

# THE HISTORY OF MIDWEST METALSMITHS

Ray Wenneker pioneered the idea of organizing a metalsmithing organization in the St. Louis area in 1994. Her goal was to establish a guild with the goal to promote, educate, develop and encourage individuals and groups who are interested in metalsmithing. When Ray first approached Heikki Seppa with the idea, he was not very encouraging. He stated that if she came up with even a handful of interested metalsmiths, it would astound him. He did agree to do the first workshop if the organization ever came to fruition.

Setting up a Not-for-Profit organization is no easy task, Ray Wenneker single handedly worked to research and learn all she needed to succeed. She started by contacting SNAG for information on how to begin. Phil London, the President of the Florida Society of Goldsmiths at that time, was kind enough to send Ray a copy of their by-laws which she subsequently used as a guide. John Baltrushunas introduced Ray to Sue Greenberg, Director of Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts. Sue was very helpful and in turn made an appointment for Ray with the law firm of Gallop Johnson & Neuman, who did pro-bono work for art related not for profits. They helped her take the proper steps to establish SMM as a not-for-profit guild. The Society was officially founded as a not-for-profit organization in 1995. The original By-Laws were updated in 2012 to reflect current needs and language.

Thus began The Society for Midwest Metalsmiths. In 1995 the first meeting was held at the Maryville University campus where it has continued to meet, to this day. Chris Chauvin was the first acting president and Ray Wenneker was the first 'elected' president. She held that position for 2 years. Other presidents through the years included: Janet Wilding, Lanie Kodner /Ellie Samson, Mike Gleason, Howard Siegel, Gayle Eastman, Linda Lankford, Kathryn Bowman, Aimee Howard, and now Leigh Roberts.

## FOUNDING MEMBERS:

Of the original group of founding members, Ray Wenneker, Deborrah Daher, Lanie Kodner, Sherri Jaudés, John Baltrushunas, Dayne Sislen, Ellen Klamon and Noel Leicht are still members. That SMM has retained so many of the original members is, in itself, a testament to what a great organization we have.

## WORKSHOPS:

Society for Midwest Metalsmiths has, throughout its existence, presented five to seven workshops each year. By now we have covered about every metalsmithing technique, but are looking for new ways of doing things each year. Our workshops are generally a sellout. Sorry we didn't have a good record of the workshops presented prior to 2008, but this should give you an idea of technique and level of expertise. Here are some of the workshop instructions we have brought into the St. Louis area:

2008

Textile Techniques for Metals – Mary Lee Hu  
Cuttlebone Casting – Jessica Erickson  
Faux Bone – Robert Dancik  
Photo Etching – Kathryn Bowman  
Chain Making – Howard Siegel  
Anticlastic Raising – Harland Taylor

2010

Viking Knit – Aimee Domash  
Coloring Titanium – Noel Yovovich  
Building Your Own Workbench – Sherri Jaudes  
Moving Metal – Joe Muench  
Russian Filigree – Victoria Lansford  
Keum Boo – Sherri Jaudes

2009

Making Your Own Tools – Sherri Jaudes  
Creative Shell Raising – Harland Taylor  
Cold Connections – Nanz Aalund  
Tinspirations - Marlene True  
Soldering 101 – Sherri Jaudes  
Stone Setting – Roger Rimel

2011

Repousse – Victoria Lansford  
Resin – Ellen Klamon  
Granulation – Paulette Myers  
Soldering 101 – Sherri Jaudes  
Form Folding – Michael Parrett

2012

Jewelry Photography – Garry McMichaels  
Etsy Shop – Kathryn Bowman  
Custom Clasps – Alison Antelman  
Cold Connections – Sherri Jaudes  
Micro-Forming - Andrea & Chuck Kennington

2014

Modified Bezel – Jennifer Mokren  
How to use the Hydraulic Press – Sherri Jaudes  
Contained – Joe Muench  
Steel Jewelry – Leia Zumbro  
Tubing Technical – Alison Antelman  
Color on Metal – Gail Crossman Moore

2016

Organic Metals – Marne Ryan  
Steel Jewelry – Brice Garrett  
Whistles! – Joe Muench  
Drawing, Painting, and Appropriation in Enamel -  
Jessica Calderwood  
Powder Coating – Kelly Miller

2013

Rose Engine Turning – Steve White  
Dip, Dry, Draw, & Fire – Ken Bova  
Line in Enamel – Sarah Perkins  
Mokume Gane – Eric Burris  
Making Multiples – Jayne Redman  
Making and Repairing Tools – Sherri Jaudes

2015

The Art of Electroforming – Aimee Howard  
Porcelain – Small Scale Processes for  
Jewelry – Billie Thiede  
Inlay/Married Metals – Suzan Rezac  
Soldering 101 – Sherri Jaudes

2017

Anti-Clastic Raising – Michael Good  
Fused Chain – Nancy Brickner  
In The Line of Fire: Torch Fired Enamel  
Anne Havel  
Reticulation-Keumboo-Perforation –  
Paulette Myers  
Designing In Multiples – Don Friedlich

#### EXHIBITIONS:

1996 Regional Exhibition – Location St. Louis Artists' Guild

“At the Table” with professionally printed catalog

Juror - Chuck Evans with lecture at show

Exhibition Chair – Deborah Daher

1999 - National Exhibition – Location St. Louis Artists' Guild

“Talismans for the Coming Millennium” with professionally printed catalog

Exhibition Chair – Deborah Daher

Juror – Eleanor Moty with lecture at show

1999 - SNAG CONFERENCE:

In 1999 SMM had the privilege of hosting the Society for North American Goldsmiths (SNAG) Conference here in St. Louis. Lanie Kodner and Ellie Samson were the presidents at that time and shouldered a lot of the responsibility along with John Baltrushunas and Paulette Myers as chairs.

