



ROYCROFTERS-AT-LARGE ASSOCIATION CHRONICLE

:: OUR MISSION ::

The Roycrofters-At-Large Association was formed over 30 years ago by a group of East Aurorans that included several descendants of the original Roycrofters, including Elbert Hubbard's granddaughter. The Roycrofters-At-Large Association, Inc. has been entrusted with educating, fostering and inspiring through the continual evolution of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

■ SUMMER 2022 ■

A 'Captivating Material,' Glass Provides Endless Challenges for Chrissy Lapham

BY ROBERT LOWELL GOLLER

Chrissy Lapham enjoys a challenge, and glass, she says, never fails to provide the artistic challenge she craves.

"Glass is such a captivating material," the Roycroft Artisan says, citing its unique reaction to heat and gravity, and its ability to take on texture. "The process takes a lot of trial and error."

The Binghamton native was first introduced to the art of glassblowing during a high school field trip to the Corning Museum of Glass. But she admits that she didn't fully appreciate the artform at first.

"I probably didn't even understand what it was at the time," she says.

A few years later, while studying fine arts at Alfred University's School of Art & Design, Lapham was intrigued by a poster promoting the school's glassblowing department. "I didn't even know there was a glass department there,"

recalls the artist, who previously had explored wood working, printmaking, ceramics, metal casting and neon.

When required to choose a specialty in her senior year, Lapham chose glass. But it was an encounter with a group of professional glass artists a short time later that sealed the deal.



CHRISSY LAPHAM AT WORK

While working as an intern at a gallery in her hometown, she met members of The Hot Glass Show Roadshow, a traveling glassblowing demonstration from the Corning Museum of Glass. She soon was offered a summer position narrating for the well-known show at the museum.

After earning her bachelor in fine arts degree in 2005, Lapham moved to Corning.

She's right at home at the Corning Museum of Glass, where she currently rents a hot shop in a space called The Studio, which, she says, provides great

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inspiration and camaraderie. Lapham also takes advantage of numerous classes at the museum to further hone her craft.

“You are not stuck in a studio by yourself,” Lapham says. “You are always surrounded by other glass artists. Corning is a great place to live.”

Lapham’s self-designed website, www.chrissylapham.com, includes numerous examples of her colorful work, including vases, glass flowers, tea light holders and soap dishes. She is currently working on a line of soap dishes for the Beekman 1802 mercantile, a company based in Sharon Springs, N.Y. Her work also has been featured at



FROM TOP: LUSTER ROPE VASES, SOAP DISHES, LILY TEA LIGHT

The Copper Shop on the Roycroft Campus since 2017, and she is looking forward to showcasing her work once again at the Roycrofters-At-Large Association’s annual Summer Festival June 25-26 at the Classic Rink on Riley Street in East Aurora.

When not creating and promoting her glass, Lapham also operates a small business growing and selling fresh cut flowers. She often features the flowers in her glass vases.

Lapham is a relative newcomer to the Roycrofters-At-Large Association. She began participating in regional art shows in 2008, and it was at one of these shows in the summer of 2017 that she learned

about RALA. After taking part in RALA’s 2018 and 2019 Summer Arts Festivals, she was asked to consider applying for Artisan status.

“I was really impressed with all the other artists,” Lapham says. “They actually invited me to apply for it. It was an honor to be asked.”

Lapham’s achieved Artisan status in April 2021, a year after her submission due to the postponement of the jury—and the cancellation of shows—in 2020 amid pandemic restrictions.

This wasn’t the only Covid-related challenge for Lapham and her colleagues.

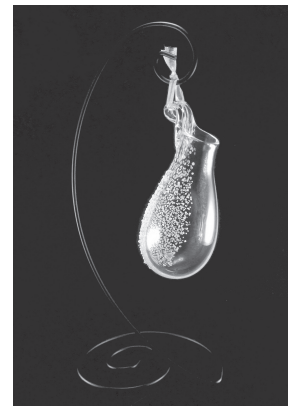
Like most of the rest of the world, the glass studio shut down for a few months after March 2020.

And due to the nature of glass blowing, getting safely back to work proved uniquely challenging for the glass studio. To substitute for the artists blowing into the glass, technicians developed air pressure machines with foot pedals. Although the devices allowed for different air pressure settings, attempting to replicate your own naturally-produced air pressure proved extremely difficult, Lapham says.

“It’s a lot different using a machine,” the artist says. “It took me six months to a year for me to get used to the pressure. It would be like trying to play the flute with a pressure hose.”

After two years, the Covid restrictions in the studio were recently lifted, and Lapham is eager to get back to creating glass the more traditional way.

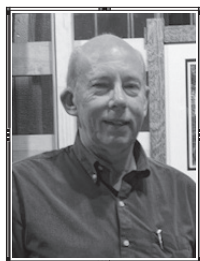
“With glass, there is always a new technique to discover,” she says. “I always keep learning something new. Now my goal is to make things that bring happiness to people in their life and continue to challenge me.” ¶



COLORTONES WINDOW VASE

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Alburn Sleeper, the Aurora Silversmith, was one of the first artisans of Roycroft Renaissance. We remember him for establishing the very foundations of our organization, in particular, the rigorous jury process. He was generous with his craft and time, sharing his knowledge to mentor aspiring metalsmiths. Al and his wife Glenda worked in leadership positions in the Roycrofters-at-Large Association, organizing shows and serving on the board. I was fortunate to enjoy Al's humor, wisdom and judgment. I valued his advice. We lost Al last year and Glenda earlier this year. I miss their guidance, support and friendship.

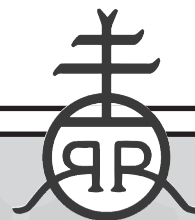


PETER POTTER

Mark Sleeper, their son, was recruited by his folks to assist in the 1990s. He co-chaired the Summer and Winter Festivals for three years and also has served on our board. Professional demands took Mark from the area for several years. Mark has retired and returned to East Aurora and we are pleased to announce that he has re-joined our board. He shares his parents' love, dedication and understanding of the Roycrofters-at-Large Association. He also shares his father's keen sense of humor, and in fact, he sounds a bit like him, too. We welcome Mark and look forward to working with him as we approach our fiftieth year in 2026.

Mark has graciously fulfilled his mother's wishes to assign Al's Roycroft Marks in metal work to the Roycrofters-at-Large Association. I speak for the entire organization to express our gratitude and our fervent wish to honor this legacy.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Potter



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RALA COORDINATOR

Debbie Muniak

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BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings are regularly scheduled for the second Tuesday of the month. The first 15 minutes of the meeting is reserved for member comments, after which the board will enter a closed session. Contact the RALA Coordinator for details.





ROYCROFTERS-AT-LARGE ASSOCIATION


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