



Houston Metal Arts Guild Newsletter

Winter 2025

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Letter from the President



HMAG President Jessica Jacobi.

Hello friends!

Happy New Year Members! 2024 was a busy year for the Houston Metal Arts Guild and 2025 is shaping up to be an exciting one too. Since the last newsletter we had a Member Meetup exploring TXRX Labs, we went behind the scenes at the MFAH to view the Helen Williams Drutt Collection of contemporary jewelry, we hosted a fantastic Share and Tell Program, we toured Serenity Knives, we were wowed by Adam Whitney’s artist talk, and just recently had a Member Meetup to visit Adam’s studio.

We enjoyed two workshops taught by Cathy Prieto-Smith on flex shaft attachments and on creating statement rings with hollow construction. HMAG also awarded René

Houston Metal Arts Guild
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Henry the 8th Membership Development Grant sponsored by Charisma Design!

We look forward to keeping the momentum going by several spring programs and workshops. HMAG members and volunteers will be helping educate and engage the public about metal arts at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft's event on March 1st, where we will be helping people make hammered copper bracelets at Craft Community Day. Registration is currently open for HMAG's next workshop: Spoon Fabrication with Corey Ackelmire on March 22-23.

Another March program will be a tour and social hour at Britt Caffarena's jewelry store, Better Bling Studio. Later in the spring we will host our next Share and Tell program, where you can catch up on what your colleagues are working on and get feedback on your own works too.

We will host our Annual Meeting on April 12th, along with a party to celebrate our members and cultivate new metalsmiths in our community. At the end of the spring, we will offer a workshop on chain making taught by René Henry, along with an artist talk!

Serving as president of HMAG is so important and rewarding to me, due in no small part to the dedication of the Board of Directors. We strive to create opportunities and experiences that will enhance our community, and we always want to hear from you! As I've foretold, we have a lot of activities planned, and we can't wait to see you there!

Jessica Jacobi

HMAG President



Asher: Past, Present, and Future

HMAG talks to Kerrisa Treanor, Retail + Sales Coordinator at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft.

By Christine Sigman

The **Houston Center for Contemporary Craft** (HCCC) was founded in 2001, and since its early years, it has included a shop. For many years, this shop, known as **Asher Gallery**, was set up in the room behind the reception area. Pre-pandemic, Asher Gallery was shuttered and its location converted to expand exhibition space. For a while, retail was mostly on hold at HCCC, and during the pandemic, with visitors staying home and many shops and other businesses closing, relaunching was not a top priority.

However, retail was never completely off the table, and in 2021, HCCC began to host regular pop-up shop events. This revival expanded over time and in its current iteration, **Asher: Off the Wall**, relaunched last summer. Asher: Off the Wall comprises dedicated retail space across the hall from the old gallery, regular pop-ups and special events, and its own Instagram account ([@crafthoustonstore](https://www.instagram.com/crafthoustonstore)) with an associated online shop.

HMAG recently toured the shop with **Kerrisa Treanor**, who manages Asher: Off the Wall in her role as Retail + Sales Coordinator at HCCC. We talked about the shop and its offerings, the role of retail within a museum or cultural center, and what the future might hold for Asher: Off the Wall. Treanor, with a background that includes marketing and social media, specialty retail, and her own maker practice, seems well-placed to move this community resource forward.



Kerissa Treanor, Retail + Sales Coordinator at HCCC.

HMAG: Starting with a philosophical question, in your view, what is the role of a shop within the context of a larger cultural institution like the Craft Center?

KT: This is something that I think about a lot—our intention. Museum shops add value to the visitor experience, but our mission is to do more than that. Asher: Off the Wall was built to support the durability of the craft community. It's designed to give artists a space to sell their work and a platform to showcase their craft and voice.

HMAG: What is your process for stocking artists? Do they reach out to you, or do you identify and contact prospects? Do you attend wholesale shows?

