



Letter from the Chair by Jennie Smith Campbell & Velina Glass, MGM Co-Chairs

Dear Metals Guild of Maryland (MGM) Members and Friends,

Welcome to the first 2010 edition of the MGM Newsletter. We expect to publish three or four newsletters each year, one in print, and the other three available via email and on the website.

Meet the 2010 MGM Board of Directors: Jennie Smith Campbell and Velina Glass, Co-Chairpersons; Dara O'Malley, Secretary; Janice Fowler, Treasurer; and General Board Members Joyce Fries-Brune, Pamela Fischer, Pat Gagliano, Nadine Jonah, and Linda Van Hart. We have been hard at work developing programs for this year, and expect to provide a variety of resources and opportunities for you to learn more about and fine tune your craft; meet national and international artists; participate in exhibitions, competitions, and sales opportunities; utilize the website more effectively; and get to know one another.

We will be participating as a group in Artscape and the Buyer's Market to be held in Baltimore in July and August, respectively, and we will get information to you shortly on the requirements and participation guidelines. Montgomery College's Rockville Campus Art Department will be presenting a show of the collection of Eugenie Benser March 9-April 2, 2010. We will be holding an Annual Meeting for the MGM Membership and Friends in the Fall, where we will also hold Board elections. We will get information to you about these activities as soon as details are finalized. In addition, we will let you know of other opportunities that come to our attention. Please let us know about other events that may

interest MGM members, which come to your attention.

We are working on upgrading the website to ensure that it meets your needs and provides the latest in social networking. The new brochure will be printed shortly, and we will make it available on the website.

One of our main goals this year is twofold - to get you more involved and to be more responsive to your needs. The MGM Board is a small group, each with our own business and without the time and resources to take on every opportunity that is presented to MGM. You can help by volunteering to take on the tasks that interest you. Help to organize a show, write an article for the Newsletter, work at a "Meet the Artist" event, update the website, do a workshop, or honcho another activity. Moreover, most important, share your ideas with us on how MGM can best serve you.

We look forward to working with you this year. If you are not yet a member, or it is time to renew your membership, please contact our treasurer Janice Fowler at janiceihg@hotmail.com, (Remember that some opportunities and resources are limited to members only.)

The Board has approved a special Student Discount - we will waive the student membership fee in exchange for 6 hours of volunteer work for MGM.

Please address your news, comments, questions and suggestions to Dara O'Malley, Board Secretary, at dara@darajewels.com. Also, remember to send us your good news to share with other members- your exhibits, recognition, etc.

In This Issue:

Letter from the Chairs

Reticulation: Process and Sources of Information

Step Away from the Bench

Congratulations Corner

Calendar of Events

Reticulation: Process and Sources of Information by Linda Van Hart, Board Member

I fell in love with metal while a grad student in **John Fix's** Towson University Metals Program and he has continued to be a constant source of inspiration: he taught me how to make my hammers dance! It was a great pleasure to be John's teaching assistant for several summers in

my classroom at McDaniel College during Common Ground. Of all the courses he taught, from forging to fold forming, it was the reticulation lesson that opened up a whole new design world for me.

Reticulation is a process used to texture the surface of the metal. The

technique John taught us is a combination of science and sense he has put together from a life of scholarly and artistic exploration in metalsmithing. After describing this process and the specific tools used, I will note several other sources and compare those

techniques with the method that has become a constant in my jewelry-making vocabulary, especially in the Savannah and Heart Armor series pictured here.



“Heart Armor for Harriet” Forged, reticulated, granulated, repouse in sterling, 14k, Akoya Pearls by Linda Van Hart.

Begin by marking F on the front corner of a 3" square piece of 20 gauge 80/20 reticulation stock. Attach a # 3 tip to the acetylene torch. Place the silver on a very clean firebrick or kiln shelf. Heat the 80/20 (or yellow or rose 14k gold) to about 1200 degrees Fahrenheit until a straw colored oxide forms. Turning off the lights makes you more sensitive to the color. The surface should remain smooth. Allow to air-cool. Because this takes time, I often prepare several pieces simultaneously, moving smoothly from one to the other while keeping note of which step in the process I am on with each piece.

