

A Great Summer



Skip Johnson (right), Penland's first teacher of furniture making, at Penland, around 1990. See page 1 for more on Skip and the wood program.

PENLAND LINE

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Thanks to Barbara Benisch, Kate Boyd, Donna Jean Dreyer, Tammy Hitchcock, Dana Moore, Jean McLaughlin, and Bryony Smith and for their help with this issue.

Penland School of Crafts is a national center for craft education located in western North Carolina. The school offers workshops, artists' residencies, a community education program, and a gallery. The Penland Line is published twice a year to communicate thoughts about the programs, people, and philosophy of Penland. We invite you to share your news, opinions, and/or photographs with us. Email: publications@penland.org

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Penland School of Crafts is a nonprofit, tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organization. Penland receives support for its programs from the North Carolina Arts Council, an agency funded by the State of North Carolina and the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.

Our fall session is underway with exciting classes taking place in seven studios. Upstairs in the clay studios, Linda McFarling and Gay Smith are moving students from cups to bowls to teapots. Down below, Cristina Córdova has students working from life on expressive two- and three-dimensional drawings as they build skills for figurative sculpture. Ben Wright and Mark Zirpel are challenging glass students to think conceptually. Elizabeth Brim is bringing new iron skills to a class mostly of newcomers to the medium. Mokume gane and Zo-Gan (kum-boo) are two of the techniques that Hiroko Yamada is teaching in metals. Donna Brown is teaching eco-friendly dyeing and surface design processes in textiles. And Steve Tengelsen is bringing focus to the fine details of cabinetry in wood.

Looking back, we have just completed one of the best Penland summers I can remember. The studios were bustling with students and instructors pushing their own limits and coming up with amazing objects and ideas.

Micah Pulleyn in the book studio joined photographers Beck Long and Suzie Ross to make a photo book illustrating the adventures of a family of chenille chicks. Susan Cannon, an architect for our planned 2D studio, took her first metals class and produced, among other things, a silver hinge that stands alone as an extraordinary ordinary object and linked us to her problem-solving mind. Anika Smulovitz's class cast their navels as part of a body adornment study and helped us see the body's individuality in a new way.

Individual growth took many forms and often this summer it has appeared as inventive class projects. Alice Ballard Munn's students made and distributed "business cards" in clay. They could take any form but needed to communicate something special and identifiable about the individual—without using words. Elin Christopherson's class used glass bubbles as a basic building block of form—bubbles were combined with an elegant, organic iron structure to make a sculpture now planted in the glass studio garden.

Learning across studios has also been a hallmark of this summer. Flo Perkins and Peter Joseph's classes combined demos and merged the properties of glass and iron. Many conversations overlapped as attention was paid to color and form and creating complexity through layering. Students from printmaking were spending time in textiles and vice versa. Students from metals and wood were integrating color and form using discarded materials from the other studios. Brian Kerkvliet talked with his students about understanding form using clear glass before introducing color. Myra Mimplitsch-Gray's class studied a wide variety of surface treatments for copper before selecting the right treatment for each teapot, and in the end

none looked alike in color or form. These conversations about basic design also found resonance with the work in other studios.

Words were important in several classes. Religious icons incorporating text were painted in one studio (meanwhile another class was talking about becoming *iconoclasts* in form and meaning). Jeff Goodman's photography students used wordplay to stimulate images rather than the other way around. One night on the knoll they used flashlights and time exposures to create photographs of words suspended in the air.