KT: Currently, we are accepting work on consignment only, as this is a revival project. As thought leaders in craft, we're very strategic about artists we select. I use a mission framework to ensure diversity in artists, culture, and media, while also serving all segments of our audience. It involves a lot of decision making and there are many boxes to check.

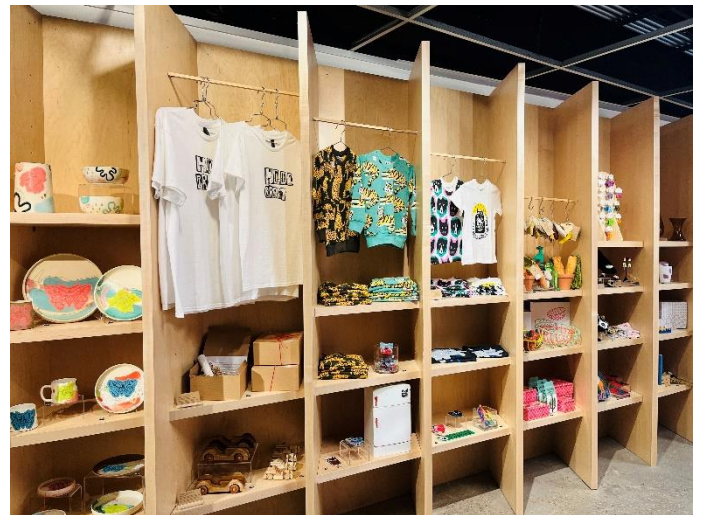
Seasonal collections or pop-ups are by invitation only. However, artists are welcome to submit a catalog or line sheet to me at retail@craftthouston.org to inquire about being a six-month consignment partner. We want to extend the invitation to as many artists as possible.

HMAG: Asher: Off the Wall seems to stock a mix of local and national artists. Is there a particular focus?

KT: I honestly try to strike a balance between both Houston-based and national artists. We also focus on supporting our vibrant community of resident artist alumni, who are spread across the country.

HMAG: It seems to me that figuring out pricing must be challenging! Do you aim to keep merchandise within a particular price range?

KT: I love trying to learn what our visitors' buying behaviors are, but finding the sweet spot for price points is definitely a moving target! (While there are more expensive items), I have found that the \$30-\$90 range makes fine craft more accessible. We want everyone to have craft in their everyday lives.



Versatile lenticular shelving maximizes space and flexibility at Asher: Off the Wall.

HMAG: Do you update merchandise seasonally or on a rotating basis?

KT: I love showing seasonality in our inventory. I also go with the flow of the Craft Center's programming and exhibitions. Incidentally, it takes a full day to change out the merchandise in the shop!

HMAG: Does the Craft Center offer any branded merchandise for sale?

KT: Yes, however we work towards primarily stocking things that are handcrafted, whenever possible. Currently, we have limited-edition HCCC t-shirts, hand-drawn by current resident artist **Jamie Sterling Pitt**, in his distinctive illustration style, and last summer, then-exhibiting artist **Georgina Treviño** collaborated with our Curator + Exhibitions Director **Sarah Darro** to produce limited-edition tees as well. We also have take-home craft kits that were put together by our Education team.



A detailed view of the varied merchandise at Asher: Off the Wall.

HMAG: Finally, what's next for Asher: Off the Wall? Do you have any plans to expand, or broaden your offerings or events, or even go online?

KT: We launched our Instagram shop last summer and there are plans to launch a shop on our website, after testing our IG shop. An expansion is in the works as well. We are meeting with designers to extend our beautiful

lenticular (angled) shelving, and it promises to be equally stunning. Stay tuned!

HMAG: Thanks, Kerrisa!

HCCC's latest pop-up, with a theme of Valentine's Day, roses, and repurposing, is on view through February 15, 2025.

Recent Program Recap

HMAG continues to offer in-person and online opportunities for members to connect, learn, and be inspired. If you have any ideas for upcoming programs, please send them to HMAGProg@gmail.com, and we'll do our best to arrange them.

