

spring membership meeting Saturday, April 20, 10 AM - 12:30 PM

On the Agenda Artist and Event Updates
Program Members presenting their work based on Norse Runes
Hosted by Diane Rusnak, 1306 Marin Ave, San Pablo, CA 94806

Exhibition at the Mexican Consulate, May 31 - August 31, 2012 Special Event for Nordic 5 Arts



Georgina Bray and Russell Herrman with *Fabula* by Gorge Lopez Garcia, commissioned by the Mexican Government for the Conference of Ecology, Mexico City, 1992.

In July, 2012, our member **Russell Herrman** and his wife **Georgina Bray** invited Nordic 5 Arts to a special showing of their exhibition - *The Magic Surrealists of Oaxaca, Mexico - Rufino Tamayo's Legacy: Contemporary Zapotec Artists* - at the Mexican Consulate in San Francisco.

Bray/Herrman Fine Art has represented and collected masterworks of Zapotec artists from Mexico since 1990. The artistic lineage of this group of artists started with the legendary **Rufino Tamayo**, and the collection featured Pre-Hispanic iconography, materials and pigments that are especially prevalent in the State of Oaxaca where Spanish influence has been minimal and much of the Pre-Columbian traditions have been preserved. The majority of the young artists have rediscovered their Pre-Hispanic roots, not just in their use of imagery, but also in their use of art materials that would be familiar to their ancient ancestors.

Russell gave a tour of the collection and introduced us to the work of Rufino Tamayo, Francisco Toledo, Alejandro Santiago Ramirez, Gorge Lopez Garcia, Calixto Robles and several others whose interpretation of the myths and legends have been passed down through the centuries using a language of symbols and signs that are familiar to their culture. Rich with textures and often whimsical, their visual lexicon and colorful imagery have become recognized as a unique art expression and their work is found in museums and galleries throughout the world.

The evening concluded with the showing of a documentary about the internationally acclaimed artist **Francisco Toledo** whose forceful personality and versatile artistic production made him known as the Zapotec Picasso. Many thanks to Russell and Gina for inviting us to this private showing of their magnificent collection of Zapotec art!

"the runes project" (working title) - an exhibition in progress...

ellen faris

My rune, Wunjo Reversed, represents unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Since the loss of my husband and my mother, the last few years have been filled with sorrow and uncertainty. Last summer, while boating with friends in Norway, I saw a lighthouse in the middle of a fjord. The vision of this lighthouse suddenly spoke to me and gave me answers to some internal questions. In celebration of that guiding moment, I created an image of the lighthouse. In contrast to the subtle hues that I saw, mine is saturated in colors. Colors give me joy and comfort and I am on my way!

maj-britt mobrand

My rune stone is in memory of Mjöltnir (Thor's hammer) and Tyrvi, who had a stone raised for her husband. She was apparently a Thor worshipper because "TYR" stands for Thor and "VI" for sanctuary. I feel a special kinship with her, since I wear Thor's Hammer around my neck, a replica from a museum in Stockholm, that was given to me a long time ago.

helena tiainen

My painting, Learning to See, is based on three runes: Sowalu (wholeness, life forces, the sun's energy), Jera (harvest, fertile season, one year) and The Blank Rune, aka The Unknowable. These three runes incorporate what I consider to be interconnectedness and oneness and the process of learning to see a sacred oneness of all life.

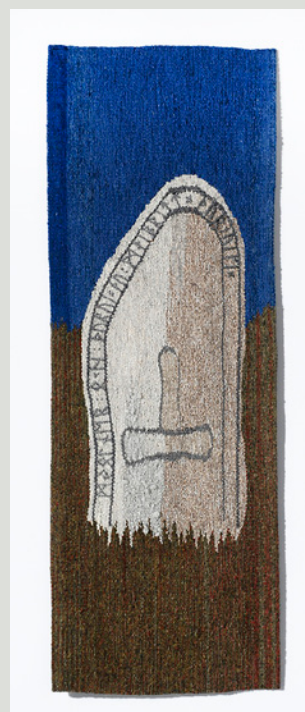
kati casida

Woman Warrior - Saga (partial)
Rune letters: Warrior, Growth, Fertility, Breakthrough, Separation, Protection
At a tender young age, I decide to run away from home and join my Viking brother on his ship sailing for Greece. Falling in love with a dark haired Viking crew member helps to pass the time. He manages to bless me with two dark haired little boys who grow up healthy and strong in between two years of storms and bad food. Finally we near Athens and the men rush off in search of gold and relics to take home. Here I find a break from laundry and cooking. Taking the boys I make myself at home in a shop of metal workers. One of the men offers to help me cut out some rune stone letters for my saga. The year is 925...



