

Letter from the Chair

Susan Kentroti

Hello All! The dust is settling a bit from the 12th annual COMA conference in Salida and I hope those of you who attended had as great a time as I did. The presentations of Carol Webb, David Huang, Jim Kelso, Michael Boyd and Tom Herman were extraordinary. Each presenter generously exceeded our expectations by an enormous amount, in both time and inspiration. THANK YOU. The workshops with Michael Boyd and Carol Webb were incredibly informative and inspirational, as well.

Thanks also to you unsung heroes who contributed to the success of the Conference and Workshops: Marlon Cohrs who transports and sets up all of his own video

equipment so that we can view the presentations up close and personal; to Todd Tychewicz and Lori Baer for manning the video cameras; to Michael Boyd, Joe Korth and Marsha White for transporting and setting up all of the equipment; to Jerry Scavezze for loaning us a stump; Judy Hoch for inviting and hosting Carol Webb; and to all of you who both contributed and bid on items in the silent auction. It covers a huge portion of the expenses for the conference.

Thanks to the member-vendors: Lew Wackler, Travis Ogden with the Naja, Donna and John Rhoads with D & J Rare Gems, Jerry McClure with Jerry McClure knives.

Finally, I'd like to recognize my fellow board members for

their enormous contribution of time and energy in organizing the conference: Elizabeth McDevitt (presenters and program); Nancy Blair (schedule, finances, registration and organization), Anne Hallam (silent auction); Geraldine Alexander (banquet, food, members' show and artist's reception), Lori Baer (photography and video); and Nancy Gass (registration). It has been a pleasure working with you.

I'm sure you all share in my admiration and appreciation of the improvements to the Steamplant Conference Center. It is a wonderful facility, and we have reserved it again for July 17-19 of 2009 for our 13th annual conference. See you there!

Memoir of the Vail Arts Festival

Ira Sherman

It's Sunday evening. I'm wet, cold and on my way home from the Vail Arts Festival with my tail tucked between my legs. The show was a disaster for me. I had already spent a full week of my precious time in preparing an efficient and elegant sales booth for the fair.

My overhead was close to \$2000 and my total sales for the 3 day event was \$600. My booth was beautiful, my promotional materials were the best I have ever created, my

inventory of 32 new elegantly hand-forged stainless steel vessels were laid out in an impressive display. I carefully reviewed my overhead, labor and value-added design costs, with each art object fairly priced for both



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Cutting Edge

Salida Conference 2008









Michael Boyd Workshop

It wasn't the first time I had taken a Boyd workshop, and this one proved to be both educational and interesting. We got off to a bumpy start when the equipment didn't arrive in Pueblo from his previous workshop in Boston in time for this workshop. Borrowing equipment from a few good friends, the workshop was up and running.

Since most of us already had basic metalsmithing skills, Michael taught about stones: how to find them, determining quality, cutting techniques and designing with stones. It was a great workshop with old and new friends. If you weren't there, don't miss Michael's article in the upcoming Lapidary Journal.



Carol Webb Workshop

Although I was exhausted from the Michael Boyd workshop, the Salida Conference and working on the conference financial recap, I just couldn't miss Carol's workshop. I had taken LB's etching workshop years ago and at that time found the chemicals and set-up too cumbersome for my small studio space. Carol has streamlined the process and it

is a blast! Twenty people attended the workshop, and each one of them did some fantastic pieces. Carol's attitude was enthusiastic and fun. This workshop was a real treat. Thanks to Judy Hoch for hosting Carol while she was in Denver.



The translation of this featured article is as follows:

Translation of document - Russian to English from Popular Mechanics Russia, April 2008

Kinetic Sculptures

Ira Sherman

Name: Ira Sherman

Country: USA

Education: Specialist in Biology and Chemistry

Trade: Jeweler, sculptor, teacher

Hobby: Percussionist

Motto: "I will never have a creative crisis. I have too many things going at once. I have more than two lifetimes of projects that I'll never even get to."

Imagine a sculpture made from metal and plastic with an ability to move provided by electrical and pneumatic components, having been put on human body endowed by deep social meaning expressed and delicate humor.

Creating artwork comes naturally to Ira Sherman, he is a globally recognized sculptor but also professional jeweler, teacher, founder and past chair of Colorado Metal-smithing Association and percussionist in the Los Lantzmun Band.

His works are unique combination of engineering art, anatomically precise bio design, social psychology and fine jeweler quality performance.

Ira considers his kinetic sculptures (that's how he calls his creations himself) a promising new perspective direction in art. As the artist genre of artwork has evolved, Ira continues to present lectures for young sculptors about basics of mechanics, electrical engineering and pneumatics.

