

Penland Line

PENLAND SCHOOL OF CRAFTS • PENLAND • NORTH CAROLINA 28765

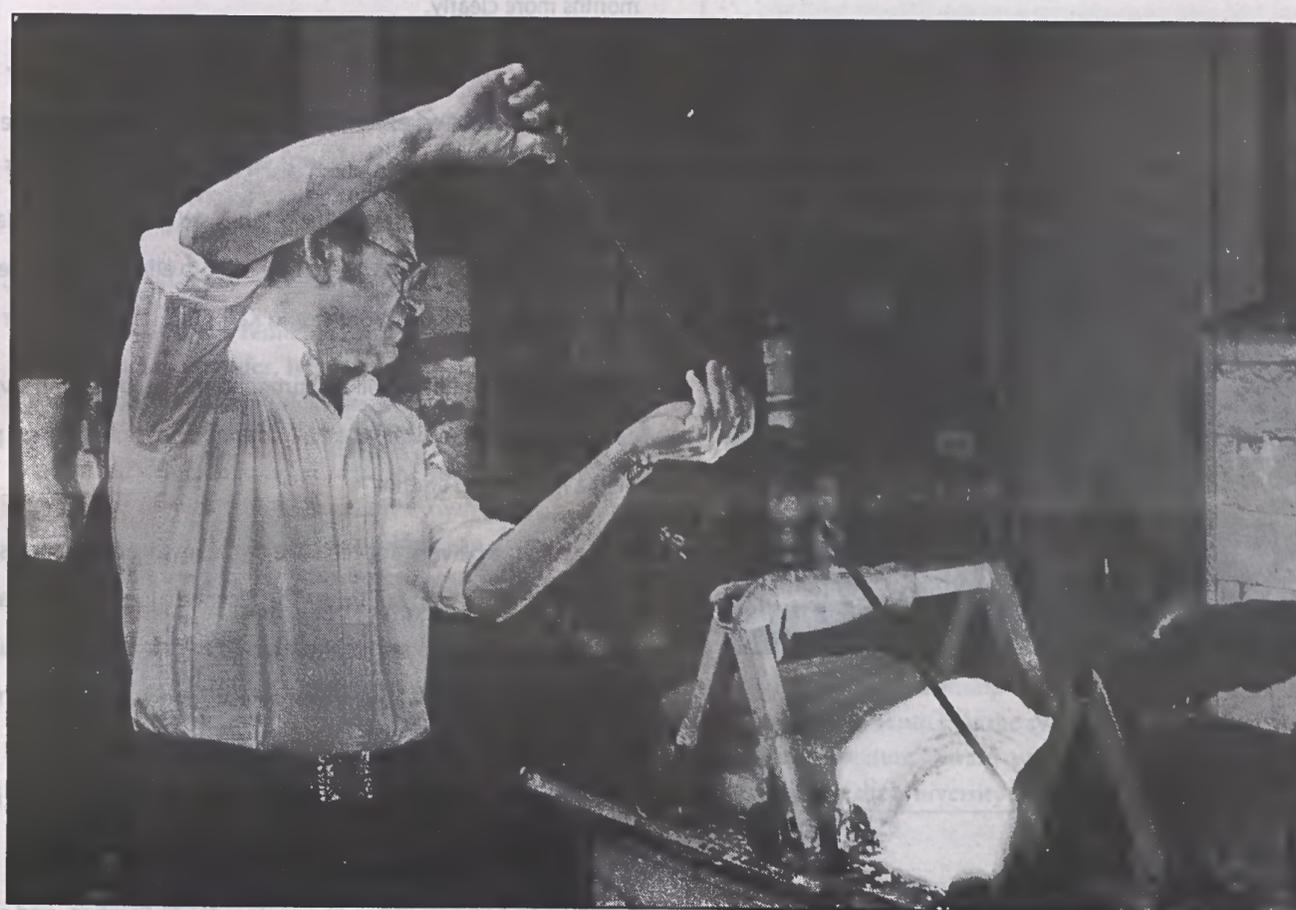
Fall 1993

1995 THE YEAR FOR NORTH CAROLINA GLASS

The first Penland glass studio, built in 1965, was housed in a 20-foot by 10-foot building made of homosote panels and was equipped for \$400. Yet, wrote Bill Brown some twenty years later, "From that modest studio, with a furnace, a glory hole, and three top-loading annealers, many of the world's finest glassblowing students and teachers were born."

It can certainly be said that those 200 square feet were something of an incubator for the American studio glass movement. And it was at Penland that the idea for the Glass Art Society (GAS) was hatched and the first meeting was held in 1971. Now the story of a new Penland glass facility and the 25th anniversary of the founding of GAS are coming together in a blow-out celebration of North Carolina glass in May, 1995.

Penland will break ground in March of 1994 for a new 4,500-square-foot studio to house the glass program, which will be completed in time for the anniversary meeting of GAS to be held in Asheville and Penland from May 11-14, 1995. The Asheville Art Museum will mount an invitational exhibit of southeastern glass, and galleries throughout the city will have special glass exhibits. Approximately 500 people from all over the world are expected to attend and will be on hand to inaugurate the new studio.



Mark Peiser, the first glass resident, works in the present studio

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBIT

Then, in September of 1995, North Carolina glass will be the subject of a survey exhibit at the Glasmuseum in Ebeltoft, Denmark, giving international recognition to the amazing collection of glass artists who have settled within a 100-mile radius of that original glass studio.

The present glass studio was built in 1977 with considerably more space and a much larger budget and allowed for an expansion of Penland's glass program. In the past decade, both the building and the equipment have been modified and improved to reflect changes in technology and an expansion of student interest in coldworking and casting. However, it is no longer possible to accomplish what is needed to maintain the strength and viability of the program with the existing studio.

The Board of Trustees made the decision at their meeting on October 22 to move ahead with the new facility. The needed funds will be raised through a focused campaign. Board members Rob Levin, Harvey Littleton and Richard Ritter together with Billy Bernstein and Mark Peiser have been working with Ken Botnick on the development of plans for the building with considerable input from other glass artists in the area. Fred Birkhill, Shane Fero, and Paul Stankard have all contributed to the planning process for the lampworking studio.

It will be an open structure, architecturally consistent with Northlight, and designed to enhance the opportunities for collaboration between lampworking and glassblowing. A large blowing area with three benches should eliminate the need for student blowing slots in the middle of the night. There will be an area dedicated to casting, slumping, fusing,

and pate de verre and substantive improvements in a cold working area. Also planned is a clean, quiet classroom/work area.

Major considerations both in the design and in the choice of a site are air circulation, safety, control of fumes and noise. The location is behind and above the current glass studio. The present glass studio adjoins the forge and, once vacated, will allow for expansion of the programs in iron and sculpture.

The increase of Penland's glass studio from 200 square feet in 1965 to 4,500 square feet in 1995 is a metaphor for the evolution of studio glass in the same time period as artists, many of whom picked up a pipe for the first time in the homosote hut, have pushed the boundaries of art and technology.