**Upcoming Exhibitions at The Art Studio**

**March**
- "Love of Labor: Art of Craft" by Fu Chia-Wen Lien
  - Opening: March 5

**April**
- TASIMJAE (The Art Studio, Inc. Member Juried Art Exhibition)
  - Opening: April 2

**Become a Member of The Art Studio**

Membership in The Art Studio, Inc. provides artist-access to all exhibitions and one year of ISSUE, the monthly art magazine of The Art Studio. It also gives free eligibility for members to enter the annual membership art exhibitions (TASIMJAE) and participate in various exhibitions throughout the year.

Membership**

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<th>Suggested Membership Amount</th>
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<td>Friend/Business: $100 Benefactor</td>
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Sign up for E-News: Visit MC Area Den.

**End Date**

**Day Phone**

**Day E-mail**

**How did you hear about the Beaux Arts Ball?**

**Please mark:**

- [ ] Renewal
- [ ] New

If yes, from what magazine or website?

**See VIEW on page 15**
IMAGINARIUM WRAP

By Beth Galaspy

A magical imagination of whimsy and wonder awaited those lucky enough to attend The Art Studio Inc.’s 2011 Beaux Arts Ball on Jan. 22 at the American Legion Hall, Post 33, in downtown Beaumont. The ball committee, led by Christopher Flannery and Trisha Faye Duhe, transformed the hall into a feast for the eyes fitting of the theme, “Imaginarium of whimsy and wonder.”

Welcome to the Imaginarium. Guests entered through a mysterious capes, enormous wigs that Marie Antoinette would envy, black swans, white swans, butterflies, feathers and tuxedos rivaling the décor of the room — masked men in fire dancing, belly dancing and just dance-dance-danced lions, fezzes, googly eyes, and, of course, tuxes and tuxedo tails. Revelers embraced the theme with eye-popping costumes.

Most importantly, the Beaux Arts Ball raised money to support the programs of The Art Studio, a non-profit that relies on memberships, donations and fund-raising events like the ball for survival. Final tallies were not available at press time.

Underwriters provided donations to help cover costs including the venue, band, sound equipment and printing. Contributions made the 2011 Beaux Arts Ball a success. Additional donations to help cover costs including the venue, band, sound equipment and printing. Businesses and individuals donated delicious treats for guests and unique items for the unforgettable silent auction.

Please let these individuals and businesses know how much you appreciate their support of The Art Studio Inc.

Regina Rogers, in memory of Torchy
Christina Delgadillo and Josh Crawford
Stacey Weaver
Jane Roberts
Tolunay Wong Engineers Inc.
Cynthia Fontenot
Katharine & Co.
Seafood Lover
Jerusalem Café
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Elizabeth Fontenot
Trish Coughlan
Andy Coughlan
Elizabeth Pearson
Elizabeth Fontenot
Tessa Carmichael
Jeff Buford
Melissa Redden
Tolanay Wong Engineers Inc.
Jodie Leigh

CALL FOR ENTRIES

DEADLINE MARCH 26

TASIM A E

The Art Studio Inc. Members' Juried Art Exhibit

CRITERIA

Entry dates .......................................March 22-26
Jury selection .........................................March 27
Notification by mail..............................March 31
Opening/awards reception....April 2, 7-10 p.m. Pick up exhibited work.........................May 3-5.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all members in good standing of The Art Studio, Inc. (TASI). Membership fee of $35 may be paid at time of entry. Works completed within the last two years that have not previously been shown at TASI may be submitted. All two dimensional work must be ready to hang (wires, not sawtooths). All three dimensional work must have firm base. Work may not exceed two hundred pounds in weight or 10 feet in height. Completed entry label must be firmly attached to the back upper left corner of 2-D work or base of 3-D work.

SUBLMISSIONS

Entries must be delivered to TASI, 720 Franklin, Beaumont, TX, M-F between the hours of 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. No works will be accepted after 4 p.m. on March 26. Deliveries by bus not accepted. Works must be shipped prepaid and/or hand delivered. Limit two (2) entries per person.

RETURN OF ALL ENTRIES

Work not accepted must be picked up by 4 p.m. on April 1. Works selected for exhibition must remain on display until April 30 and be picked up by May 3.