Clockwise from top

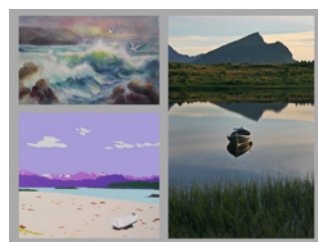
- Ellen Faris
- Helena Tiainen
- Kati Casida
- Maj-Britt Mobrand



artist news & exhibitions

in memoriam

Colette Crutcher is collaborating once again with Irish ceramicist Aileen Barr on several public art pieces. *The Hidden Garden Steps*, a grass-roots initiative, is halfway towards completion. A recent neighborhood workshop gave community members the opportunity to place tiles into the complex mosaic design. View hiddengardensteps.org for the timing of the next workshop. Other projects include a fountain/bird bath for Jardin de lo Ninos in Redwood City, a series of pre-Columbian-themed mosaic panels for Oakland's Cesar Chavez park, and a third stairway at Arelious Walker Way in SF's Bayview district. **ulla de larios** was in a group show, *4 Weavers - Contemporary Expressions of an Ancient Craft*, at Petaluma Arts Center, Petaluma, CA, January 11 - March 10, 2013. **marc ellen hamel** May 4 & 5, 2013: Spring Open Studio, Hunters Point Shipyard, San Francisco, Marc Ellen Hamel's studio, Building 101 #2507, shipyardartists.com; July 2013: "Color in the Abstract," an exhibition of paintings, monotypes, and mixed media works at Main Street Artists Gallery in Quincy, CA, mainstreetartists.net. **mark erickson** 'Suspended in Daylight', May 1 - June 30, 2013, Robert Green Fine Arts, Mill Valley, CA, rgfinearts.com; Group Exhibition, April 28 - June 28, 2013, Mary Ann Cohen Fine Art, Fort Lauderdale, FL. **dorothy mccall** On April 7, 2013, she gave a lecture at the Nordstrom store in Walnut Creek on "Masterpieces of American Jewelry". During her residency in 2012 at Arteles, Finland, she gave lectures at the Porin Art Museum and the Tampere Art Museum. **Elizabeth Stokkebye** August 15 - September 29, 2013, *A Date with the Devil*, Napa Valley Museum, Yountville, CA, napavalleymuseum.org. She has a new job as the Visitor Center Coordinator at the combined Chamber of Commerce/ Visitor Center in Calistoga.



Norway - Sea, Fjords and Lakes

An Exhibition by Three Nordic 5 Arts members
Ellen Faris, Anne-Inger Oseberg and Helene Sobol
May 4 and 5, 2013 10 AM - 5 PM

Norway Day Festival

Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason, San Francisco

East Bay Open Studios

June 1-2 and 8-9 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Patricia Bengtson - Maj-Britt Mobrand - Helena Tiainen - Lee Williams
Diane Rusnak (1st weekend)

agathe bennich - long time member

Long time shipyard artist, Agathe Bennich - Gatta to her friends - passed away Thursday, November 1, 2013. An artist of the first order, her work was original, transformative, and very beautiful. Agathe's work was marked by intuitive reaches into color, mythology, imagery, dream and spirit. She evolved a unique medium of working on unsized and unframed canvas, layered and intensely saturated with the pigments of oil pastels. She was open about her work as an artist, able and willing to talk about her work and deep process without reserve or ego. She believed in art as a language of truth and discovery, and deeply cared about the history of art, the history of women artists, and the contemporary range of art-making.... Many of you also knew her: from her smile, radiant presence, her work, her teaching at City College, or from so many other Gatta aspects of her being. Agathe is survived by her husband, fellow shipyard artist, Tron Bykle, and Odin Bykle, her son.

Ruth Geos, ruthgstudios@aol.com

mark erickson

elizabeth stokkebye



colette crutcher



thank you to loren rehbock for hosting the fall meeting, november 10, 2012



The meeting was held in Loren Rehbock's home and new studio in Napa. He was pleased that the Planning Commission there had approved his project without delay. His new series of paintings based on postage stamps decorated the wall. Marc Ellen Hamel led the meeting.

PRESENT: Colette Crutcher, Marc Ellen Hamel, Norma Andersen Fox, Kati Casida, Loren Rehbock, Elizabeth Stokkebye, Ellen Faris, Pat Bengtson-Jones, Lee Williams, Olivia Eielson, Russell Herrman, Maj-Britt Hilstrom, Diane Rusnak, Maj-Britt Mobrand, Debra Jewell, and Ulla de Larios.