Member Meetup at TXRX Labs

On August 2, several HMAG members got together at **TXRX Labs** for their Friday Open House. On every first Friday of the month, TXRX Labs hosts an informal Open House gathering where the creative community can make, meet, collaborate, learn, and share ideas. The group toured what is Texas's largest makerspace, and members were especially impressed by the jewelry and metals lab. The HMAG group also learned about TXRX classes, workshops, and membership opportunities.



Jewelry lab at TXRX.

The Helen Williams Drutt Collection: Behind the Scenes at the MFAH

On September 13, a capacity group of HMAG members met at the MFAH's offsite conservation site for a private viewing of selections from the **Helen Williams Drutt Collection of Contemporary Studio Jewelry**, led by MFAH curators **Cindi Strauss** and **Elizabeth Essner**.



Curator sharing the details of a Claus Bury ring from the Drutt collection.

The curators displayed a variety of works not currently on view at the museum, and seeing the range of items set out for us, the group got a sense of the size and scope of the Drutt collection, widely regarded as the most important collection of its kind anywhere. (The Museum's total jewelry collection consists of approximately 11,000 pieces, only a small fraction of which can be displayed at any one time.)

Paralleling the astonishing works, the expertise and insights that Cindi and Elizabeth shared greatly enriched the experience, and all participants left feeling that they had taken part in something special.



HMAG members at the Drutt collection presentation.

Member Share and Tell

On October 19, HMAG hosted the latest in an ongoing series of **Member Share and Tell** sessions at **Charisma Design Studios** in the East End. These popular informal events give members a chance to show and talk about their work and get a glimpse of what other members are working on. Participants enjoyed the chance to connect with other members over ideas and processes.



Member Stacey Johnson at the latest Share and Tell.

Visit to Serenity Knives

On October 26, close to a dozen HMAG members and their friends enjoyed a tour of **Serenity Knives**. Tucked into a pleasant residential street in the Heights, the shop is small but extremely efficient. Serenity Knives are custom knife makers who also do knife and edged tool sharpening and knife restorations. They do absolutely everything by hand in their shop.

Proprietor **Russell Montgomery**, who started the business in 2010, was very informative and gracious, and the HMAG group had a great time!



Lively interactions at Serenity Knives.

Raising and Chasing with Adam Whitney

On January 11, metalsmith, sculptor, and current **Houston Center for Contemporary Craft** Resident Artist **Adam Whitney** treated a group of about 20 HMAG members and their friends to a fascinating presentation on his technical processes for raising and chasing an intricate sculptural vessel. His presentation walked the audience through the complete creation process of the piece *Sea Monster Stirrup Cup 005*.



Adam Whitney in an image from his presentation.

Through video, the audience followed Adam through 28 rounds of manipulation as, over the course of about four weeks, he transformed a disc of fine silver into a multidimensional sculptural cup, using a wide array of hammers, mallets, stakes, and stumps. Throughout his narration, he shared tips on everything from metal selection to heat fusion gilding to ergonomics.



Adam Whitney chasing on a pitch pot.

Following his presentation, Adam generously answered several questions from the audience, demonstrating his commitment to educating and sharing information.

Member Meetup: Studio Visit with Adam Whitney

On February 1, **Adam Whitney's** successful presentation was followed up with a visit to his studio at the **Houston**

Center for Contemporary Craft. A group of HMAG members and friends had the opportunity to check out his creative setup and tools and talk with the artist. In addition to discussing his creative process, Adam also spoke frankly about the challenges and rewards of the artist's life.



HMAG visits Adam Whitney's studio.

Note: If you missed this visit, bear in mind that Adam will be in Houston through February. The public is welcome to visit his studio on Saturdays, when he will always be present. He is there most of the time during the week as well.



Recent Workshop Recap

HMAG continues to offer local workshops to help members extend their skills. If you have any ideas for future workshops, please submit them to HMAGWkshp@gmail.com.

Workshop: Big Bling! Creating and Embellishing Hollow-form Rings with Cathy Prieto-Smith

On November 2, an enthusiastic group of students met at Charisma Design Studios for Cathy Prieto-Smith's

project-based workshop on creating and embellishing hollow-form rings.