AGREEMENT

Although the greatest possible care will be exercised in handling work, TASI accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to work submitted, while in transit or on premises. TASI reserves the right to photograph submitted works for publicity purposes. Submission of entries implies the artist’s understanding and agreement to the rules and conditions of the exhibition.

AWARDS

1st place: ... A solo exhibition at TASI, May 2012 2nd place $75, 3rd place $50

JUROR

Jeff Buford
Ceramics Department Chair
Gonzales School of Art

Volume 17, No. 6 March 2011

Volume 17, No. 6
Drawing mid-air with molten glass

JENINE BRESSNER’S “INVERTED HARMONY” AT THE HOUSTON CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY CRAFT

“I aim to make things that reflect my respect and awe for the natural world, my quiet sadness for the uncertain future, and the paradox of humans trying to control and recreate nature itself in artwork that can only strive to be as beautiful as authentic life.”

Jenine Bressner artist’s statement

Commentary by Elena Ivanova

LAYOFFS AT THE HOUSTON CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY CRAFT were packed beyond capacity on Saturday night of Jan. 22. The organizers of the screening of Faythe Levine’s film ‘Handmade Nation’ had grossly underestimated the interest in contemporary craft among Houstonians and their neighbors. The prudent early-comers had the luxury of watching the film seated, while the fashionably late-comers squatted in the aisles and along the walls.

Author, artist and curator Faythe Levine traveled to fifteen cities around the country and interviewed forty-four practitioners of the branch of contemporary art known as “indie” (“independent craft”) and DIY (do it yourself.) In the introduction to the book of the same name, which preceded the making of the film, director and screenwriter Andrew Wagner summed up the essence of this anti-mass production movement in the following way: “Making your own clothes, your own dinnerware, your own art has become a way to polity (or maybe not so politely) give “the man” the middle finger, for lack of a better term.”

The film showcases a diverse array of items, from jewelry to house decor, many of which were mind-boggling and out-of-this-world. I caught myself thinking of haute-couture shows, although these two areas of contemporary culture could not be more different from each other in both spirit and purpose. I had the recurrent thought, “I could never wear this!” flashing through my mind.

It is quite logical to mentally “try on” clothes or jewelry featured in a fashion or art show. After all, it is called “wearable art.” However, I think that in this name the word “art” is of prime importance and “wearable” is secondary to it. It does not matter if I personally like to have a certain item in my wardrobe. If it is a work of art, it should be assessed with the same criteria as we apply to other works of art, such as a painting or a sculpture.

But what are these criteria? We are much more comfortable talking about formal and conceptual elements in reference to traditional art. However, when it comes to contemporary art, we often find ourselves at a loss. And then there are nagging questions about art versus craft, as eternal as “to be or not to be.” Is this art or craft? Do art and craft have equal standing? Does craft apply only to handmade objects or machine-made as well?

But what are these criteria? We are much more comfortable talking about formal and conceptual elements in reference to traditional art. However, when it comes to contemporary art, we often find ourselves at a loss. And then there are nagging questions about art versus craft, as eternal as “to be or not to be.” Is this art or craft? Do art and craft have equal standing? Does craft apply only to handmade objects or machine-made as well?

Still pondering these and many other questions, I joined the crew at the Center for Contemporary Craft for the second feature of the evening, a talk by one of the artists interviewed in the film, Jenine Bressner. Her installation, “Inverted Harmony,” is one of the Center’s current exhibitions. Her medium of choice is glass and she holds a B.F.A. from Rhode Island School of Design. In 2010, she graduated from Fab Academy, a pilot program taught via international videoconference from MIT and the Institute for Advanced Architecture in Catalonia.

In the film, we see Jenine Bressner working on glass beads in her studio. I have to confess that I was so fascinated by the glass-dox of humans trying to control and recreate nature itself in artwork that can only strive to be as beautiful as authentic life.”

