



Houston Metal Arts Guild Newsletter

Summer 2024

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Letter from the President



HMAG President Jessica Jacobi.

Hello friends!

Summer is here, and HMAG is turning up the heat! We are kicking off this new membership year with fun activities and planning many more. My years of service on the board have gifted me with so many wonderful relationships, and I look forward to programs and workshops that will offer the chance for our community to get together and connect.

Our recent Share and Tell Program was an amazing example of the rich variety of styles and techniques practiced among our members. I was thrilled to teach the June workshop, where we did a deep dive into understanding files and utilize them to carve silver rings. Upcoming workshops will include flex-shaft attachments

Houston Metal Arts Guild

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and capabilities and blingy hollow construction for rings. In the fall HMAG will offer the next application cycle for the Member Development Grant – an incredible opportunity that you won't want to miss!

As always, we welcome input from our members and community. We want to hear from you about the types of activities, techniques, and topics you want to see more of. Thank you in advance for taking part in our community – I am proud to be amongst you.

Jessica Jacobi

HMAG President



Membership Renewal



June was Membership Renewal month! Is your HMAG membership up-to-date? It's not too late to rejoin and participate in all the activities we have planned.

Take advantage of the perks of membership, including access to member-only workshops, exhibitions, and grants, opportunities to share and promote your work, and invitations to social events.

Go to <https://www.hmag.org/membership> for more information.



HMAG Board Election Results

The results of the HMAG elections are in. The Board of Directors is as follows:

President: Jessica Jacobi

Secretary: Michelle Zingaro

Treasurer: Patty Scott

Programs: Cathy Prieto-Smith

Workshops: Paula Angeleri

Newsletter: Christine Sigman

There are still many positions open, so if you have ever considered getting more involved with HMAG, now is a good time! Contact Jessica Jacobi at HMAGPres@gmail.com for more information.



Recent Program Recap

HMAG continues to offer in-person and online opportunities for members to connect, learn, and be inspired. If you have any ideas for upcoming programs, please send them to HMAGProg@gmail.com, and we'll do our best to arrange them.

Wear It Out! Opening at Hooks-Epstein Gallery

On December 2, HMAG hosted an informal meetup at the opening of **Wear It Out! An Art Jewelry Invitational** at Hooks-Epstein Gallery. Members mingled with a lively and stylish crowd while getting a closer look at the work of the nine featured local artists, many of whom are fellow HMAG members.



Featured artists Corey Ackelmire (with daughter Grace Dube), Tarina Frank, and Edward Lane McCartney at the Wear It Out! opening.

Member Appreciation Party

On February 17, HMAG held its 2024 Member Appreciation Party at the welcoming Heights home of board member Cathy Prieto-Smith. A very healthy turnout of members and their friends enjoyed a delicious dinner catered by Phoenicia. Then the party really started! It was an evening of fun, games, prizes, and good company.



Members mingling at the party.

Craft Community Day at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

On March 2, a group of HMAG volunteers joined other crafts artists and guilds at HCCC’s annual Craft Community Day. This day-long event lets the public learn about and try out various craft forms. At HMAG’s table, volunteers showed people how to texture copper metal blanks.



HMAG members sharing with the public at Craft Community Day.

Museum Tour: Silver from Norway

On March 23, HMAG members were treated to a private tour of *Crowning the North: Silver Treasures from Bergen, Norway*. Curator Misty Flores, who designed the exhibition, discussed the history of the city of Bergen and its metalsmiths while highlighting the unique and evolving forms of metal objects in Bergen.



Curator Misty Flores walking HMAG members through the exhibition.

For more on this exhibition, see **Norwegian Silver at the MFAH: A Review** on page 8.

Member Meetup at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft: La Fuente del Deseo with Georgina Treviño

On May 25, several HMAG members met up to hear HCCC curator **Sarah Darro** interview artist **Georgina Treviño** at a well-attended public program. Members explored the glittering, blinged out gallery while listening to the artist explain her motivations and process.



HMAG members at the Georgina Treviño artist talk.

Annual Meeting

On May 29, HMAG President **Jessica Jacobi** presented the annual meeting and report via Zoom. This meeting was open to the full membership.

Member Share and Tell

On June 22, HMAG hosted the latest in an ongoing series of Member Share and Tell sessions, giving members a chance to show and talk about their work and get a glimpse of what other members are working on.



