



Volume 2-2

I:4 Summer 1989

Masthead cut by Paul D. Beal

MAY MEETING REPORT

Claire Archer

Members who were able to come to Montpelier Cultural Arts Center in Maryland on May 20 found an exhibition of incredible cut paper work: the originals for David Wisniewski's newly published The Warrior and the Wiseman.

They also met the artist/author himself, whose sense of humor proved as delightful as the pictures he creates. It seems quite appropriate that he attended the famous Ringling Brothers-Barnum & Bailey Clown College, followed by several years of "clowning" with Ringling Bros. and other circuses. While associated with the Maryland Park System he and his wife Donna worked with shadow puppetry, from which emerged the Clarion Shadow Theatre, which enjoys an international reputation. When their blooming family took priority over Clarion Theatre's need for "instant mobility," Mr. Wisniewski directed his talents to independent graphic design.

A Washington Children's Book Guild Seminar brought attention to his work, referrals to New York publishers, and the advice that positive results are more apt to happen, sooner, for the artist who presents a "saleable unit" of both art work and story line. Ready with both, his first New York appointment resulted in the sale of what became, over a period of two years, this stunning publication.

Mr. Wisniewski's marvelous sense of the ridiculous was evident as he recounted the steps and frustrations on the way to publication: the pruning of the text to match the attention span of the age group to which it is directed; the placement strategy of text and illustration to create a "flow" to the book as a whole; the complexities of bringing art work to completion over a period of two months, involving papers in a spectacular range of colors, and 800 #11 Xacto blades.

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May Meeting (continued) These insights certainly enhance appreciation of the book, which offers, aside from its visual pleasure, a narrative of great action, yet substance, reminiscent of Aesop's Fables. It was an added pleasure to be able to purchase copies, and to have them personally inscribed by the author, during the reception which followed (and lucky the recipient of a gift copy!). It would appear that Mr. Wisniewski has been bitten by the literary bug (would that his ability were contagious!) as he describes new ideas under development; we'll be waiting!

FROM THE EDITORS' CORNER

The Guild of American Papercutters reached its one-year anniversary in May. The achievements of our young organization are to be congratulated: the outstanding exhibition at the Hershey Museum of American Life, the fine programs presented at the Guild meetings, our informative newsletter FIRST CUT/, and new friendships formed with other papercutters.

It is now time to consider reaching others interested in our art form, as well as arousing new curiosity. One suggestion would be to have extra copies of FIRST CUT/ to pass along during shows and exhibitions, as a source of information. Demonstrating and teaching at local schools or adult evening classes will drum up interest. Local library display cases are an excellent means of exhibiting papercuttings along with displaying the tools and materials used to cut paper; it is educational and well suited to libraries.

These are only a few of the many ways we can spread the news. How about you? What can you do to increase knowledge and appreciation of papercutting? Send in your ideas, and we'll share them in the next issue of FIRST CUT/.

-- Ellen Haberlein



TIDBITS

Polish Papercuts Paper Cuts Polish Style is a 100-page book by Lawrence G. Kozlowski offering instructions for cutting traditional Polish wycinanki. Many regional variations are described. Available for \$10.50 postpaid from Polska, 808 Phineas Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15212. Also offered are sets of note cards with traditional wycinanki designs: eight assorted cards for \$3.50 plus postage (\$1.50 plus \$.35 per item).

Mexican Papel Picado While on a business trip to Tucson, your intrepid editor tracked down a source of Mexican papercuts. Their present stock includes:

- o 20" x 30" "Day of the Dead" banner: yellow or orange (different designs) (FO1145) \$6.00
- o 24" x 60" banners: purple "lascalaveras", or green skeletons (FO11620) \$6.00
- o String of 9 20" x 14" Christmas cuttings, various colors (FO9005) \$7.00
- o String of 9 14" x 10" floral cuttings, various colors (FO9005) \$7.00

Include \$2.50 for postage and handing (estimated). Available from: SEIS, 424 North Fourth Ave., Tucson, Arizona 85705, phone 602 622-6454. (They also have exciting Southwestern and Mexican furnishings and folk art.)