Finally, Sherman is a magnificent showman. Nobody can demonstrate "kinetic sculpture" in action as im-

pressively as he does.

Ira began to attend visual art lessons in 3rd grade. His parents hoped to distract him from mania of taking apart toys. "Call my mother and she will tell you that I would instantly to take apart every toy I received as a gift"- artist's laughing. She would get very upset over my interesting more in breaking things than playing with them. I've been continuing doing that now - taking apart toys of my kids. Besides that Ira came in touch with mechanical world because of his father, owner of manufacturing metal working machinery company. The artist never studied engineering but perfectly understands mechanics on intuitive level. He got excellent education in biology, chemistry and of course art.

Ira makes his living making exclusive jewelry and ritual objects for churches. "First thing artist has to do, he says, is to find the source of livelihood. Then art comes out from heart and does not become the mass production to satisfy every taste.

Sherman earns a living creating jewelry, Sherman endlessly brings his skill of work with metal to perfection. Jeweler precision and attention to finest details is what that gives especial brilliance to the kinetic sculptures of Ira Sherman.

"People in society have a wonderful ability to adjust to the most absurd behavior of people surrounding them...sometimes to tell good from bad a person needs a good sense of humor."



Well of inspiration

When asked what it means to be an artist, Ira Sherman responds: "From my point of view the main predestination of an artist is to give a new meaning to things which he sees and senses, connecting, merging seemingly incompatible materials and ideas. In a case of success, his creation compels people to see something new inside their hearts and souls. Ira finds ideas in reality of contemporary society, in problems of people's attitude, their interactions. That means his source of inspiration will never end

Panacea for all ills

Currently most of the kinetic sculptures of Ira Sherman have been included

in two thematic exhibitions, displayed in which are shown in major museums and galleries worldwide. First series of works, created in 1990s is called *Panacea to Persistent Problems*.

For example, a fantastic device called *The Arbitrator* is intended to force the two individuals into a constructive dialogue by finding a mutually beneficial compromise. *The Arbitrator* fixes to the head, body and hands of subjects so that they are constantly against each other and watch each other eye to eye. An hourglass with photocells gradually allows an increase the pressure on the heads of negotiating parties, forcing them as soon as possible to find the right solution to the conflict. If the time for compromise is not found,

the critical pressure on the heads of both individuals will make further negotiations meaningless.

The *Explosion Injection Former* promises to enable the normal ordinary person to like feel an artist when they wear this metal jacket. A bizarre metal object erupts through a cloud of flame in front of the nozzles located on the chest, symbolizing the creation genius. This device also causes unpleasant compression of the chest to let the an individual understand that a person often suffers to make a creative piece of joyful art.

With the correct application, *The Pavlovian Trainer* can stimulate the correct behavior of an individual in just a few minutes. This device can be used by politicians, bureaucrats, egomaniacs, as



well as husbands, wives, parents, stepmother and stepfather throughout Europe and America. The combination of ease of administration and the highest quality manufacturing makes *Simulator for a Conditional Reflex* pleasing in appearance and at the same time an extremely effective device. Opening one's mouth depresses a pneumatic valve under the chin, forcing high pressure air into two large air cylinders, which closes a

plate over the mouth. The configuration of sensor is adjustable. *The Pavlovian Trainer* has a built-in locking device located on the head and in the area of eye and neck. The release of high pressure air also rings two brass bells located in bell-cups near the ears. A person is quickly trained not to speak when



they hear the bell ring. Upon completion of training, *The Pavlovian Trainer* is removed and only a ringing bell is necessary to cause instant silence.

The recruitment of junior genetics

The Seed

August, 1993. "Two British women who were implanted with the wrong embryos during fertility treatment are claiming damages, a medical charity said Monday in London. The two women, whose cases were unrelated, chose to have abortions after being told by doctors the embryos they were carrying were not their own.

"In March 1985 a young New York City couple faced a tragic dilemma. They were newlyweds and had not yet started a family. But the husband had cancer and continued chemotherapy would make it difficult for him to father a child. The couple decided to store some of his

sperm in a Manhattan sperm bank. After a year the wife decided she wanted to have a baby as soon as possible, and so she was artificially inseminated. She gave birth to a daughter in December 1986. DNA tests on the child and on the husband's remaining deposits at the sperm bank, ... have confirmed there is no genetic link between the two." (Quote taken from Newsweek, March 19, 1990.)