UPDATE on members' activities:

Norma Andersen Fox chairs the Art Committee at Salem Lutheran Home, East 29th St., Oakland, where she resides. She is taking classes in various art media and is studying Viking jewelry. **Pat Bengtson-Jones** has been drawing instead of sculpting due to health issues. **Kati Casida** is working on having a metal sculpture fabricated. **Ellen Faris** has spent much time in Norway, and is looking forward to paint a new collection for upcoming exhibitions. **Olivia Eielson** confessed that she's using the Runes Project to combat the Nordic gloominess of her nature. The themes she is working on are global warming and the myth of Sisyphus which may not be of great help! **Maj-Britt Mobrand** created a Rune weaving which already sold! She will make another. She has been working on several commissions. **Diane Rusnak** had a mural installed at the Cleveland Hospital. She has built a new studio at home and offered to host the spring meeting. Her colored pencil drawings have been featured in *Dream Time*, an international magazine. **Marc Ellen Hamel** has been spending much time at her retreat in Plumas County where she continues to paint quilt motifs that decorate the sides of barns. The hard-edged precision of this style has had an effect on her paintings on canvas. **Colette Crutcher** has traveled to Alaska, Provence and Brazil. She is collaborating with Aileen Barr on two new public tile projects, a stairway in the Sunset (hiddengardensteps.org) and a plaza and fountain in Redwood City. **Debra Jewell** has been working with printmaking and landscape architecture. She traveled to Vienna and London and has been showing with the California Society of Printmakers.

Russell Herrman curated an art exhibition and showed films at the Mexican Consulate in San Francisco. His personal collection of Oaxacan paintings and prints was exhibited there, and will later be shown in San Jose. **Ulla de Larios** will be participating in Palo Alto Open Studios in December and will be in a show entitled "Four Weavers" at the Petaluma Art Center opening in January 2013. **Elizabeth Stokkebye** has moved back to Calistoga and is working on illustrating four fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen. **Maj-Britt Hilstrom** has been showing extensively: Blue Bay Press, California Society of Printmakers, Triton Museum in Santa Clara and London. **Lee Williams** has worked on reorganizing her studio and is painting on canvas.

PROGRAM The Runes Project (working title)

The Runes Project (working title) Marc Ellen summarized the ideas behind the runes project and explained that it will make more sense to decide on an exhibition title after all the art work is completed. She asked those who had completed their art piece to share their experience.

Kati Casida used the warrior rune to help her create a template for a sculpture. Tents used by the Sami people, with whom she feels a kinship because she moved a great deal in childhood, inspired her. **Ellen Faris** presented an image of a lighthouse in a fjord to represent her feeling of being torn between Norway and California. **Lee Williams** and **Norma Andersen Fox** both used birch wood because of its importance in Scandinavian culture: Norma made a birch basket and Lee made a series of paintings of birch trees focusing on the eye-like marks on the bark. **Maj-Britt Hilstrom** has continued to focus on ocean-related ecological issues, particularly over fishing, because of the importance of salmon in Scandinavia. **Ulla de Larios** reached back to petroglyphs from western Sweden that precede the runes (Hällristning) as inspiration for her weaving and dyeing works. **Marc Ellen Hamel** shared how she used the runes for divination to tell her what direction to follow in her creative life. She created a painting showing the results of that divination with three lines of 3 runes for each era: now (April - July) next (August - October) and the following months (November - ?). She believes that the final section "Major Shift" has begun. Her painting reflects this movement. She also created a full set of runes on rocks affixed to a board, gathered from the nearby creek at her Plumas County home. All agreed it was exciting to see the energy and new departures that have come out of this runes project so far. Those who have worked with them seem to have found the experience to be not only challenging, but inspirational and healing. **For information**, please contact Marc Ellen Hamel at mehamel@comcast.net or call her at 415-202-4315.

The meeting adjourned and pot luck was served before heading to visit the Hess Art Collection.

Respectfully submitted, Colette Crutcher, Secretary

The nordic 5 arts NEWSBRIEF is published in spring and fall. Edited and designed by Helene Sobol.

The publication supports and promotes artists with Nordic heritage in the San Francisco Bay Area. Subscription \$10; membership dues \$25.
Helene Sobol, Co-coordinator, Nordic 5 Arts, 435 Crestmont Drive, San Francisco, CA 94131, hfs@HeleneSobol.com

Thank you to those who contributed photos to this issue.