Although the course was intensive, participants say that it flew by as they learned how to transform a relatively small amount of sheet metal into a volumetric yet lightweight ring with presence and impact. Techniques covered included cutting, stamping, texturizing, piercing, forming, and soldering sterling silver sheet.

Later, following their own tastes and designs, class members had the opportunity to customize and embellish this generously-sized canvas through texturing, adding stones, and so on. By the end of the workshop, several students had permanently lost their fear of making big rings and were eager to move on from dainty little stacks.



Big Bling workshop in progress.

Workshop: Beyond the Drill Bit: Flex Shaft Attachments with Cathy Prieto-Smith

On September 21, Cathy Prieto-Smith of Charisma Design Studios presented a one-day workshop exploring the often-untapped potential of the flex shaft and its wide range of attachments. As Cathy put it, "Most of us regularly use our flex shafts for drilling and grinding metal, but they can do so much more!" In fact, as Cathy demonstrated, the wide range of mark-making,

hammering, cutting, polishing and other attachments can improve your work and streamline your workflow.



Unlocking the potential of the flex shaft.

The workshop began with an overview of the basics of burs, bits, and abrasives, then dove into an array of other uses like cutting prongs, setting stones, and using the flex shaft as a lathe. After hands-on activities including tube setting 4mm stones, creating a lathed bead, creating texture with cut-off wheels, and more, participants had the option to create earrings, set more stones, and begin designing new masterpieces using their newfound knowledge.

Upcoming Programs

This section lists programs coming up in the next few months. As more programs are added, HMAG will publish them via eBlasts and social media.

HMAG at Craft Community Day

Saturday, March 1 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm.

(Held at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main Street, Houston.)

Come out and see HMAG at this large-scale, popular public event, where numerous Houston-area craft guilds demonstrate their skills and interests. This year HMAG will be sharing a bracelet-making project with the public, and would welcome the participation of additional member volunteers. If you're interested, please contact Jessica at HMAGPres@gmail.com.

Tour and Social Hour with Britt Caffarena at Better Bling Studio

Saturday, March 29, 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

(Held at Better Bling Studio, 2813 N Main St. Stafford, TX 77477.)



Better Bling owner Britt Caffarena.

Join HMAG for a detailed tour of **Better Bling, Britt Caffarena's** jewelry studio, shop, and gallery, and learn more about how running your own jewelry studio works. Britt will also host us for a social hour on her fabulous patio.

Member Appreciation and Cultivation Party and Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 12 (location and time TBD)

Save the date for HMAG's annual **Member Appreciation and Cultivation Party**. After a brief **Annual Meeting** presentation, including the results of the upcoming Board Elections, the party will take off, with food, drink, games, and festivities.

Full details will be provided via eBlasts.

Share and Tell

Saturday, May 3 (location and time TBD)

Join fellow HMAG members for the next in our popular series of Share and Tell sessions, where members mingle to share and critique one another's work in a friendly, supportive environment.

On the Horizon

Coming up this spring/summer but not yet scheduled are a planned artist's talk and an external visit. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Upcoming Workshops

This section lists workshops coming up in the next few months. As more workshops are added, HMAG will publish them via eBlasts and social media.

Introduction to Chasing and Repoussé with Adam Whitney

Friday, February 14 from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm

(Sponsored by the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft and held at the Glassell School of Art.) In this workshop, participants will learn to use essential tools and techniques to create low-to-medium relief designs at a jewelry scale. Adam will discuss how he applies these same techniques on raised vessels to create his unique work.



Chasing tools.