Recent Workshop Recap

By Jessica Jacobi

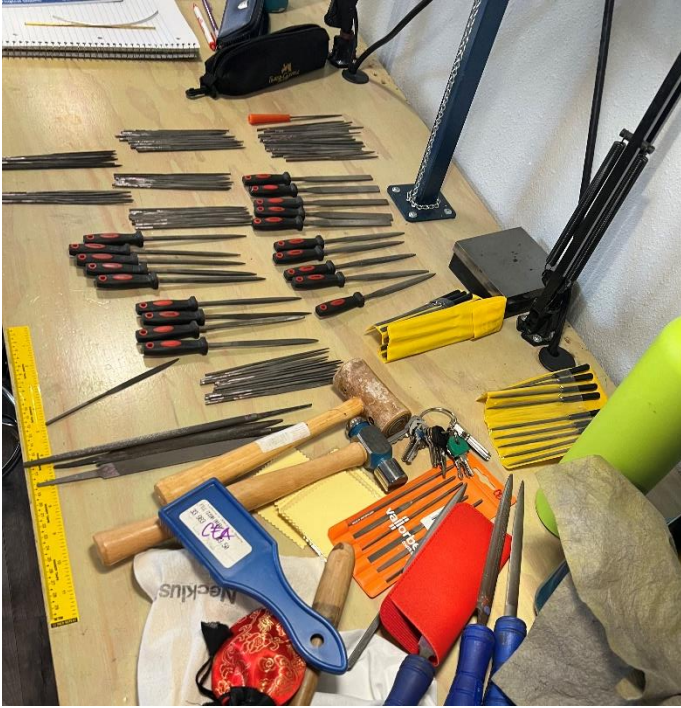
HMAG continues to offer local workshops to help members extend their skills. If you have any ideas for future workshops, please submit them to HMAGWkshp@gmail.com.

Forged and Filed Cuff Bracelets with Corey Ackelmire



Instructor Corey Ackelmire with students in her cuff bracelet workshop.

On December 3, **Corey Ackelmire** led a one-day workshop on forged and filed cuff bracelet construction. Students learned the basics of forging non-ferrous metals for the purpose of creating a brass or silver cuff bracelet using thick wire stock. Additionally, students learned to use hand and needle files to carve the stock in order to create a variety of design effects.



Assorted files used for shaping and marking metal.

Students enthusiastically followed Corey's expert guidance in forming and filing their bracelets. Some students completed two bracelets, while others took their second bracelet home to finish later. All were impressed by the range of effects possible using the same sets of tools.

Flex Shaft and Torch Maintenance with Nathan Dube

On May 4, **Nathan Dube** led a one-day intensive overview of the various components of flex shaft machines and acetylene/air torches with Smith tips.

Workshop participants learned how to troubleshoot and diagnose issues that can occur over the lifespan of these mainstays to the jeweler's studio. After thorough explanations and demonstrations, participants turned to hands-on practice, taking apart their flex-shaft machines to check the status of the brushes, and then to clean and apply new lubricant.

Nathan gave detailed demonstrations on safety and maintenance for acetylene tanks, including many tips on how to check for gas leaks and how to maintain the regulator, hose, and connection components.

Participants then got hands-on experience with cleaning Smith torch tips and replacing worn rubber O-rings. Everyone got a glimpse at how dirty acetylene can be, with the soot puffing out of the torch tips, but by the end the group had a shiny and "like-new" set of torch tips to show for their efforts.

After these activities, Nathan went over how to maintain and care for a rolling mill, to keep the rollers in the best shape possible.

The workshop was very successful, with participants expressing their increased confidence on handling and maintaining their shop equipment.



Nathan Dube and students review the anatomy of a flex shaft.

File Education with Jessica Jacobi

On June 29, **Jessica Jacobi** led a one-day workshop entitled **File Education: Carved Silver Rings**.

The workshop began with a detailed discussion of files. Participants learned about different manufacturers, cuts, and shapes of files, along with what advantages different types of files add to working on metal. The discussion also included tips on how to chalk files to prevent clogging with soft metals, how to properly clean files with a file card, and best practices for storing files to extend their lifespan. A varied selection of needle, escapement, hand files, and rasps were available for students to examine and practice with.



Ring workshop participants at the bench.

Jessica provided many examples of finished metalwork and jewelry pieces that showcased the use of file carving on wire and sheet elements. After a quick demonstration on filing and carving contours into sheet metal, participants were given an 8-gauge round wire sterling silver ring to carve, along with heavy brass wire and copper sheet for practicing.



Carved rings, before and after.

The group spent the remainder of the workshop carving into their heavy gauge rings to create unique forms that showcased repetitive patterns and fluid line movement.



Upcoming Workshops

HMAG has the following educational offerings in the works. Look for additional information as it becomes available in HMAG E-Blasts or on the HMAG website.