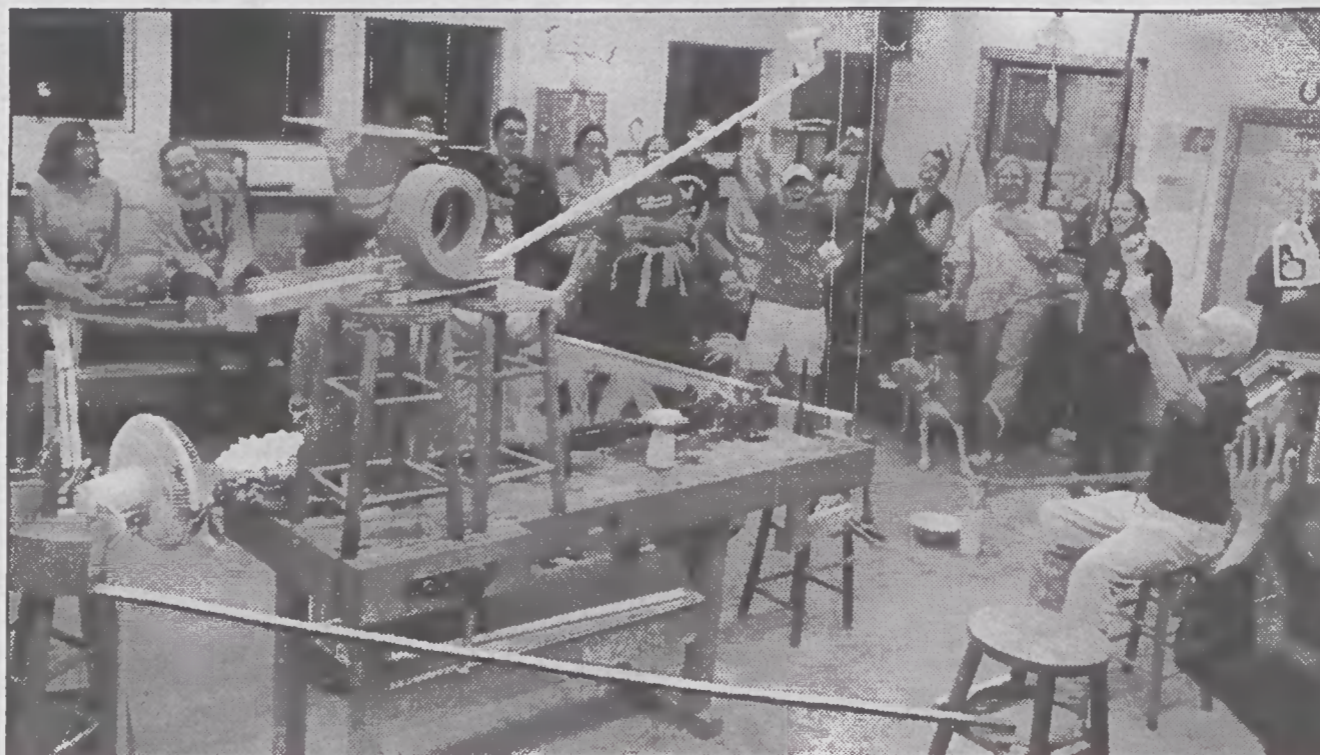
Interactions with nature took different twists and turns. Takako Ueki demonstrated the intricate process of weaving with very fine silk, starting with the silk worm itself. Students were cooking cocoons in order to collect, comb, spin and twist silk threads which ultimately became sheer woven fabrics. In Stacey Lane's metal casting class, student Lisa Bruns expressed her fascination with crows by creating a ring with a crow perched on top, proudly carrying a beautiful stone in its beak.

Gail Rieke's *The Artist as Traveler* book arts class stimulated my thinking about the metaphor of journeys for all of us as students and artists. Gail sent her students off on a silent walk to capture experiences to feed their projects. Many students talked about the richness of sounds they heard when they could not speak. Another wrote, "What separates an artist from an ordinary worker? Our mental and physical labor is, in part, an attempt to hang onto a piece of human experience. As capitalism advances, it seems likely that we will be alienated from the goods that we consume and produce, from one another and from our creativity." Her walk across campus in silence provoked these musings on the value of making objects by hand and of being at a place like Penland.

Behind the scenes we continued our work on campus improvements. The clay and metals studios received a new roof. Bascom received major interior repairs. The Pines and Craft House now meet the highest of fire safety standards and have new sprinkler systems. We've completed four new apartments for resident artists. We've poured the slab and footers for the new wood studio. A new 2D studio is in the preliminary design stage. And we've started earthmoving and construction on the accessible Pines Walk, an exciting project which will tie the lower campus together in a new way.

We could not attempt these projects or facilitate all this exciting activity without your help. As always, we thank you for your support of Penland and all that it means to each of us.

—Jean McLaughlin, director



Steve Tengelsen's fall wood class and friends cheering the progress of a golf ball through a complex and hilarious ball race which the class built during the first few days of the session. The ball bounced, climbed an elevator, catapulted through the air (several times), turned on a fan which sent a little sailboat sailing, and finally knocked over a can of dog food into a dog dish where it was happily consumed by Steve's dog, Ruby. Although every part of the mechanism had been successfully tested, the whole thing ran perfectly only once—when the room was filled with spectators. You can't really hope for more than that.