Roma Starczewska UNICEF Card UNICEF has published a beautiful new card by Roma Starczewska, "The Awakening." It features a traditional-style black Polish papercutting of trees and woodland animals with a baby in a manger, backed by a stunning burst of rainbow color. UNICEF is distributing the card only in Europe, but Roma has reprinted it for distribution in this country. The cost for a package of ten cards is \$8.50, postpaid, from Roma Starczewska, 518 Paxton Street, Alexandria, VA 22304.

Scherenschnitte Kits Catalog I was told that a 1989 catalog of scherenschnitte kits by Suzanne Schaffhausen is available from Baptism River Crafts, 10448 Partridge St. N.W., Coon Rapids, MN 55433; I haven't seen it yet.

Ombres Chinoises The illustrations in this issue of FIRST CUT/ are taken from a nineteenth century French print of shadow puppets of Paris street merchants. Approximately 16 x 13", it is entitled "OMBRES CHINOISES.--Crieurs des rues.--Marchands ambulants de Paris." It is identified as "No 8." which suggests it may have been part of a series. The bottom margin has the following: "Propriete de l'editeur. (Depose.) Fabrique de PELLERIN, Imprimeur-Libraire, a EPINAL." Shadow puppets, known as ombres Chinoises, ("Chinese shadows") were a great rage in France and throughout Europe during the late nineteenth century.

Classes Tsirl Waletzky taught papercutting at the Yiddish Folk Arts Program "KletzKamp West" in California August 27 through September. David Wisniewski is teaching his course in Cut Paper Illustration this fall at the Montpelier Cultural Arts Center between Washington and Baltimore (for information call 301 953-1993). And Tamar Fishman's fall class on "Papercutting in the Jewish Tradition" offered in Washington by the Smithsonian Resident Associates Program is already filled.

Mail Order The latest Nostalgic Crafts Catalog from Gerlach's offers their usual wide selection of die-cut and laser-cut cuttings, books about papercutting, pattern books, and papercutting supplies. New this year are craft books from Germany with instructions for making "Fensterbilder," the traditional multi-colored 3-dimensional Danish "window pictures." (\$2.25 from Gerlach's of Lecha, P.O. Box 213, Emmaus, PA 18049.) The "Christmas Kaleidoscope" catalog from Papercuttings by Alison just arrived--it's full of pattern books, supplies, prints and cards (404 Partidge Circle, Sarasota, FL 34236).



MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

Black Paper Marcia Guthrie writes from Kelly Corners, New York:

I cut from black paper, and right now I am using something called Fadeless Art Paper. It is satisfactory enough, in that it is thin, opaque, folds well, and is white on the back. But I have been searching for a blacker paper. I have seen the velvety blackness of what I guess is silhouette paper, but the art stores don't know what I'm talking about. If there is anyone who knows how I can find this paper, could he/she let me know? I would be so excited to cut from the real thing.

Send your replies care of FIRST CUT/; we will forward them, and share the information in the next issue.

YES Glue Kerch McConlogue writes:

"YES" glue is, in my experience, by far the most wonderful of all glues to work with. It is unbelievably smooth and extremely tacky. It is water soluble, and dries clear. The manufacturer claims it "will not curl, wrinkle or discolor any material regardless of how thin the stock or how delicate the tint." I have used it to glue foil wrapping paper in large areas with absolutely NO puckering! Having had a great deal of trouble finding this glue, I finally purchased it in bulk from the manufacturer. Therefore, I have a supply of 1 lb. 3 oz. jars (approximately 1 pint) which I will happily share for \$10 each post paid. Please send your checks to Kerch McConlogue, 701 Hunting Place, Baltimore, MD 21229.

REPORT FROM THE SHOW COMMITTEE

Sukey Harris

Prior to the opening of the Hearts and Flowers Show at the Hershey Museum of American Life on February 12, there was a considerable amount of work.

The show committee accepted hand deliveries of cuttings at the Museum on January 28 and 29, and made ornaments for the spiral hearts and flowers tree between deliveries. Saturday, February 4, paper cuttings were unpacked and catalogued for insurance purposes. Judith Beattie set up the antique paper cuttings in the glass case. Arlene France designed and cut the decorative banners for the tops of the cases.

Sandy Gilpin, Tilly Schouten, Sharon Schaich, Arlene and Sukey hung the cuttings -- a tedious task -- taking care to have cuttings level, properly spaced, and artistically arranged by color, size and style.

