

Aspen Daily News

aspendailynews.com

The Roaring Fork Valley's only independent and locally owned daily newspaper

FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2009

Vol. 31 #350

Slide Lectures Show Off Artists at Anderson Ranch

BY AMANDA MERVINE, TIME OUT STAFF WRITER

Since the mid-1980s, Snowmass Village's Anderson Ranch Arts Center has played host to thousands of new and emerging artists, as well as a host of art veterans. This summer's Slide Lecture Series provides a stage for the artists currently residing and teaching at the Ranch to present their works and explain in detail the meanings, methods and personal importance of each one.

The Schiemer Meeting Hall, located amongst a range of camp-like log cabins on the Ranch's sprawling property, is a simplistic wood-clad room from floor to ceiling, ornamented only by white Japanese lanterns. This sets the perfect ambience for the artist lectures by making the slides of their artwork the primary focus in an otherwise barren meeting hall. Last Tuesday's lectures included such assorted artists as a studio potter, a wood sculptor and a woodturner.

"We like to have artists at the Ranch that represent all mediums of art," explained Anderson Ranch's Interim President Paul Collins. Collins has only recently been promoted as Anderson Ranch's Interim president, but usually holds the position of artistic director of painting and drawing. He explains that each medium of art represented at the Ranch is presided over by a different art director. These directors are in charge of selecting which artists the Ranch will bring to teach classes to art students in every field, as well as present the slide lectures to anyone who feels the urge to attend. This way the Ranch attracts an eclectic collection of artists said Collins.

Anderson Ranch's Marketing Director, Holly Bornemeier, explained that from the pool of faculty, which the art directors have chosen, the slide lecturers are then picked.

Tuesday's lectures kicked off with studio potter Kathryn Finnelly, who gave a very brief presentation of her 19th century English-inspired pottery. Finnelly, originally from Toronto, received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Nova Scotia College of Arts and Design and went on to receive her Masters in Fine Arts from Louisiana State University.

She explained to the audience that she originally intended on being a jeweler because of her love for the ornamentation jewelers are able use. However, she soon realized she could apply that same love for embellishment and detail in jewelry making to pottery.

After being a full-time studio potter for 25 years, this was Finnelly's first visit to Anderson Ranch. Her slides portrayed her use of and love for the playful, ornamental aspects of "Victorian

Majolica" pottery. The influences of this 19th century style of pottery are very evident in Finnelly's work as her pottery is highly decorated with several different patterns as well as vast arrays of colors adorning every one of her pieces.

Although Finnelly's pottery seemed far too ornate and delicate to put to practical use, she explained that she intends for her pieces to be utilized. A majority of her work consists of making teapots, various types of jars, salt and peppershakers and every day items that can be found in a standard kitchen.

Jeffrey Brosk's intentions for his works are similar to that of Finnelly. Brosk, being the second guest lecturer, showed various slides of his incredibly breathtaking wooden sculptures, furniture pieces and landscape art.

Brosk attended M.I.T. where he received a Master of Architecture and went on to realize his love for the arts. He worked for a construction company in Arizona in order to have a more hands-on experience in the world of architecture. This led to the primary inspiration in his artwork: the Southwest.

"The Southwest changed me spiritually and visually," said Brosk. "My inspirations from the Southwest include asphalt, concrete and wood," he jokes of the comparison of his pieces to the desolate southwestern landscape.

Brosk explained that he used his knowledge as an architect combined with his interest of painting to create his uniquely original works. His pieces often intertwine large pieces of wood with pieces of granite, slate or different metals to create an Asian vibe to his work.

Although much of his works are functional and interactive pieces — such as doors, coffee tables, dining tables, benches and stools — a great deal is also simply for viewing pleasure. His wall sculptures, as he calls them, represent the artist's appreciation for the beauty of a simple piece of wood combined with a basic black or grey piece of slate to create a truly unique and beautiful piece of art.

The theme of functional art continued as the third and final artist of Tuesday's lectures took the podium. Michael Mochno has been a full-time craftsman since 1976 according to his website. His pieces are nearly all functional such as tables, jewelry boxes, instruments and doors, except that they are anything but your basic everyday adaptations. Every one of Mochno's pieces is interwoven with different types of wood to create the fascinating, all-timber masterpieces.

Addressing the audience with a shirt that read "I just make stuff" made it easy to see that his remarkably complicated handcrafted pieces were simply made during just another day in the workshop for Mochno.

Mochno told the audience that he had a severe case of "LMS," or Ligno-Mania Syndrome. In laymen's terms, this basically means he has a slight obsession for all things wood.

"I find that if you take your compulsive behaviors into the workshop you're less likely to hurt society," joked Mochno of his sincere love for the art of woodturning.

This past week's slide lecture series certainly lived up to Collins' standards of diversity in art mediums, and it looks as if this coming week's artists will continue the trend.

The lineup this Sunday, July 12, includes photographer David Hilliard and furniture craftswoman Gail Fredell. The guest lecturers on Tuesday, July 14, will be studio artist John Hull, Director and Curator of Contemporary Center at the American Folk Art Museum Brooke Davis Anderson, and photographer and print-maker Jonathan Singer.

This is Hilliard's fifth summer teaching and presenting at the Ranch. He became involved with the summer programs through Singer, who is a close friend of the photographer, as well as a veteran at the Ranch.

"I teach a wide variety of students at Anderson Ranch from hobbyists to photography graduate students," explains Hilliard, who says he looks forward to teaching at Anderson Ranch every summer.

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ANDERSON RANCH SLIDE LECTURE SERIES

Sundays and Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

Runs through August.

923-3181

andersonranch.org