Pickle in hot fresh Sparex™ for 4-6 minutes to remove oxides from the surface. Remove with copper tongs. The metal will appear to be a dull grey. Rinse. Burnish with a brass brush then Scotch Brite™ with a slurry of pumice on both sides. Rinse in water.

Repeat these two steps a total of 6 times, making certain the F marked side is always face up. With each pass the pure silver is lifting to the front to form a silver-rich skin, and the copper oxide is forming a layer just underneath. The metal will appear increasingly frosty white.

On the last round, do not burnish with brass brush and pumice. Change the torch tip to a smaller #1 or #2 so that the flame is sharp and less broadcasting. Create a "table" to hold the silver. Use firebrick or a ceramic kiln shelf for the bottom layer. Firmly wrap a block of hard charcoal with steel binding wire for the middle. This is an essential step to lengthen the life of this expensive block since repetitive heating will weaken it. The silver rests in the middle of the top layer which is ThermaGaurd™. This is a fiber glass-like insulation. No flux is used in this process.

Heating fast and cooling is what causes the skin to crawl, creating the textural crenulations and wrinkles of reticulation. Heat a small area to a dull red before moving to the next area and the reticulation will crawl after your torch. The deeper the fine silver layer, the deeper the reticulation. Allow the piece to lose its redness before quenching in hot pickle. Rinse in water.

Select the areas you like best for the design you have in mind and saw them out. If you want the edges sharp and smooth, file them. If you want to texture the edges, repeat the last step by reheating with the torch and concentrating on the edges. I often pre-cut larger components so the edges naturally reticulate. Air-cool. Hot pickle. Rinse. Thoroughly burnish the surfaces and edges with the brass brush and pumice to close the pores of the piece. A porous surface will soak up solder and polish. If additional soldering is required to finish the construction of your design, be sure to make burnishing the last step before polishing.

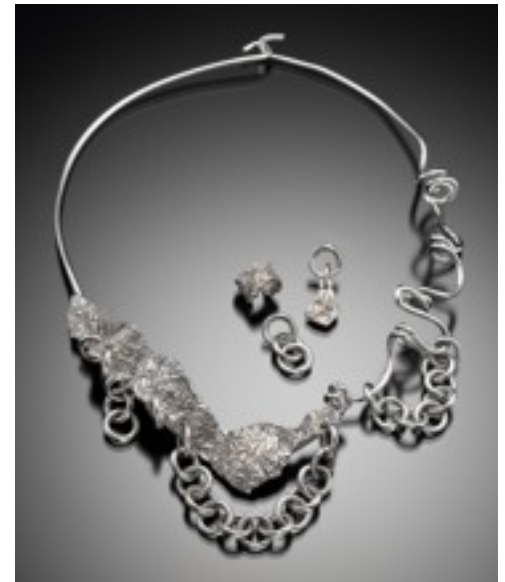
John and I are both aficionados of forging and forming metal. The reticulation process makes metal brittle. It cracks very easily. I prefer using daps to push the silver into a leather pad or wooden forming block rather than over, or into, metal forms. This maintains the integrity of the texture while cradling the metal being formed. One firm, definitive blow is more effective than several timid ones.

When soldering, it is best to use pallion and pick methods. Sweat soldering and stick feeding just soak into the porous surfaces. My designs often combine 80/20 reticulated silver with smooth or roller printed sterling, copper, 14k gold

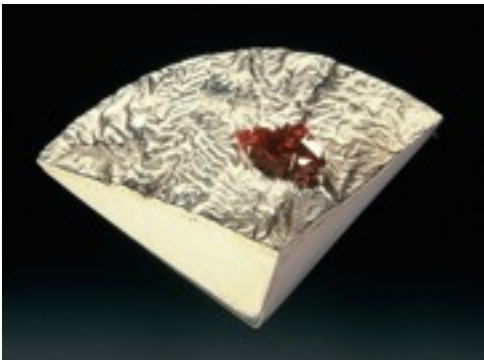
or fine silver mesh. Keeping a stock of tiny pallions of various solders close by lets you quickly add to exact locations if the initial pallions are absorbed.