Sharon provided a VCR interview tape she had done for a television station demonstrating papercutting. The tape was run continuously during the show. She also cut a beautiful border into the paper tablecloth on which the museum provided refreshments the day of the opening. Potted primroses furnished bright splashes of color.

An exhibition catalog featuring each artist exhibitor was provided to each exhibitor and Guild member, and was available to visitors for \$1.00. The catalog contains a brief Guild history, exhibition agenda, photograph of each exhibitor, representative picture of the artist's work, and a short description of cutting materials and methods.

Sukey and Dick Harris videotaped the show preparations, proceedings, and closing; the tape will be made available to members on loan. On the opening date February 12, the Guild provided donuts and the museum the coffee and meeting room for the business meeting of the Guild. Some spouses helped to staple the FIRST CUT/ newsletter which was distributed to all members.

Yael Hoz of Israel, who is currently in the United States researching paper cuttings, showed the catalog of the recent Haifa Papercut Exhibition, of which she was guest curator, and told of her work in researching, cataloging and photographing antique papercuttings in Mexico and the United States.

After the meeting members talked with guests and each other, admired works, autographed catalogs, and shared their enthusiasm for papercutting.

Throughout the show, comments to the museum were very favorable. The Museum Gift Shop stocked many papercutting and silhouette books and supplies for interested visitors.

The Mothers's Day closing was also a high point of the show with internationally known cutter Walter Von Gunten coming from Durham, NC, with many of his "impossibly intricate" papercuttings including a fantastic buttercup and butterfly collage of colored papers.



Helen and Nel Laughon, a delightful mother-daughter team, cut silhouettes for 56 persons using the camera obscura method. Taking not more than two minutes, they put children and adults at ease with friendly conversation while they captured the "black art" likeness of each sitter. Their charming personalities brought to life the story of the profile; their slide presentation was entertaining and educational, and geared for all ages. They autographed copies of their book, August Edouart, A Quaker Album.

The committee plans to meet in the near future to evaluate the show for future reference. For a show to be held again in two years, 1991, work must begin now. If you have comments, ideas, suggestions for a future show or about this show, please send them to Sukey.

THANKS FROM THE HERSHEY MUSEUM Mary Lou "Sukey" Harris, Chair of the Show Committee, received the following letter from the Hershey Museum of American Life:

Dear Mary Lou:

You and the papercutters guild are to be congratulated on the outstanding papercutting show you organized for the museum. It was a tremendous undertaking and your efforts are greatly appreciated. It was a pleasure working with such a talented and nice group of people.

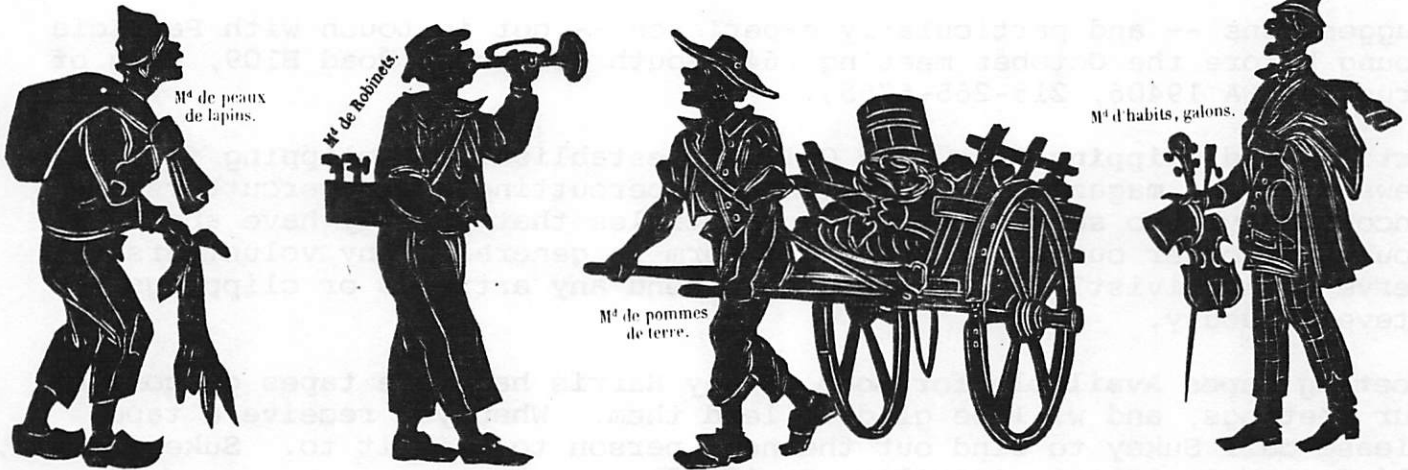
Would you please extend my thanks to the entire guild. Their high-quality work and diverse styles gave museum visitors a wonderful overview of papercutting possibilities and the antique cuttings added an interesting dimension to the contemporary ones.

