

# SEATTLE METALS GUILD

Monthly newsletter

January-February 1999

## TIN CAN ARTWORK BY BOBBY HANSSON

**Workshop:** Saturday-Sunday, February 27-28, 1999  
**Time:** 9:30 am – 4:30pm  
**Location:** Pratt Fine Arts Center  
**Deadline:** February 1, 1999  
**Cost:** \$85.00 (see registration form on back page)

**Lecture:** Friday, February 26, 1999, at 7pm (FREE)  
**Location:** University of Washington  
Art Building, Room 3

This workshop will explore the imaginative use of tin cans and other recycled materials. You won't need any previous metalworking experience to enjoy this exciting, resourceful class. Participants will be taught both traditional and innovative tinworking techniques, which can then be used to create musical instruments, toys, ornaments, and jewelry.

Mr. Hansson, author of *The Fine Art of the Tin Can*, has made artwork from tin cans for over forty years. His exhibitions include American Craft, Renwick, and Oakland Museums. To get a feeling for the scope of what can be made with tin cans and other materials, take a look at his book. It includes a large selection of unique jewelry made by artists such as Tim McCreight and Robert Ebendorf. In addition, you'll find a profile of Mr. Hansson in the April 1988 issue of *The Crafts Report*. It tells how he went from being a professional photographer to a person who is now considered a major advocate for the use of recycled materials in art.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ron Pascho at (425) 488-3404 anytime about this exciting workshop.



Artwork by Bobby Hansson  
**THINGS YOU NEVER LEARNED IN ART SCHOOL:  
BUSINESS AND MARKETING TIPS FOR THE  
WORKING ARTIST  
BY MIRIAM WORKS**

**Date/Time:** Wednesday, May 5, 1999, 7- 9 pm  
**Location:** UW Art Bldg., Room 3  
**Cost:** Free

Fast paced and down to earth, this presentation by a former professional buyer includes ten important tips about the business of making and marketing your work. Topics include managing your time and money, goal setting, vital tax strategies, how and when to choose professional help and creating a marketing plan. These pointers will prove helpful for emerging artists as well as those with years of experience.

Some info about Miriam Works:

Formerly a business manager and buyer for Seattle area galleries, Miriam Works has taught and lectured on arts business and Marketing topics and advised individual artists since 1993. Her goal is to assist in creating business, marketing and organizational strategies that support an individual artist's goals related to growth, integrity and professional success.

### SMG Calendar

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Jan. 30-31	Workshop: Greg Wilbur	p. 3
Feb. 26	Lecture: Speaker Bobby Hansson(FREE)	p. 1
Feb. 27-28	Workshop: Bobby Hansson	p. 1
March 26	Lecture: Speaker Jamie Bennett(FREE)	p. 3
March-27-28	Workshop: Jamie Bennett	p. 3
April 9-11	Jewelry Symposium	p. 4
April	Lecture/Workshop J. Fred Woehl	
May 5	Lecture: Miriam Works (FREE)	p. 1
May 26-29	SNAG Conference	
June	Year End Party	

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## PROCRASTINATION

BY ANDY COOPERMAN

A metalsmith friend of mine once told me that jewelers and metalsmiths (male jewelers and metalsmiths in particular) compulsively acquire tools and equipment as a way to procrastinate, holding at bay the uncertainties and discomfort of creating, substituting the highs and deeper satisfaction of the making for the short thrill of acquisition. Now being a healthy compulsive male tool collecting jeweler/metalsmith myself, I at first bristled at her statement. Upon deeper reflection however, I saw the validity in what she had said...with the exception, of course, of the word "male".

To be sure, I've certainly sat in my studio staring at the bench with my head pressed firmly against a brick wall, no where to turn but dead ends, a tense nail of frustration grinding its way up my spine. My thoughts rapidly descend into a deep well of negativity. "This place is so cluttered; the bench is old and shabby; the studio's a disgusting mess; my career is a disgusting mess; etc. etc. etc..." And then I've felt my pulse quicken as an answer becomes clear in a single word emerging as if from a fog: BENCH. Why... I'll buy myself a new bench! No, better yet, I'll make myself a new bench; of course first I'll need a new jig saw, a better belt sander and a more accurate drill press. Now we're getting somewhere! All of a sudden a valve turns and a small door swings open through which can flow all that energy that was building up behind the dam of my "metals block". Blessed Relief.