The course is appropriate for any student who understands metalworking fundamentals and is

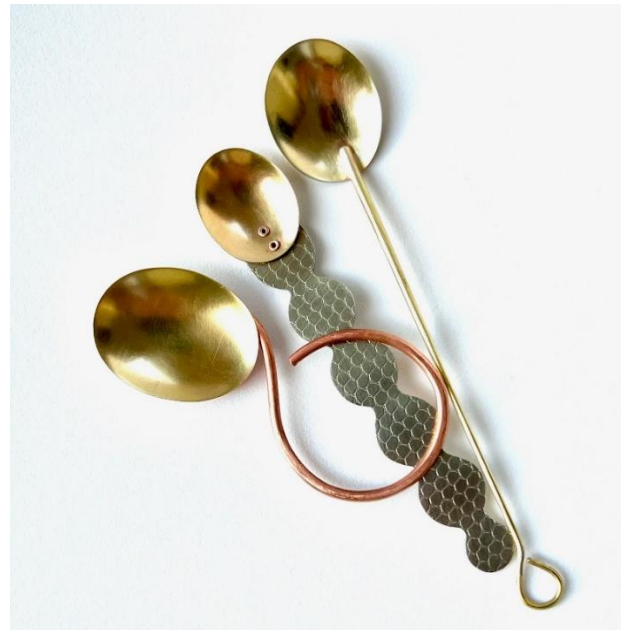
interested in learning more about forming. Students must be comfortable handling a torch.

For registration and more information, visit <https://crafthouston.org/register/chasing-and-repousse-workshop/>.

Fabricated Spoons with Corey Ackelmire

Saturday and Sunday, March 22-23

(Sponsored by HMAG and held at Charisma Design Studios.) In this workshop, Corey will teach participants how to fabricate spoons. She will cover using the hydraulic press to form the spoon bowl, as well as explore different fabrication options for the spoon handle.



Fabricated spoons in brass, copper, and nickel, by Corey Ackelmire.

Registration via the [HMAG website](#) is now open.

On the Horizon

Coming up this spring/summer but not yet scheduled are workshops such as *Chain Making* with **René Lee Henry**, *Using Alternative Materials* with **Dongyi Wu**, and *Image Transfers on Metal* with **Diane Falkenhagen**. More information will be provided as it becomes available.



HMAG Member Development Grant 2024 Recipient René Lee Henry

The winner of HMAG’s 2024 Member Development Grant is René Lee Henry. René will use the grant to acquire a new guillotine shear for her studio, feeling that this equipment will significantly elevate the quality and efficiency of her work.



Artist René Lee Henry.

“My designs are heavily influenced by architectural elements, and I frequently utilize thin strips of sheet metal—primarily brass and steel—in consistent widths to reproduce the geometry of the forms,” she states. “The latest pieces I am creating, which incorporate photo transfers and intricate layouts, require precise, even cuts. Any inconsistencies in the strips are immediately apparent and can compromise the integrity of the design.”

Look for a Q & A about René’s experience with her new shear in a future issue of this newsletter. Congratulations

to René and thanks as always to Charisma Design Studios for funding this grant.



Community News

Here are some things going on in the Houston metals community:

- ☯ **Currently on view:** works by artists **Corey Ackelmire, René Lee Henry, and Edward Lane McCartney** are included in the show *Designing Motherhood*, on view at the **Houston Center for Contemporary Craft** through March 15, 2025.
- ☯ **Also on view:** work by artist **Masumi Kataoka** is included in the latest jewelry show *For Your Eyes Only: The Secret Language of Jewelry*, at the **Museum of Fine Arts Houston Beck Building**.



Memento earrings by Masumi Kataoka, on view at the MFAH.

- ☯ In addition, one of **Masumi’s** works was selected for the *Schmuck* exhibition in Munich in March.
- ☯ This past fall, artist **Mary Davenport** participated in the juried show, *Art Exhibit at Brookwood: Celebrating Community and Creativity*, sponsored by the Brookwood Community of Brookshire, TX.
- ☯ **Edward Lane McCartney: Restoration** is on display from January 13 to April 26, at the

Beeville Art Museum, 401 E. Fannin, Beeville, TX, 78102. *Restoration* showcases **Edward's** collages, assemblages, jewelry, and sculpture, created from found objects drawn from everyday life, celebrates finding beauty in the overlooked.



Edward Lane McCartney, Gone Fishing II, 2011. Fishing floats, steel, sterling silver.