Jenine Bressner artist’s statement

MANY PEOPLE MAY BELIEVE that in order to see quality art one must visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Prado in Madrid, the Louvre in Paris or the Tate Gallery in London. Sure, they’ve got some nice stuff. But don’t sell Southeast Texas short. Whether you are looking for Cubism, Surrealism, Fauvism, Abstract Expressionism, or any of the myriad items that make up history of 20th-century art, there’s a Southeast Texas artist who was it — often the same artist was exploring the major movements as they came along.

Don’t believe me? A quick trip to the Art Museum of Southeast Texas is all the proof you need. The exhibition “Southeast Texas Art: Cross-Currents and Influences, 1925-1965,” features nearly 200 works by local artists and covers the entire spectrum of 20th-century art.

Several works by Manuela Carron demonstrate the depth of understanding of the major art movements of the century. Next to the front entrance is “Magic Script #1,” which mirrors Kandinsky in its fluid composition. Across the gallery, Carron’s “Lavender Blue” features pre-drip Jackson Pollock with early Pol Mouton. Below it is a Paul Klee-inspired piece of whimsy, “Unified (Caricature)” by Merle Cox. Carron is also well represented by “Renaissance,” a beautiful watercolor that has undertones of Bomann and Schiele, a beautiful hybrid that is referential yet still completely its own.

Everywhere one turns, one’s senses are assaulted by a variety of diverse artworks hung salon style. One could argue that there are almost too many, but the sheer scope of the exhibition makes up for being slightly overwhelming. Besides, it will force the visitor to make frequent trips — there is no way to take it all in otherwise.

Local artist and mentor Herman Hugg has a strong presence in the room, both with his own work and with the works he owns. The wood-sculpture hybrid “The Memory” by Herring Cox being a particular standout for its workman- ship. Hugg is represented by several sculptures incorporating found objects and wood, as well as several paintings, most notably “Folhoids,” an expressionist piece from 1947, which he is proud to say once hung on the same wall as work by Max Ernst. It is one degree of separation from one of the giants of modern art.

David and Patricia Campell, two stalwarts of the Southeast Texas art scene are well repre- sented. Danil’s impressive sculpture, “Abstract,” is a modern twist on the primitive fetishes. Patricia shows the influence of cubism in the area with “Unified (Cubist Woman),” a piece

See REVIEW on page 14

See BRESSNER on page 11

AMSET ‘CROSS-CURRENTS’ EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS SETX ARTISTS

Review by Andy Coughlan

THE MEMORY, by Herrimg Cox, is one of the almost 200 works by Southeast Texas artists on display at AMSET through April 13.
The pieces are deceptively simple. Clean, smooth lines merge into a symphony of textures often accentuated by common objects: a leaf, some spoons, bits of paper and white buttons. Most of Fu Chia-Wen Lien's projects are boxed neatly in frames, ready to line up in polite rows along the gallery's white-washed walls. But her collection's precise craftsmanship and clever, biting titles dispel the aura of innocence and draw the viewers in by its intricate structures. Her pieces also explore the unedited view of feminist philosophies by challenging socially-accepted conventions and subtly questioning gender roles with simple wording.

"I try to make them meaningful, rather than just self-expression, to have something that most people can relate to. I want my work to reflect the experiences and processes of daily life," Lien, a native of Taiwan, said during a recent phone interview.

She will reveal her latest experiences with the greater Beaumont area during her show, "Love of Labor. Art of Craft," at The Art Studio, Inc. in Beaumont, March 5–26. A free reception will kick off opening night from 7-10 p.m.

Lien has great hopes for the collection, which will feature a variety of mixed-media craft projects. Lest any confusion result, the artist herself defines her artistic endeavors as "crafts." The former Southeast Texas resident said that she hopes to shine light on the little-hailed art of crafting.

"It would be the same endeavor for pursuing decoration, handicraft... bringing life to the experiences as a woman and human being."

The "Orange Peel" series underlines her efforts to remain close to home by the use of organic material, which Lien shapes into imaginative designs through free association and the use of natural shapes and textures.

She also celebrates the complexity of the collage-cutting process through the works "Four Seasons" and "Bird Flower Painting," in which Lien reconciles her traditional Asian poetry and motif background with the pop of Western art.

As she established herself in the academic world, Lien refrained from publishing her art until the early 1990s, when she decided to spearhead her first one-woman show in the Space II gallery in Taipei, Taiwan.