Hopefully, the exhibit here helped to stimulate interest in the guild and papercutting in general.

With great appreciation,

Tanya Richter
Director of Public Programs





GUILD OF AMERICAN PAPERCUTTERS NEWS ITEMS

FIRST CUT/ Needs You!! The Newsletter is only as informative as you make it. What can you do?

- o Write an article. Write a book review.
- o Design a masthead.
- o Send us news about what you are doing, or papercutting activities you know about. Courses? Shows? Lectures?
- o Write about your ideas for promoting the practice and appreciation of papercutting.

The Guild Needs You Too!! Here are some ways you can help:

- o Offer to plan or host a meeting. Suggest a site.
- o Send ideas for themes or locations of our next Guild show.
- o And don't forget to send your dues for this year.

"Hearts and Flowers" Catalog Copies of the show catalog are available to members; if you want one and haven't received it, get in touch with Kerch McConlogue, our corresponding secretary. Addition copies are available to members and others for \$1.50 postpaid. The catalog has a photo and brief biography of each artist in the show, with a reproduction of one of their works.

The Bookshelf I continue to add to my collection of books about papercutting, and books illustrated in papercutting. In addition to reviews of important new books, **FIRST CUT/** will periodically publish an annotated list of books relating to papercutting. Your suggestions and contributions are welcome. --SRW

Papercutters Guild Logo Members present at the May meeting decided to have a contest to create a logo for the Guild. Details will be announced after the October meeting. In the meantime, be thinking about designing and cutting your entry. It should represent papercutting, and must be reproducible in large and small formats.

Papercutting Calendar The Guild is also looking into publishing a calendar. In order to have it for sale in the summer and fall of 1990, we would need to have it published by next summer. If you have ideas or

suggestions -- and particularly experience -- get in touch with Patricia Young before the October meeting (649 South Henderson Road B109, King of Prussia, PA 19406, 215-265-6755).

Article and Clipping File The Guild is establishing a clipping file of newspaper and magazine articles about papercutting and papercutters. We encourage you to send copies of any articles that you may have about yourself, other cutters, or the art form in general. Any volunteers to serve as archivist? For the present, send any articles or clippings to Steve Woodbury.

Meeting Tapes Available for Loan Sukey Harris has made tapes of some of our meetings, and will be glad to lend them. When you receive a tape, please call Sukey to find out the next person to mail it to. Sukey Harris, 514 East Main Street, Annville, PA 17003.

Tape #1 Presentation at Philadelphia Museum of Jewish American History, including Tsirl Waletzky, Karen Schloss and Ethan Weiner Kaplow.

Tape #2 Hearts and Flowers Show, February 12--May 14, 1989, Hershey, PA. Setup, opening and closing, Helen and Nel Laughon silhouette cutting.

Tape #3 Guild meeting May 20, 1989, Montpelier Art Center, Laurel, MD. David Wisniewski and his book illustrations. Opening and reception for show and David's presentation about his book, The Warrior and the Wiseman.

Officers The following officers were elected at the May meeting to serve for the coming year.

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EXHIBITS AND SHOWS

Ljuskrona Gayle Woods Graham, in Reading, Kansas, sends a clipping from the Emporia Kansas Gazette. "In September the library will exhibit ljuskrona, Swedish candelabra decorated with cut paper. Those wanting information on this folk art before the display arrives will be interested in a forthcoming program at Emporia State University. Greta Swenson, a Lindsborg folklorist, will present a slide-illustrated lecture on ljuskrona. There is also an article in the 4th issue of 1988 of "Kansas!" magazine." Gayle promises to provide further information.

