

Curatorial Statements

Jean McLaughlin, curator of contemporary craft component of *Tradition/Innovation*

The South has attracted and nurtured hundreds of artists. Its educational institutions, landscape, and community life have enabled creativity to flourish and artists to dig deeply into imagination and psyche to produce bodies of remarkable, original works. Through this exhibition, the mastery of craftsmanship is underscored, and individuality—the voice and fingerprint of the maker—is eloquently conveyed. Serious craftsmanship requires many years of attention to acquiring technical skills and facility with materials as well as a profound grasp of history and tradition. The works in this exhibition demonstrate the power of objects to tell an artist’s story of passion and commitment, of years spent mastering material and process, of keen observation and reflection, and a desire to bring others into the process through use, touch, and dialogue.

Kathleen Mundell, curator of traditional art component of *Tradition/Innovation*

Craftsmanship draws on a complex set of skills developed over a lifetime of practice.

With “elegance and authority,” the contemporary and traditional artists featured in this exhibit have worked on refining these talents into a body of work. But such mastery involves more than just obtaining technical proficiency. It also calls for an understanding about materials, place, cultural practices and connections to both local and global communities. In the process, a foundation for creative work is built, as well as an understanding of ways of living in a particular place and time.

Some of the artists featured in *Tradition/Innovation* are rooted in a respect for traditional technique, materials and a connection to a specific place or culture. Others explore and expand ideas of form, function and community. Whether it be in the studio or at the kitchen table, each artfully balances skill, vision and tradition. Collectively, these works and their makers are part of our living artistic heritage, reminding us of the many creative ways to work and live.

Judy Sizemore and Martin Rollins, education curators for *Tradition/Innovation*

The *Tradition/Innovation* exhibit presents an amazingly rich view of Southern contemporary crafts and traditional arts masterpieces. The scope of the exhibit ranges from exquisitely crafted functional artworks to highly expressive abstract objects. The breadth of the exhibit provides countless opportunities for community and K-12 educational activities based on the works, the artists, the media represented, the tradition of crafts in the South, and the concept of mastery. The web-based education component includes power points to explore and discuss these areas as well as hands-on activities and resources for educational engagement.