

Fall Concentration

It's not to soon to think about



Dana Moore

There aren't many places farther from Penland than Seto, Japan. But that's how far the Glass Arts Society (G.A.S.) has travelled in twenty-eight years. Seventeen people came to Penland for the first conference in 1970. This May, the conference was held in Seto with 1,700 people—only 325 of them Americans. Thanks to a low conference rate, some frequent flyer miles, and accountant Helen Cate's determination to figure out how to use them, I was able to attend the conference. After I arrived in Seto, I was joined by studio coordinator Kenny Pieper and Penland Resident Junichiro Baba.

The conference has never been outside of North America before. The international scope of the gathering allowed us to make contact with glass artists and students from around the world. I would like to be able to say that our common love of art bridged the language gap but that is not quite true. There were interpreters, however, along with earphones providing simultaneous English and Japanese translations.

Kenny made a slide presentation about Penland and the whole event was a good opportunity for schools to present their glass programs to an international audience. The combination of lectures, slides, and demonstrations at the conference gave us a look not only at the aesthetic distinctions between cultures but also at the very different ways that the material is handled.

Penland's program was well represented with instructors, friends, and staff. Board member Paul Smith was there. Shane Fero, Sally Prash, and Jack Wax all did workshops or demos, as did Toyama Institute instructor Michael Schunke, who will teach here for the first time next year. Seeing Kait Rhodes's name in the program gave me a tense moment since she was scheduled to be teaching at Penland on the same day. I'm glad to say Penland won out.

Although the conference itself was memorable for the scale and success of the endeavor, it was nearly eclipsed, at least for me, by my first-time experience of Japan itself. The distance between our cultures was stunning, beginning the moment I stepped off the plane and onto a bus—the wrong bus—careening the wrong direction through the wrong city on the wrong side of the street, filled with people speaking the wrong language while I was carrying a suitcase of the wrong weight and operating on the wrong amount of sleep. Even after finding the right city, by accident, I quickly learned that English words on signs are quite fashionable and did not indicate any upcoming communication. Stranger still, after two days without

Right now, it's about as hot as it ever gets on this mountain. We're not complaining (we *do* get reports from the flatlands), but weather like this makes the fall sound very attractive. The truth, however, is that fall at Penland is more like magnificent. When North Carolina's deciduous trees begin to change color, our complex mountain landscape displays them like a tapestry.



Leah Leitson

hearing a word of English, was seeing the hotel suddenly swarming with familiar American glass artists.

After the conference, Kenny and I were treated to three days in Toyko with Junichiro Baba, who invited us into his family's home and guided us through the city as well as the Toyko Glass Arts Institute. Our comprehension was greatly enhanced by Jun's presence and his endless willingness to answer our incessant questions, ranging from explanations of courtesy, bathing habits, toilet instructions, and food to history and religion. His unfailing patience and insight gave us an unforgettable experience.

Tokyo is an unbelievably huge place, but it is an accretion of minute elements, and I was struck mostly by small things: personal rice fields; department stores with galleries; computerized bus stops that tell you where your bus is; the artful packaging of everyday objects; food not meant for the squeamish; hordes of teenagers talking on cell phones; drivers turning off their headlights in deference to night-time pedestrians; clerks bowing to customers; a woman wearing a mask in the train station so nobody would catch her cold; tiny cars named Joy Pop and Mini Cooper; vending machines on every corner with beer and canned coffee; buses with chandeliers, hostesses, and lace antimacassars; Toyko Station at rush hour—the sight of faces pressed against the train windows and the bravery it takes to cross against the grain of the crowd; squid jerky; bikes with no locks; a pinball-like gambling game called Pachinko (I won big!); and the understated beauty of the shrines and temples.

Above all, however, I was amazed at the way the efficiency, punctuality, and the extreme courtesy and kindness of the Japanese people creates a culture which embodies the generous qualities we only hope for in individuals.

—Dana Moore



Kenny Pieper and Junichiro Baba out on the town in Tokyo. The sushi behind them is moving on a conveyor belt; the bill is figured by the number of empty plates.

Dana Moore

By the time those colors peak, they will get the attention of even the most dedicated, studio-obsessed Penland student.

This year you can take in the mountain autumn while devoting yourself to books, clay, hot glass, neon, flameworked glass, iron, metals, or textiles. The session runs from September 27 through November 20, 1998; half of the classes are four weeks long, the rest are eight weeks.

Leah Leitson will preside in the clay studio where she will teach utilitarian porcelain pots, covering a variety of techniques including wheel-thrown forms, creative appendages, lids,

and decorative embellishments. In the glass studio, Katherine Gray will lead a class titled *Blown, Rolled, Molded & Otherwise Shaped*, which will cover a broad range of techniques. Students can expect to try blown and not-blown vessels, cane

work, bit work, warm and cold processes, and resolving sculptural concerns through glass.

Get Your Iron is the title of Elizabeth Brim's class which will take beginning blacksmiths through basic forging techniques with an eye towards expressive iron sculpture. For those interested in lighter metals, Maria Phillips's class will cover fundamental and experimental techniques along with casting, hollow

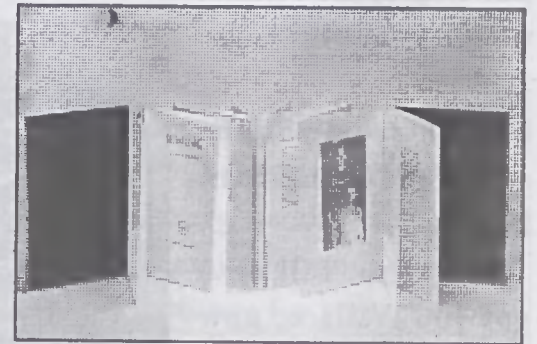


Katherine Gray

construction, electroforming, and enameling.

The flameworking studio will host two, four-week classes (feel free to take both). From September 27–October 23, Jacob Fishman, Sally Prash, and David Wilson will explore the light from within. This is not self-improvement; it's neon. By combining their expertise in flameworking, hot glass, and neon, these three instructors will help students set tubing and vessels aglow with electrifying colors. Sally Prash will fly solo from October 25–November 20, leading a comprehensive workshop in flameworking techniques.

Carol Shinn will teach painting, printing, stamping, stenciling, dyeing, appliqué, collage, stitching, and more in her class titled *Transforming Textiles*. This surface design workshop begins on September 27 and concludes on October 23. The Concentration is rounded out by Katherine McCanless's book class which runs from October 25 through November 20. Her students will learn a variety of structures, beginning with simple, folded books and progressing to sewn, multi-signature, case-bound volumes.



Katherine McCanless

Complete course descriptions along with registration information are available on Penland's website at <http://penland.org>. Or you can call 828-765-2359 to register or to request a copy of our fall/spring flyer.