*, which said of her work: "Images of mysterious faces, stately architecture and unidentified gardens form the centrepieces of Bettina Speckner's work. The soft grey, monochromatic tones of the etched photograph in its silver setting infuses the work with a certain pensiveness, even melancholy, which invites our contemplation and encourages us to weave our own narratives around it Sponsored by the Society of North American Goldsmiths.
- **Jim Rose (Ann Nathan Gallery, Chicago, IL)**, renowned for his minimal functional furniture inspired by Shaker design, creates a rich mahogany appearance of aged wood by handcrafting each piece using naturally rusted steel. In his quilt cupboards, Rose uses color and earth-toned steel panels from found objects, referencing Americana patchwork. For Rose, the reuse of discarded scrap "creates a dialogue between past and present; the marks and scars are a record of time". His pieces are in the collections of the John Michael Kohler Art Center; Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution and the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, among others.
- **Silvia Levenson (Caterina Tognon Contemporanea Arte, Venice, IT)**, accomplished cast glass artist who immigrated from Buenos Aires, Argentina, and now lives and works in Lesa, Italy. Of her work, Levenson said, "Sometimes households become a pressure cooker. These emotional bombs lurking in family relationships are the focus of my new work." Levenson's works are in many

- prominent glass collections such as the Altare Glass Museum in Italy, the Glas Museum Fraueneau in Germany and the Corning Museum of Glass, New York
- **Sergei Isupov**, celebrating his ten-year association with **Ferrin Gallery, Lenox, MA** this year in an anniversary presentation by Ferrin Gallery at SOFA CHICAGO. Treating ceramic sculpture as a "canvas" for his "paintings," Isupov uses plastic, graphic, and painting elements to complement each other in a given piece, and mixes classical forms with comical elements. Isupov has said: "I like the contrast of serious to humorous. The front is cartoon-like, but the back of each figure features an intimate painting of the being's spirit."ⁱ In the US, Isupov's work is in the collections of the Mint Museum of Craft + Design, Charlotte, NC; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, NY, among others.
 - **William Carlson (Marx-Saunders Gallery, Chicago, IL)**, recipient of this year's Art Alliance for Contemporary Glass (AACG) Honors Award, holds the Endowed Chair in the Arts at the University of Miami. Former Professor of Art and head of the Crafts and Sculpture programs at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Carlson creates austere laminated sculptures that address issues of interior space, geometry, texture and color. His works are included in numerous museum collections around the world including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Hokkaido Museum of Art, Sapporo, Japan. Presented by AACG.
 - **Daniel Clayman (Habatat Galleries, Royal Oak, MI)** Clayman's evocative sculptures are created using the pate de verre technique, often combined with electroplated metal and/or bronze. He has been exhibiting his works since the mid-80's and they have been acquired by nearly a dozen museums, including The Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, The Cleveland Museum of Art, The Museums of Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA, Museum of Arts & Design, New York, and The Corning Museum of Glass.

ⁱ <http://www.chronogram.com/issue/2005/07/viewfromthetop/>