Michael Good was the keynote speaker, with Betty Helen Longhi, Lisa Gralnick, Gavreal Feder, Jim Kelso, Nicole Ann DesChamps, Hiroko Sato-Pijanowski, Roy Skognick, Rick Smith, Kathleen Eggert, John Behringer, Jan Yager, John Medwedeff, Dennis Nahabetian, Nancy Sachs, David Watkins and Susan Ewing as speakers.

There were special exhibitions at local venues including: Ellear B. Heffren, Locus Gallery, Laumeier Sculpture Park, Craft Alliance, Washington University Gallery of Art, Anheuser-Busch Gallery of Art at COCA, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, University Museum, SIUE Wagner Arts Gallery, Nancy Sachs Gallery, James Durbin Jewelers and Componere Gallery of Art and Fashion. Maryville University, St. Louis hosted "In the Palm of Your Hand," a student exhibition, juried by Deborah Daher and Ellen Klamon and chaired by Sherri Jaudés. Deborah Daher also designed and produced the Student Show catalog. Also in conjunction with the Conference, Linda Shapiro as Workshop Chairperson organized 10 workshops for before and after the conference. The workshops included presenters: Betty Helen Longhi, Elliot Pujol, Lee Marshall, Elizabeth Brim, Douglas Harling, Fred Fenster, Rick Smith, Munya Avigail Upin, and Chuck

Evans. The SNAG conference was a huge project and a lot of hard work for our relatively new and small guild to organize. It brought very positive attention from the whole metalsmithing community to SMM, the Midwest and St. Louis.

2001 – National Exhibition – Location St. Louis Artists’ Guild

“Metal Departures” with professionally printed catalog

Exhibition Chair – Janet Wilding

Juror – Pat Flynn with lecture at show

2004 – National Exhibition – Location St. Louis Artists’ Guild

“Stone/s a Piece of Rock for a Specific Function” with professionally printed catalog

Exhibition Co-Chairs – Lanie Kodner and Deborrah Dahr

Juror – C. James Meyer with lecture at show

2006 – National Exhibition – Location St. Louis Artists’ Guild

“Hey, These Things Just Snap Right Off!” with professionally printed catalog

Exhibition Co-Chairs – Sherri Jaudes and Jessica Erickson

Juror – Andy Cooperman with lecture at show

2008-09 – International Online Exhibition

50 digital images of metalwork and jewelry remaining online for two years.

“METAL Inclinations”

Exhibition Chair – Dayne Sislen

Jurors – Michael Monroe, Marilyn da Silva, and Susie Ganch

2010-12 – International Online Exhibition remaining up for two years.

50 digital images of metalwork and jewelry remaining online for two years.

“METAL Inclinations2”

Exhibition Chair – Dayne Sislen

Jurors – Jamie Bennett, Klaus Bürgel, John Cogswell, and Sydney Lynch

2010 & 2011 – Member’s Show at Third Degree Glass Factory

“Jewelry 2 the Third Degree”

Exhibition Chair – Ellen Klamon

Open to all members on first come first serve basis.

2012 thru 2016– Member’s Show at Ethical Society of St. Louis

“Hot Metal”

Exhibition Chair – Ellen Klamon

Open to all members on first come first serve basis.

2017 – Member’s Show at Ethical Society of St. Louis

“Hot Metal”

Exhibition Co-Chair – Lisa Koenig and Rosemary Werkmeister

Open to all members on first come first serve basis.

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#### NEWSLETTER:

Started in 1995 Chris Chauvin was the first newsletter editor, subsequent editors have been; Dayne Sislen, Susan Boudreau, April Morris, Linda Lankford, Elizabeth Wood, Rachel Thoma and Lisa Koenig. We now communicate events, ideas and share technical information through a private Facebook page for members.

#### SCHOLARSHIPS:

SMM provides two scholarships for each SMM workshop to students attending from the sponsoring school. SMM provides scholarship to three metalsmithing students attending a Midwestern University every year of \$1500 to further their metalsmithing education and careers.

SMM also provides scholarships for metalsmithing classes and workshops at other metalsmithing schools for underserved children.

In 2017, thanks to the generosity of Howard Siegel, we began distributing an endowment in memory of Fran Siegel to send one Midwest Metalsmith member to William Holland School of Lapidary Arts in Georgia for a class of their choice. This \$500 scholarship is available to any current Midwest Metalsmiths member. The purpose is to assist with funding for course fee, class supplies and/or transportation expenses for a class.

#### WEBSITE:

In January 2000 the SMM website and chat group was started by Dayne Sislen. The website provides up to date information about meetings, exhibitions, events, and workshops. There is also an online gallery to showcase members' work. In January of 2018 the Midwest Metalsmith website has been complete redesigned and updated by Kathryn Bowman to reflect the needs of the current membership. A clean design and ease of navigation was of primary concern. Along with the current President, Leigh Roberts, Midwest Metalsmiths has undergone a complete rebranding with a new logo, redesigned website, and efficient email communications to the membership. On the website each member that chooses to can have a page of their own showcasing their work, an artist's statement or blurb about their work, and a link to their website and selling location. Part of the rebranding was to drop "The Society For". We are now legally Midwest Metalsmiths.

#### SOCIAL EVENTS:

Social events have included: lectures and slide shows, swap meets, themed meetings, pot luck dinners and lunches, picnics, studio tours, exhibition kick off parties, openings and gallery tours. Midwest Metalsmiths members come from all over the Midwest and beyond. They span generations and encompass hobbyists as well as practicing and award winning professionals, students and educators.