You may use various patinas to enhance the reticulated surface. When considering any type of patination, you must relegate the polishing buffs specifically for this by labeling them with permanent marker and bagging them to store when finished. If a smoky, rainbow-like surface is your goal, use warm liver of sulfur in a well ventilated space. Several coats may be used. Allow to dry, then buff the high points. If you want a strong contrast of dark and light, paint Black Max™ in the crevices with a small brush and leave the ridges clean. It is best to do these steps towards the end, but before any stone setting is done.

A few years ago while lecturing in the area, **Tim McCreight** was a guest in the home of John and Dorothy Fix. In my active imagination, the two metalsmiths squared off in front of the fire, beer in hand, to haggle over their different points of view on reticulation. After Tim presented the advantages of heating the metal in a kiln for the first stages, John shared what one of his Asian students had taught him: she had learned the "secret" of using the top insulating layer in her homeland. Tim's method is



“Savannah Unchained: a tribute to Harriet, Tubman” Forged, reticulated and chain made in sterling by Linda Van Hart.



"Earth Fragment-Ruby" (Brooch) 80/20 silver, sterling, & Chatham Crystal. 2007.

described in *The Complete Metalsmith*. **Heikka Seppa** wrote the well illustrated chapter on reticulation in the book Tim edited called *Metals Tecnic*.

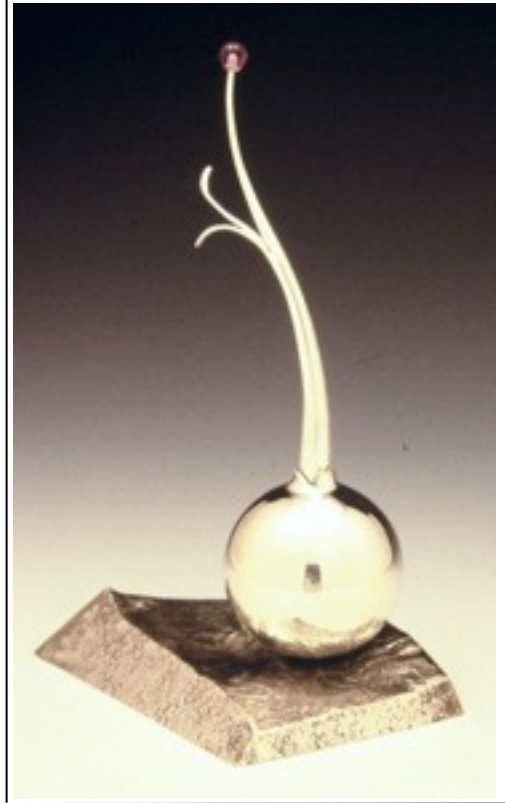
In the last several years, Rio Grande™ has greatly increased the selection of various gauges of reticulation stock as it has with Argentium™. They also offer pre-reticulated stock which greatly reduces the amount of time it takes to incorporate this texture into your jewelry, but it also removes the personal quirks of the maker and reduces the meditative time on the overall design. If

asked, they will insert a two page description of their version of the process which they call **depletion gilding**.

Never to be outdone, **Oppi Untracht** describes the history, science and process all the way from the Latin *reticulum* or *rete* meaning "a net", to the Russian *samorodok* meaning "born by itself", to the Finnish *rypeytetty* meaning "wrinkled". In Untracht's *Jewelry: Concepts and Technology*, the most enlightening thoughts in the lengthy reticulation section are the suggestions for variations in the effects during the reticulation process.

"Reticulation and Hot Connections" is the title of the course I am teaching from July 12-16 on McDaniel College campus during Common Ground on The Hill. I serve as the Visual Arts Coordinator for that program. You can find out more about all of our classes and register for college credit. Visit our website at www.commongroundonthehill.org, or call our office at (410)857-2771 to get a catalog. ■

"Spring Bottle" (Scent Bottle); 80/20 silver, sterling, with amethyst. 2000.