Workshop: Beyond the Drill Bit: Flex Shaft Attachments with Cathy Prieto-Smith

Date: Late Summer **Location:** Charisma Design Studios

Most of us regularly use our flex shafts for drilling and grinding metal, but they can do so much more! Join Cathy as she introduces the wide range of mark-making, hammering, cutting, polishing and other attachments that can improve your work and streamline your workflow, as well as how to apply the flex shaft to materials other than metal.

Workshop: Big Bling! Creating and Embellishing Hollow-form Rings with Cathy Prieto-Smith

Date: Early Fall **Location:** Charisma Design Studios

Dainty and delicate have their places in the jewelry universe, but sometimes you want to make more of an impression! In this project-based workshop, Cathy will teach participants how to construct a volumetric hollow-form ring that takes up space while remaining lightweight and easy to wear. Later, following their own tastes and designs, class members will have the opportunity to embellish this generously-sized canvas and take home the cocktail ring of their dreams.



Q&A with HMAG Member Development Grant 2023 Recipient Donna Pierce

HMAG recently chatted with 2023 HMAG Development Grant recipient **Donna Pierce** about her experience taking

a course at the **Houston Art League** with instructor **Mary Rogers** last spring.

HMAG: Tell us a little about your career/work.

DP: I was a middle school art teacher for 29 years and last year, made the decision to retire in May 2023. I loved teaching art and introducing my students to techniques and a range of media. Sharing the world of art has always been my passion. However, in the last few years of teaching I felt a strong desire to be a student again. I wanted to explore my own creativity with my favorite medium, metals.

HMAG: What motivated you to apply for the grant? How did you hear about it?

DP: In the Fall of 2023, HMAG President **Jessica Jacobi** did a fantastic Zoom HMAG program on writing resumes and business plans. She announced at the meeting the grant opportunity available to members. Through her encouragement, I decided to apply. It was a perfect opportunity for me to explore a technique that has always fascinated me, Keum-boo. I was curious to explore how it is done and really liked the idea of incorporating a little gold into a piece of silver jewelry.

HMAG: What specifically did you do with the grant? Our members love tools and techniques so feel free to mention the exact items you purchased or classes you attended and why you chose them.

DP: Mary Rogers teaches a beginners/intermediate jewelry and metalsmithing class at the Art League Houston. I registered for her class and used the remaining amount of grant money to purchase 23.5K gold foil. The class was 3 hours on Monday nights and lasted for 8 weeks.



Keum-boo in action.

Mary was so knowledgeable in so many ways; she worked with each student on their own level. She was able to guide me through each step of the process and helped me reach my objective. She even brought in a hot plate, along with a chopstick (to check the temperature of the hot plate) and a burnisher. The whole class watched her demonstration and many afterward became interested in the technique.

HMAG: Generally, what's next for you professionally/artistically?

DP: I plan to continue to take metalsmithing courses. I focused on texture, form, and Keum-boo with this grant. My textures were done with the rolling mill on the surface of the metal. The two forms I created were puffed hearts and hydrangea flowers, which I used to make a series of earrings. Some of the earrings I made for myself and friends, while others have been sold to customers.

HMAG: What would you say to motivate other members to apply for the grant?



A finished pair of Donna's earrings.

DP: I strongly encourage others members to consider

Donna Pierce's tips on Keum-boo

In her own words, here's what Donna has learned about Keum-boo:

- 23.5 K gold sheet is very delicate. At first, I was very cautious and used small amounts, but as I gained confidence, I used it more generously.
- Sterling silver needs to be annealed many times in order to bring the silver up to the surface for the Keum-boo to bond.
- Using fine silver is easier and doesn't need annealing, and it really has a light luminous glow to the surface.
- Smooth and sand the wire tips of the earrings before you shape them.
- Keum-boo is the last step when making a piece of jewelry.
- Keum-boo can be pickled once you finish; it cleans and brightens the piece.
- Easy does it: Don't force pump on hydraulic press once you have reached a resistance, and don't force extra pressure on rolling mill. With experience you'll get a feel for how much pressure you need.

applying for the HMAG Development Grant. I took the words to heart: to "develop" my ideas and designs, and to be "granted" the opportunity to pursue my passion. We

are so lucky to have HMAG here in our community and I hope others will apply to pursue their passions as well.

One of the greatest aspects of HMAG is the sharing of ideas with other artist and learning new techniques. And, we are a fun group of people who enjoy our special community.

HMAG: Thanks, Donna! Your pieces are beautiful!



Norwegian Silver at the MFAH: A Review

By Christine Sigman

This past spring, HMAG members enjoyed a private tour by Museum of Fine Arts Houston curator **Misty Flores** of the exhibition **Crowning the North: Silver Treasures from Bergen, Norway**. This extensive and unique exhibition gave Houstonians a chance to see many artifacts that have never left Norway before.