Claire Archer Claire's one-artist show at the Landis Valley Farm Museum, in Lancaster, opened on June 18th, with a reception from 12-5. It ran through the middle of July. Claire also had two pieces accepted for a juried show in Reading, held as part of the Scenic River Days. The show is in the indoor gallery at Reading Community College.

Paul D. Beal Paul, who also designed the masthead for this issue, had a cutting selected in a nationally juried show, "Animal Imagery: New Forms/New Functions," at the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg, Tenn., February 24 -- May 20. The 57 pieces in the show were selected from over 2,200 slides submitted. Paul's cutting, entitled "November's Song," is a forest scene containing bare trees, evergreens, laurel, deer and a wedge of migrating geese. It is a 18" x 30" black cutout on white rag board. Paul writes, "There are many media represented in the show but only one papercutting. I think this is a great boost for me and for papercutting."

Tsirl Waletzky Tsirl had a show in Riverdale, New York during March, and offered a workshop in Judaic Papercutting at the Hebrew Arts School at the Abraham Goodman House in New York in early April.

Carmen Lomas Garza Carmen has published a book about Mexican paper cutting, which is now out of print. She hopes to revise and republish it, but in the meantime, sends news from San Francisco about a couple of shows. In October 1988 she made a Day of the Dead ofrenda at the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum in Chicago which included a cutout measuring 5' x 6'. "I made it in 6 sections so that I could ship it and also hang it directly on the wall without framing or glass. I was very happy with the results." She also recommends the group show of "Hispanic Art in the USA" at the Brooklyn Museum from June 10 to September 4. It includes a few of her paintings, "plus an ofrenda to Frida Kahlo which includes paper cutouts. There is a big color catalog published by Abbeville Press which reproduces all the work in the show including the altar."

LET OTHERS SEE YOUR WORK

FIRST CUT/ would like to share the work being done by Guild members. However, we want to be sure we have your authorization to print it. Please send sharp black-and-white reproductions with a signed note to the effect that "I authorize The Guild of American Papercutters to reproduce the following works in FIRST CUT/: (name and date of each work)." We will include credit and a copyright notice.

DUTCH PAPER CUTTING PEN PAL

Dear Readers,

In the magazine of our Dutch Papercut Association, I read about your exhibition.

As I am a papercutter myself, I'm very interested in what is made in other countries, especially in a country so far away from ours. I feel sorry it's too far away to pay a visit!

The reason I write to you is this: I should be very glad to get a contact in your Papercut Guild to hear about the way of cutting in your country, about special techniques, etc. Perhaps one of your members is interested?

I am 55 years old (married woman), and have been cutting for about 2 years now. I'm not a great cutter; a lot of our members are better cutters! But I like to do it. Usually I make small things (never big work until now) often for special occasions such as birth, wedding, birthday, etc. I use black paper, but mostly the colored papers that are used for origami.

I will close now. I really do hope one of your members is interested!

With my best wishes,

Yoke Reisiger - de Vries
Kano Straat 7
1784 S P Den Helder
the Netherlands



FALL MEETING -- OCTOBER 14

The Fall meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter will be held on Saturday, October 14, 1:30 to 3:30 pm at the Schwenkfelder Library, 1 Seminary Street, Pennsburg, Pennsylvania. Yael Hoz enthusiastically recommended that we meet there, and made preliminary arrangements before she returned to Israel in August. The Library has an extensive collection of Pennsylvania-German fractur, including many scherenschnitte which will be on display.

Pennsburg is located north of Philadelphia in Bucks County, off the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Take the Quakertown Exit, and go west on Route 663 about 5 miles to Pennsburg. Continue through the light at 663 and 29, and bear right to follow Fourth Street. Continue 2 blocks, then bear right on Seminary Street. The library is on the left after two blocks.

Personalize your Presence

Those attending the May meeting of the Guild of American Papercutters were provided with 3" x 4" pin-on plastic name badges to personalize for the next meeting. If you weren't there, that's fine too. Design a badge on a 3" x 4" card, with your name and a papercutting to represent the style of your work, and bring it to the fall meeting. With so many imaginative and artistic members, our fall meeting will have an added dimension of expectancy and fun. (But if you don't get your nametag cut, come to the fall meeting anyway, and finish it before the winter meeting.)

FIRST CUT/

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FIRST CLASS

- o Fall Meeting: October 14, Schwenkfelder Library, Pennsburg, PA
- o Renew Your Membership Now