Step Away from the Bench by Janice Fowler, MGM Treasurer

Ever have one of those days (nights) in the studio?
 Where everything you touch either melts, cracks, or somehow just ends up garbage?
 I know we all do, but I have to be honest, I haven't had one in a really long time.
 Or at least not to this magnitude. Truthfully, I'd call comedic error but there was nothing funny about it.
 Not even remotely.
 Except possibly my persistence.
 When every shred of evidence suggested I should turn off the tanks, put down the pliers, and just step away from the bench....I failed to listen.
 So I melted more.
 I burned my finger.
 I pinched my thumb in a pair of scissors.
 I got my specs stuck in my hair.
 I created a lot of scrap.
 But I just could not walk away.
 At first I was sad - frustrated near tears.
 Then I was mad.

You see, I only get ONE night dedicated to the bench. I may score some other time here and there over the week - but Tuesday night is my ONE guaranteed 'me' time to work. To try to alleviate my brain from a weeks worth of designing, and dreaming and planning.
 But a clean schedule is no guarantee of clean work - or any work at all. There have been times when I have begun aching to get to my bench by Sunday night and when Tuesday rolls around I am DYING to dig in...and then I get there...and....like my issue with blog post titles - it strikes. Some weird sort of performance anxiety...and I freeze up and just stare at all my lovely tools and stones and metal. *sigh*
 In reality, last night was a little bit like that. I had cleaned off my bench over the weekend and I arrived there last night and thought "hmmmm, what to do, what to do..?" I didn't have a clear objective. Well, I might have had an objective - but it involved LOSING and polishing already finished work and I just ummm, well,

decided to ignore that and turn my energy in a different direction.
 Big mistake.
 So I wasted more than an hour fiddling with a stupid box. . . before deciding I just wasn't meant to make a box last night.
 Then I decided to use a stone that I bought earlier this month -- pulled some materials and made a bezel. Ooops, a little small - stretch it....errggggg, ok, it fits. Grab a piece of scrap sterling that had a lovely texture on it. Flux, heat, apply solder....great. Quench. Inspect. RATS. Bezel popped open just a tad -- ok, easy fix. Heat, flux, solder.....crap.
 Melted part.
 No big deal, do-overs are relatively cheap at this point.
 Grab metal, measure bezel big enough this time, snip, file, solder, quench, grab a different backplate, heat, flux, solder (yea, yea yea rinse repeat blah blah blah)...great.
 Ouch, gap under bezel. Tiny one. Fix it.
 No problemo.

Congratulations Corner:

Velina Glass, Shana Kroiz and Wayne Werner participated in the American Crafts Council show. Shana's jewelry appeared on the cover of the Feb. issue of Metalsmith Magazine and she will appear at the upcoming Smithsonian Craft Show. Several pieces of jewelry by Jennie Smith Campbell were selected for auction at the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre Benefit Gala in New York. Velina was published in the Nov. 2009 issue of Art Jewelry Magazine.

Flux, solder, yadda yadda...oh @^*#!
wasn't watching my flame--melted
a tiny bit of the top of the
bezel. Hmm, stop, inspect. Measure
stone...OK, was going to shave it down
anyway. Quench, dry...ok...not bad.
(so tired). Clean up
backplate--carve decorative edge
--grab scrp for ring shank--solder.
OK, success. FINALLY!
But wait.
Howzabout adding a little sparkle.
Some visual interest...how about

a little faceted tone up there
somewhere? *rummage, rummage*
oh look--a little blue sapphire
--2 mm--PERFECT!
Careful now--let's go to some easy
solder...drill hole, apply solder, balance
setting...heat, melt setting.
Clean up hole, grab new setting...apply
solder, heat...reposition setting...
repeat, repeat, repeat...
And then, just shy of throwing the
whole damn thing across the room...
Success!



Pfft. Sure doesn't feel like success
I left the basement
around 10:30, half promising
never to return.
Oh wait, you want pictures, right?
sigh
The ring isn't done...not cleaned...
but here is a quick peek of what
will be MY ring.
It has issues. I have issues too.
We were meant for each other!



Calendar of Events:

Bruce Metcalf Carved Jewelry workshop
at MICA April 17-18.

Buyers' Market of American Craft--
Participant applications due
April 30, 2010. Event date
August 23-25, 2010.

2010 Smithsonian Craft Show--
April 22-25, admission \$15/day

ArtScape 2010--
Application currently being made,
information to participate will follow. Event
date July 16-18, 2010.