Misty began our tour by introducing the city of Bergen itself. A former capital of Norway and its largest port city, Bergen long experienced a flow of materials and ideas as well as immigrants. In the 14th century, Bergen came under the jurisdiction of the German Hanseatic League trading monopoly. During this period rigorously trained and regulated gold- and silversmiths from Germany settled in Bergen, establishing family lines and in many cases eventually adopting Norwegian nationality.

As Misty explained, the work of these guild-approved gold- and silversmiths was aimed at two distinct audiences: city and country. The city audience, exposed to more trends, tended to adopt and then discard styles to make way for something new, while the more conservative rural regions continued to demand similar styles for decades. One example is the wedding crown, only briefly adopted in the city, which remained an important feature of rural bridal attire for generations.



Norwegian Bridal Crown, from the Crowning the North exhibition.

Another distinguishing feature of the Norway of this period is the fact that it was ruled by an evolving cast of outsiders for centuries. While the city of Bergen was very wealthy, there was no domestic royal family or aristocracy to set the fashion or drive highly luxurious designs such as one might see in other European nations of this era. There was an underlying practicality in much of the work displayed, be it a guild cup, a communal tankard, or a wedding crown, itself often owned by a church and rented or lent to individual brides.

One pervasive design element in many of the jewelry and other pieces on display was the inclusion of small, domed, and often gilded disks, meant to move and reflect the light, especially during long northern winters, and evoke the presence of the sun. Interestingly, scholars believe that this solar theme (as well as other ritual uses of reflective disks in Nordic culture) harks back to the 530s, when two back-to-back catastrophic earthquakes in the Southern hemisphere spewed so much debris into the atmosphere that the Nordic region was plunged into near-total darkness for several years. Approximately half the population of Scandinavia at that time died, leaving a deep cultural wound and an enduring, atavistic appreciation for the light of the sun.

As the group moved into the final room of the exhibition, Misty explained the evolution of Norwegian culture and emergence of a romantic nationalist spirit in the 19th

century. Rather than adopt the international styles and taste they were exposed to, these Norwegians sought a more indigenous, uniquely Norwegian style, rooted in history, to complement their move toward political autonomy. This overall cultural trend led metalsmiths and other artists to embrace a reinterpretation of their unique past, drawing on Viking motifs as well as native accent materials to create a national visual identity.

By the end of this highly informative and entertaining tour, HMAG members were reminded that decorative arts and objects are more than merely pleasing: they also tell the story of the people and places that created them.



Community News

Here are some things going on in the Houston metals community:

- On view through August 24 at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, **La Fuente del Deseo (The Fountain of Desire)** by **Georgina Treviño**, an interdisciplinary artist and metalsmith from Tijuana, Mexico, based in San Diego, California. Treviño's expansive approach to adornment combines art jewelry and sculptural traditions with the vernacular material culture, architecture, and music of the border.
- The following area metalsmiths and enamellists are featured in the current **Glassell School of Art Juried Student Exhibition**, on view through July 26: **Jodi Brewer, Humaira Fazili, Leslie Huston, William Luft, Edward Lane McCartney, Janet Ross, and Christine Sigman**. Special kudos to beginning metalsmiths Humaira Fazili and Leslie Huston for being selected, and to William Luft for receiving the Juror's Award for Best 3D Work in the show.



William Luft, *The Pen is Mightier Than the Sword*, 2024.



Share Your News with the Community

We love to highlight what HMAG members and others in our local community are up to professionally. Do you have any artistic or professional news or achievements to share with the HMAG community? Upcoming online or in-person gallery shows? Sales or business milestones? Jury awards or other professional recognition? Changes of address or employment?

Submit your community news to HMAGNews@gmail.com for consideration for the Winter 24/25 newsletter.



Mission Statement

The Houston Metal Arts Guild, Inc. is a non-profit organization made up of people with varying interests and involvement in traditional and contemporary jewelry and metal arts.

The Guild was founded to provide for the exchange of ideas and information, as well as offer affordable educational opportunities to its members and the public. Our activities include workshops and programs on a wide range of aesthetic, technical, and commercial topics; exhibitions at leading local venues; social and volunteer events; and communications via our Web presence, social media, and newsletter.

The skills, energy and enthusiasm of the Houston Metals Arts Guild, Inc. members promote and sustain its successful programs. We welcome and encourage participation by everyone.

HMAG Board 2024 - 2025

President	Jessica Jacobi	HMAGPres@gmail.com
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