



ROYCROFTERS-AT-LARGE ASSOCIATION CHRONICLE

:: OUR MISSION ::

The Roycrofters-At-Large Association was formed over 30 years ago by a group of East Auroran's 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.

FALL 2017



Suzanne Handel Mair: A master of paper and hidden messages

By Joe Kirchmyer

Make no mistake, Roycroft Master Artisan Suzanne Handel Mair is a professional storyteller. Maybe not in the traditional sense of expressing oneself with great expression and verbal detail, but a great storyteller nonetheless. Instead, her stories are told visually through her designs and her artistic technique. Hidden in plain sight, they range from historic and spiritual to philosophical and even mischievous. Let's take a closer look.

of drawings needed to ensure accurate and well-defined imagery. At this point I took a huge departure from the Scherenschnitte art form and integrated other paperwork techniques ... techniques that include but are not limited to collage, layering papers from a wide variety of sources, cast paper pulp and embossing.

Q: Decades of cutting paper with sharp instruments. What do those fingers look like?

Q: Your website says that you've worked exclusively with paper for the last 20 years, yet during that time your work has greatly evolved. How so?

A: Yikes! I have to be more diligent and careful when I update my website. I became a Roycroft Master Artisan in 1986, but I had been cutting for years before that date. That would bring the number of years to approximately 35. Where does the time go? It's been a road representing thousands and thousands of long, happy work sessions. My work began in the early '80s with the inaugural designs being purely decorative, simple, stylized forms which could be executed easily with scissors. Not content with decoration, I wanted to convey more complex ideas which would involve more intricate drawing strategies which in turn would require different cutting techniques. The majority of time spent on production shifted to the initial series



A: They don't look too good, but I am thankful to the Lord for the continued strength and health of my hands — you know, head, heart and hand!

Q: There's just so much minute detail in your work. If we look hard enough, will we find any hidden secrets or messages?

A: Yes. It has been a long-standing tradition in my work to not only create layers of meaning to the stories told, but also include symbols that may take a good amount of time for the viewer to "decode." The message may be in the positive or negative space of the design, or it may be present in the paper that is added beneath the mat. As long as the piece presents a well-integrated and pleasing visual, all bets are off. The message may be deeply philosophical or a bit mischievous.



The 2016-2017 Goodie Box was raffled off at the summer show and winner Elaine O'Niell from Grand Island, NY won the box and contents.

ROYCROFTERS-AT-LARGE ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

ROYCROFT

10AM TO 5PM
December
2nd
AND
3rd
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admission
\$1.00

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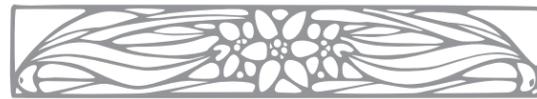
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Board Meetings

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.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Like it or not, the holiday season is upon us. I only accidentally grazed by a Christmas song on my radio (they're not allowed in my car until after I've completed the Turkey Trot) and was suddenly jarred by the thought that I have so much to do between now and the advent of the holiday season. Our winter show is scheduled for December 2nd and 3rd in the cafeteria at the East Aurora Middle School. Hours are from 10am to 5pm. I look forward to seeing you there.

Looking further ahead, we are pleased to announce that the summer show for 2018 will be in a new—and covered—location. We'll be at The Healthy Zone Rink, 41 Riley St. in East Aurora. After last year's heavy rain, we thought that a covered, and slightly wind-protected space might be exactly the solution to our weather-induced problems of other years. Please stay tuned for more details, but know that we'll still be in the village, but at a more centralized location.

Plans are also starting to come together for the 2018 Roycroft Chamber Music Festival. It's a bit too early to announce anything yet, but the committee is hard at work planning a very special 25th annual series.

I know that our hard-working board and committee members join me in wishing you the very best for the holiday season. And remember...December 2nd and 3rd at the East Aurora Middle School for another fabulous winter show!

Martha Buyer
RALA President

Suzanne Handel Mair: A master of paper and hidden messages ...continued from page 1

Q: Your designs are said to each tell a story. What are your favorite stories to tell through your work?

A: Anything that bears preservation in our culture. All themes in my series of designs are historic in nature — very few contemporary themes. We are witnesses to so much destruction in this moment of history because we have strayed from our core values and truth. We have reassigned different meaning to our traditions resulting in fractured relationships with each other. Visual storytelling can repair those fractures. Major themes that I use in my designs include scripture, classic literature and poetry. The best story anyone can convey in their work is, "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, (pursue) these things."

Q: You live in East Aurora and have been a Roycroft Artisan for many years. Is that in itself inspiring, or do you seek inspiration elsewhere?

A: As a child, my mother would bring me to Walter Jennings' studio set in the enclosed front porch of his home. The craftsman, his workspace and his metalwork made such an impression that I still carry it today. As a Roycrofter I am surrounded by an exceptional circle of craftsmen. Roycrofters produce work unequalled, unsurpassed and uncompromised. Quality is not defined by address or location. It is the spirit of integrity invested in the work. Other than my faith, I find that most inspiring.

Q: When you display your work at a show, like the upcoming Roycroft Winter Festival, do you find that customers make an immediate connection to your work, or does it require educating the consumer?

A: The exhibition pieces are created for visual impact and it is hoped the majority will react with a heartfelt connection. A good percentage of studio work goes to custom work pieces. That process is quite different from exhibition production and may require a bit of education and negotiation. For example, what visual element can be put together and what can be carefully edited out, color choices, etc.

Q: If you weren't working as a paper artist, what would fill that void in your life?

A: I find great joy creating in my medium, however, one knows that there will be a time when studio work will transition or may stop altogether. (I think when you used the word "void" you put me in a very pensive train of thought.) If not working in paper I would explore other media. Travel, family, friends, swimming, reading... be content and thankful in all things.

Joe Kirchmyer is president of Kirchmyer Media LLC, a communications company based in West Seneca, N.Y.; co-owner of the popular website BuffaloScoop.com; and a member of the RALA Board of Directors. You can contact him at jkirchmyer@verizon.net.