☻ **Asher: Off the Wall** ([HCCC's shop](#)) is hosting a Valentine's Day themed pop-up shopping event from January 31 to February 15, featuring jewelry, ceramics, paper goods and more by local and national artists, including several Houston-area jewelers. Open during regular HCCC hours.



New work by Heidi Gerstacker, available at the Asher: Off the Wall Valentine's Day themed popup.

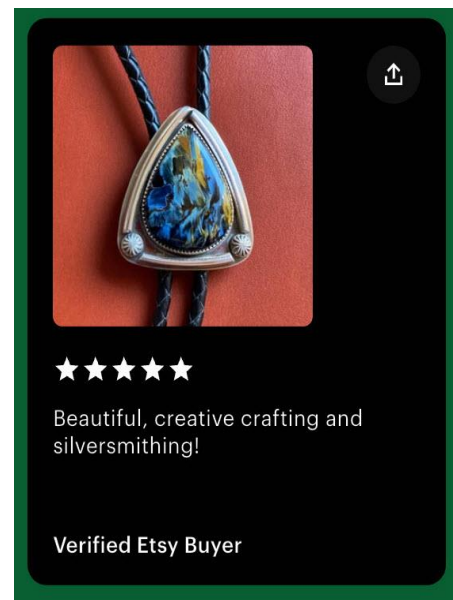
☻ In addition to [Adam Whitney](#), the HCCC is also hosting another metals artist resident this season. In March, **Dongyi Wu** will arrive in Houston for a several-month-long residency. HMAG may remember Dongyi as the winner of

the Best in Show award in HMAG's 2022 show *Sawed, Soldered, Constructed: The Work of the Houston Metal Arts Guild*.



Juror Cindi Strauss with Sawed, Soldered, Constructed Best in Show award winner Dongyi Wu in 2022.

- ☻ On view from March 7 to May 6 in the third-floor **Orton Gallery** at the **Glassell School of Art**, ***Tiny Shiny Big & Bold*** will feature recent work by students in the advanced Jewelry and Enamel programs.
- ☻ **Beverly Flowers**, proprietor of **Watusi Bird Silver Works**, has met and exceeded the milestone of reaching 100 sales in her **WatusiBirdSilverWork** Etsy shop, all with 5-star customer reviews.



One of many rave reviews for Beverly's work.



Share Your News with the Community

We love to highlight what HMAG members and others in our local community are up to professionally. Do you have any artistic or professional news or achievements to share with the HMAG community? Upcoming online or in-person gallery shows? Sales or business milestones? Jury awards or other professional recognition? Changes of address or employment?

Submit your community news to HMAGNews@gmail.com for consideration for the Summer/Fall 25 newsletter.

Serve HMAG: Join the Board!

By the time you receive this newsletter, **HMAG Board Elections** will be right around the corner. If you appreciate HMAG and all the benefits of a local live guild, please consider joining the Board for 2025-2026.



HMAG's first Board of Directors.

For a relatively modest time and effort commitment, you can help ensure the ongoing presence of an organization that offers programs, workshops, parties and socials, opportunities to show your work, and more.

If you think taking on a leadership role in HMAG might be for you, please contact Jessica Jacobi at HMAGPres@gmail.com for a no-obligation discussion and more information.



Mission Statement

The Houston Metal Arts Guild, Inc. is a non-profit organization made up of people with varying interests and involvement in traditional and contemporary jewelry and metal arts.

The Guild was founded to provide for the exchange of ideas and information, as well as offer affordable educational opportunities to its members and the public. Our activities include workshops and programs on a wide range of aesthetic, technical, and commercial topics; exhibitions at leading local venues; social and volunteer events; and communications via our Web presence, social media, and newsletter.

The skills, energy and enthusiasm of the Houston Metals Arts Guild, Inc. members promote and sustain its successful programs. We welcome and encourage participation by everyone.

HMAG Board 2024 - 2025

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Vice-President	OPEN	HMAGVicePres@gmail.com
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