The Seed addresses this disturbing problem of misplaced sperm and embryos by allowing people to do their cryogenic banking at home away from the humiliating laboratory environment and inevitable confusion of commercial cryogenic sperm banks.

"People astound me by their ability to appreciate exquisite beauty and at the same time have the ability to do amazingly evil things."

Impenetrable Devices

The second exhibition, *Impenetrable Devices*, includes grotesque artifacts for fighting violence. Violence in a wide meaning of this word: from threat to honor and dignity from rape attack to international and interracial conflicts. This series was inspired by medieval fidelity belt.

Sculptures of Ira Sherman are beautiful, anatomically correct and guarantee protection from illegal violent actions.

Eye of justice

Surveillance Device, *Flipper Cam* is a anti-rape device equipped with a video camera with built-autonomous video transmission, which transmit video to recording unit and help identify the attacker and deter attacks. All the devices in the *Impenetrable Devices* exhibition become a meta-

phor for terrorist attacks and other external and internal threats that have forced the United States to take many protective measures, that do little to effectively protects the country from attack, but restricts the freedom of its own citizens. According Ira Sherman, the authorities often resort to means, equally bulky, awkward, strange and silly-looking, like a protective underwear from stainless steel. Ironically, "I have created devices that solve social problems, which in principle can not be solved."

The Injector

For many centuries, inventors created a bizarre device designed to resist sexual aggression. Primitive medieval "belt of fidelity" and high-tech steel prototype of ergonomic devices of the XXI century. Fantastic arrangements Ira Sherman, which became part of the exhibition *Impenetrable Devices*, designed to protect the most sensitive parts of the human body. Using refined mechanics the artist tries to express the sense of anger and pain, which occur in people affected by violence. Sherman draw inspiration from interviews with five rape victims, one male and four females. "I asked what they would like me to express through my sculptures - says the artist - and each of them gave me a list of ideas." Sherman's sculptures are beautiful, anatomically correct and provide guaranteed protection from unlawful harassment. For example, a device called *The Injector* is equipped with two syringes. One of them injects the rapists under the skin with a strong sedative, and the second needle injects tattoo die into the rapist. Following such injections attempt to apprehend rapist and prove guilty in court would be very easy.

Кинетические скульптуры Айры Шермана

Впервые взглянув на эти скульптуры, их можно принять за ювелирные украшения, хирургические инструменты или таинственные механизмы инопланетян

Текст: Сергей Апрезов

Представьте себе скульптуру из металла и пластика, способную двигаться благодаря электрическим и пневматическим компонентам, надеваемую на человеческое тело и не причиняющую ему неудобств, наделенную глубоким социальным смыслом, выражаемым с тонким юмором. Для художника Айры Шермана из Денвера это не составляет труда. Айра не только всемирно известный скульптор, но и профессиональный ювелир, преподаватель, основатель и руководитель Ассоциации кузнецов Колорадо

ИСКУССТВО

и перкуссионист в группе Los Lantzman. Его работы – это уникальное сочетание инженерного искусства, анатомически выверенного биодизайна, тонкой социальной психологии и ювелирного качества исполнения. Айра считает “кинетические скульптуры” (так он сам называет свои творения) новым перспективным направлением в искусстве. Желая, чтобы созданный им жанр развивался, художник организовал регулярные лекции, на которых знакомит молодых скульпторов с основами механики, электротехники и пневматики. Наконец, Шерман – еще и великолепный шоумен. Никто не может продемонстрировать “кинетические скульптуры” в действии столь же эффектно, как он сам.



Vail from page 1

the artist and the buyer.

Three cold rainy days later I had sold only one vessel and one small silver charm. What went wrong?

At first I blamed this disaster on the rainy, inclement weather and the low buyer turnout. However, people did show up with umbrellas in hand and many of the booths did pretty well, especially the bead/jewelry booths, print maker booths and wood worker booths.

After the realization that more than 300 people did indeed visit my booth, I decided to make a deeper evaluation of the situation.

I ruled out price: Vail has plenty of individuals who, if they liked the work, could indeed afford it. Rainy weather for sure had a role; 2000 more people visiting my booth could really help me out! Salesmanship—hey I'm the best there is for talking about my own work.

I felt a bit queasy when I realized the problem may originate from my "fantastic" art work. My preoccupation and enjoyment with the technique and creation of my work led me to completely misjudge the Vail market!