"I had a great breakthrough for starting the method-collage with found objects and paper-cutting. The combination of the feminist sensibility with the 1950s love of decoration and material seems somewhat of an oxymoron. But Lien argues against that rigid stance."

"In this I incorporated more of the craftsman- ship, the arts-and-crafts approach to art. There was a time when that type of art was frowned on by the critics, but since the women's liberation and artistic movement in the 1970s, you see a lot of that type of stuff — knitting, beading, kitchen tools, etc. — being used as a more common type of media," she said.

Lien usually employs objects she finds around the house, collecting them until she finds a source of inspiration.

"I think that one day all things are destined to become art, or form art. Like ribs," laughed Lien.

One of her strongest titles, "Is Woman Just A Rib Of Adam?" consists of a vaguely diorama-like setting in a red rice steamer; vinyl doll busts that in the midst of circling rib slices, their detached arms upraised in a synchronized, questioning manner. Lien said the "Rib" piece is the summation of her progression in art development.

"I tried to address different perspectives and symbolism with the 'Rib' work. For instance, the ribs obviously refer to the Christian story of Adam and Eve; they also symbolize strength and last forever. Also, it alludes to the fact that most of the major religions are male-oriented and male-dominated, and how it affects a woman's standing socially and morally, according to their standards."
BRESSNER from page 6

making process that I probably missed a few things in her interview. Bressner uses the old Italian technique known as millefiori, which originated in Murano about a thousand years ago. The method is based on working with long rolls of glass, which are repeatedly heated and cooled. While hot, the rod is layered with color, then cooled and layered again with a new color. When sliced in cross-section, the glass has the appearance of “thousand flowers,” or, in Italian, “mille fiori.” The technique also is known as lampworking since it involves melting glass rods with a gas-heated torch.

“The process of lampwork, torchwork or flame- work is analogous to drawing molten metal and glass, in three dimensions,” says Jenine on her website.

In her gallery talk at the Center, Bressner told the audience how she got involved in this particular glass-making method. Apparently, she saw samples of Murano glass in a boutique and was instantly taken by the bright colors and intricate patterns which reminded her of the sea world. She struck up a conversation with the boutique owner and at some point exclaimed, “One day I will make glass beads like those!” The boutique owner’s reaction was dismissive and condescending, which only fueled the young artist’s desire to master the ancient Murano technique.

Bressner encourages anyone interested in learning the secrets of Italian glass-makers to explore it firsthand. “I taught myself how to flame-work with a kit I ordered in the mail more than a decade ago.”

Sunland Glass offers a bare bones beginning kit for $374. I began with a kit similar to this, and Candy Jenkins’ book, “Making Glass Beads.”

During the talk, and also in the film, Bressner was wearing an amazing necklace which she made herself with millifiori glass beads. “This is a continuous project,” she explained. “I add new beads all the time and this necklace has been growing bigger ever since.”

Like other artists featured in the film, Bressner is avoiding traditional methods of art. However, the installation “Inverted Harmony” brings together some of them. “It is a philosophical statement, an expression of the artist’s vision of modern life and human civilization in general.”

Viewers are confronted with two scenarios, which may be called the Earth models, albeit flat. Displayed in a darkened room, each one is illuminated with a separate set of lights, which give an impression of an insular environment. In the first, the artist’s hand is placed on the ground. The dark green Earth, — a platform suspended from the ceiling — is hovering over the sky exemplified in the glass. From above, the clouds cascade down as if trying to touch the clouds. These chandelier flowers provide the starting contrast to their bleak environment Made of various fabrics, with hand-crafted glass centers, and suspended from the “Earth” platform by long threads, they burst with an endless variety of colors: red, pink, fuchsia, blue, violet, lilac and orange.

In the second model, the world has returned to its “normal” state with the sky above and the Earth below. The rain in the form of sparkling glass rods is pouring down upon the land which is blossoming with flowers and plants of unimaginable colors and shapes, all made of hand-cut glass. Some flowers look like pansies, violets, daisies, hyacinths and water-lilies, others show imagination. The landscape also features green patches of grass and brown patches of soil that meander across the sand-color terrain.