The trouble is that when the bench is built and the shiny new tools--which I've hunted down at considerable bargains--are put away, more often than not the indecision, along with its attendant frustration and lack of productivity, is still there. The block remains.

I've been thinking a lot lately about fear, procrastination and missed opportunity. The increase in this volume of reflection is in no doubt due to the recent passage of my fortieth birthday. (Yep, I'm a walking cliché.) But I've been watching students, workshop attendees and fellow metalsmiths lately and I've seen some procrastination strategies that, while maybe not my preferred methods, are familiar.

With all due respect to the compulsive tool collectors and bench builders, there are some subtler barriers that can be erected between the maker and the making. Some people choose to attend workshop after workshop, accumulating a varied array of information, techniques and procedures along with mountains of beautiful handouts. Their class tackle boxes are full of beautifully executed samples. Their vocabularies at the various procedures of metalsmithing are impressive, but for some reason they don't string these words together to make sentences. Don't misunderstand me, most of them could produce wonderful things. Their ideas, when they share them, are challenging, their designs compelling. But something stands between them and the work. Sometimes pieces never leave the safety of their sketchbooks; other times their workboxes are filled with wonderful objects frozen in various stages of development, from small packets of components to nearly, but never fully, completed pieces.

I know other jewelers who set the studio itself between

them and the jewelry. One is building the perfect studio, another is perennially trying to rent the ideal space. Something always seems to interfere with the process though, some glitch in the permitting process or an unreasonable landlord who refuses to cooperate. Alas, without a proper space in which to work, their innovative ideas never materialize. But one day, with the right space....

Perhaps an even more destructive form of procrastination occurs with those who make well considered, complete work: truly remarkable pieces that illicit powerful reactions from most people who see them. The tragedy here is that despite all of the positive feedback and their professed desire to pursue a career as a working metalsmith, they don't take the leap of faith necessary to make their desires manifest. They shy away from compliments and discount their work through self depreciation. Their pieces are given away to friends or sold at venues and at prices that fall way beneath the caliber of the work. This is fine if it gives them what they really desire. The making itself may, in fact be enough for them (it should be, shouldn't it?) But if they really want to make a go of it, if they truly want to support themselves as jewelers and metalsmiths, is this the road to their goal? What's standing in their way? What's standing in the way of any of us?

One of the big answers, of course, is obvious: fear. Fear of failure, what if nobody's interested in my work? Fear of embarrassment: what if they find out what kind of an artist I really am? Fear of the unknown: What if this new direction leads nowhere? Fear of loss: I've had this idea in my mind for so long; dare I risk losing it by trying to actually make it? Fear of what comes next: Well, that's it, no new ideas and I'm all dried up.

It's tough to leave the relative safety of the sketchpad for the risky business of 3 dimensions. It's safe and easier to sit on the hub of a wheel with decisions and commitments radiating, spoke-like, outwards in all directions. Choose one and all other options are negated. Choose none and all possibilities remain open. Quite the Catch-22. I've sat on that hub quite a few times and, despite the fact that I know better, I'll probably be climbing right back on it next week, fears whirling 'round my head. Maybe in tomorrow's light, one of the two possible solutions for that all but completed neck piece will finally stand out. (God forbid I should make the WRONG decision.) Perhaps if I just had a more pleasant environment in which to work these decision would come easier. I'm not really sure that I want to stick my neck out and enter a particular competition--one from which I've been rejected several times--and subject myself to professional humiliation. And really, it's much more pleasant to sit up here in the office, pecking away on my trusty Mac than being out in the studio beginning the new body of work that's due in California two weeks hence. (Suppose it isn't as good as my last stuff?)

But on a fundamental level I know that safety can sometimes be complacency and that the best work often enters through the door marked DISCOMFORT. If you don't turn the key in the car's ignition your chances of having an accident go way down, but so do your chances of making it 10 miles to a meeting that could change your life. Sometimes the fluttering wings of those butterflies in your stomach stir up some wonderful things. You can't make an omelet without first breaking a few eggs. Like they say at the gym: "no pain, no gain." Even clichés have their roots in truth.