I personally love my new collection of sculptural vessels. I learned to manipulate stainless steel in ways I have never seen done. The nickel oxides in the alloys became a wonderful leathery gray/black patina. The hot-forged, undulating pleated steel evolved into surreal vessels

occupied by perplexed, miniature, bronze-cast amphibian creatures. Some people in Vail were amazed and impressed by my art objects, but most individuals asked if my pieces would work as nut or candy dishes. Almost everyone enjoyed my whimsical silver and bronze frogs I tossed in the display in a transparent attempt to cover a broader range of buyers. I really do not like whimsical art very much and get fairly despondent when people chose to appreciate a miniature casting of a fat happy pig over a carefully designed, patinated, undulating stainless steel art vessel.

I had made objects that no one had ever seen before and had no reference as to the intrinsic or artistic value of the objects. I certainly was excited about the forms, materials and techniques, but the Vail public did not trust themselves to make the artistic and financial decision to buy the objects.

I theorize that if my art objects were to be placed in a gallery setting in Vail and presented to the Vail public via a trusted art agent, I think I would see more sales.

I'm now going to test this theory in Denver. The art gallery at Agency CTA will feature a one-man show of my vessels from August 15 until October 15. My vessels and plates will be displayed in a formal gallery setting in a fine art context.

Aha, my tail is wagging again.

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COMA News

We are going electronic!!!!!! This will be one of the last printed newsletters. Initially we will send out the newsletter in PDF form and post it on the web site. Please make sure that your email address is on file and that it is correct. You can send your email address to comaforum@comcast.net

In the News

"Show of Hands" is hosting a "Political Exhibit" in conjunction with the Democratic Convention. The show was curated by **Sharon Schaffner** and features both sculpture and jewelry.

Todd Reed and **Julie Jerman-Melka** have re-

turned from successfully showing their work at the Buyers Market of American Craft in Philadelphia.

Haley Bates demonstrated the use of the Hydraulic Press to the Ft. Collins Posse Group at their monthly meeting.

Ira Sherman showed his work at the Vail Arts Festival

Lexi Erickson taught "Soldering Techniques" at the Allen-Sweetman Studio

Elizabeth McDevitt and **Jerry McClure** were in Santa Fe showing their work with the "Knife Group," a very successful show. While there they connected with **Michael Boyd** who was displaying his work at Patina.

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

Sat., Sept. 27, 1:00 p.m. — Max 30 Polishing Machine with Neil Koster

Sat., Oct. 18, 1:00 p.m. — Torches w/Travis Ogden

Sat., Nov. 8, 1:00 p.m. — Flexshaft Tool, Accessories and Maintenance w/Terry Kille

Sept. 12-14, Denver Gem and Mineral Show

The Naja will have a booth at this annual event in the Mart Expo Hall. Come see us while you are shopping!

Naja Annual Christmas Ornament Competition and Auction — Please plan to participate in this worthy cause to benefit The Food Bank of the Rockies. This is a fun and easy way that you can be a part of helping needy Denver children during the Holidays!

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Workshops

- ❖ Basic Chain Making with Joe Korth, September 6 & 7, 2008
- ❖ Forged pendant using "Fretz" hammers

Darlene Armstrong Saturday Workshops

- ❖ Jewelry Marketing — September 27, 2008
- ❖ PMC Rings — October 4, 2008
- ❖ Advanced PMC — October 18, 2008
- ❖ PMC Christmas Ornament — November 8, 2008
- ❖ Beginning PMC — December 13, 2008

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I would like to volunteer to help the COMA Organization. Please circle all that apply.

My interests are: Marketing Advertising Computer Programs Phones

Other: _____

Membership Costs:

A membership will run from January 1 to December 31. Renew each January.
Regular Membership is \$40.00. Student Membership \$25.00

To qualify for Student Membership you must be enrolled in a degree program and a copy of your current student ID/activity card must accompany your check. Please contact a board member for further clarification.

Send form and check payable to COMA (Colorado Metalsmithing Association) to:

**COMA
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For more information, contact the board at comaforum@comcast.net or visit our web site:
www.coloradometalsmiths.org

We will be compiling our member information into a directory for distribution among current members ONLY. The directory will include name, business name, address and email address. You may opt out of this directory by placing a check in the space below.

_____ I would like my information EXCLUDED from the COMA directory.

COMA Newsletter Guidelines and Deadlines: Manuscripts, announcements, news releases, black and white photographs, illustrations, information about exhibitions, calls for entries, school programs, workshops, etc. are welcome and will be considered for publication.

Deadlines for submissions will be the first day of February, May, August, and November. You will receive the newsletter about a month later. E-mail articles and materials to Nancy Blair at Blair_Designs@hotmail.com

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To join COMA or tell us about address changes, please send membership dues (\$40 regular; \$25 student) to: COMA, P.O. Box 631898, Littleton, CO 80163.

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