Unlike the first model, in which all textiles are synthetic, this one incorporates only natural fibers and organic materials, such as natural silk and felt. “Our impact on the natural world is currently disruptive and unhallowing in unprecedented ways,” says Jenine in her statement. “We are turning the world upside-down, but I believe in the resilience of nature — sans humans. If plants can break through pavement, nature can eventually resolve much of the damage for which we have been responsible.”

Looking at the “Inverted Harmony” installation, I thought of the irrelevancy of arguing about the distinctions between art and craft, handmade and machine-made, tradition and innovation in reference to Bressner’s work. Before my eyes was a perfect example of a harmonious union between these theoretically opposite notions. The handmade flowers, with their fabric petals and glass beads, happily coexisted with laser-cut textiles shaped as meandering pathways. Could the same shape be cut out by hand? “The laser cutter saved me a lot of time. Besides, it would have been impossible to achieve the same level of accuracy,” says Jenine in response to a question from the audience.

And why not use modern technology? As curator of the exhibition Amma Walker notes, “The computer has evolved to become a tool for the contemporary craftsman.” Artists have never shied away from using new and advanced technology, particularly if it saved the time previously spent on tedious, mechanical labor and allowed more time for creative exploration. Think how the camera has revolutionized the painting process in the nineteenth century. Today it’s the digital laser cutter.

In 2006, Jenine Bressner was featured in the Bulletin Biaruee Boston preview of the annual craft and art fair in response to the question what historic examples she would like to see shopping at her table, she said, “It’d be cool if Buckminster Fuller came over and wanted to talk about glass and structural integrity.”

I think that the creator of the geodesic dome, whose name has become synonymous with bold innovation in modern art, would have appreciated the union of art and technology in Bressner’s “Inverted Harmony.”

“Inverted Harmony: A Handmade Environment by Jenine Bressner” is on view at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft through March 13. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft is a nonprofit arts organization, founded to advance education about the process, product and history of craft. Located in the Museum District at 4604 Main Street, HCCC is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sunday Noon-5 p.m. Admission is free.

Elena Ivanova is chief editor of the Sixth Studio of Art in Orange.

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY By Fu Chia Wen Lim. Beine is one of her orange petal figurines.

The heavy influences of Dadaism and a post-struc- turalist view of gender and sexual and political equality in her work echo of third-wave feminist theory, which tries to strip away accepted ‘feminine labels.’

Lien takes her students to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, during her tenure at Lamar University. I am trying to make people stop and think about what we consider “normal.”

Lien, an assistant professor in Art History,Global Arts and Architecture at Lamar University in New Orleans, mentions to the dear themes as a purely political ideology and instruc view her creations with a critical eye.

The term ‘genius’ takes on a slanted perspective, particularly when it comes to art: it is politically and socially gen-

...her work “Inverted Harmony” installation...

...she said, “It’d also be cool if Buckminster Fuller came over and wanted to talk about glass and structural integrity.”

...I think that the creator of the geodesic dome, whose name has become synonymous...
Andrew Coughlan

You can’t spell heroin without hero.

Welcome to my numb slice of paradise.

But no she is a rock of white trash crack.

Oh if she were a beer and not sweet smack.

I’d find God and A.A. She’d still be mine.

The good night bids goodnight to me,

while I sleep in my dreams

With shoulders dimly slumped.

The good night bids goodnight to me,

I’d find God and A.A. She’d still be mine.

The good night bids goodnight to me,

I’d find God and A.A. She’d still be mine.

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The good night bids goodnight to me,
When you support The Art Studio with your membership, you receive ISSUE, Southeast Texas' and Southwest Louisiana's alternative press as well as class schedules, invitations to opening receptions and various Studio functions.

Volunteers

These people are the life blood of our organization. WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

To volunteer, drop by The Art Studio, Inc., or call 409-838-5393.

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JOIN US
FOR ART OPENINGS ON THE FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

THIS MONTH:
LOVE OF LABOR.
ART OF CRAFT
FU LIEN’S MIX MEDIA

MARCH 5
GALLERY RECEPTION IS 7-10 P.M.