

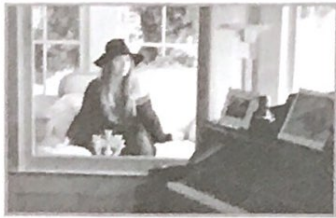
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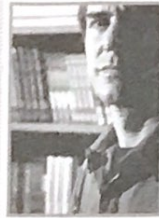
WALLY SKALIS/LOS ANGELES TIMES
Judith Owen in her Santa Monica home.

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KEYOBI TOGABEI PBS/Clarkson Potter

CRAFTED

Hommage to hand and heritage



JACK RAMEDALE PBS/Clarkson Potter

URBAN CHIC: Found objects combine in Jan Yager's "Tiara of Useful Knowledge."



PROTEST POTTERY: Richard Notkin's "Cube Skull Teapot (Variation #23)."

R. NOTKIN PBS/Clarkson Potter

LIKE much of the painstaking handiwork highlighted in the PBS documentary series "Craft in America: Memory, Landscape, Community," creator Carol Sauvion says that crafting the three-episode series — airing consecutively Wednesdays from 8 to 11 p.m. — called for infinite patience.

Sauvion, co-executive producer of the series with Kyra Thompson, says that the L.A.-based nonprofit organization Craft in America was founded in 2003 but raising community interest — and money — for the programs, presented in association with KCET Los Angeles, began in 1996. "We finally finished our fundraising in 2006 and immediately began filming; it took 10 years to get there," Sauvion says.

"I felt that craft was really sort of under the radar, it was important for people to have more information about it," Sauvion continues. "There's a community of people who make things with their hands, it's really an international movement. For people who are involved in craft, it is not a career — it's more of a calling."

Among the artists featured in the TV series are 91-year-old California furniture maker Sam Maloof, Philadelphia metal worker and jewelry maker Jan Yager, who takes inspiration from her urban surroundings by creating jewelry using weeds from vacant lots and discarded crack vials; and Richard Notkin, a Montana "potter of protest" who makes antiwar statements in his design of teapots and other practical objects.

"Sometimes people think of craft as sort of a nostalgic experience, and I think what we set out to do in the series is to say, no, it's as vital and necessary as it ever was," Sauvion says.

The TV series is accompanied by an eight-city national touring exhibition "Craft in America: Expanding Traditions," which began April 13 in Little Rock, Ark., and will include stops at Mingqi International Museum in San Diego (Oct. 20 through Jan. 27) and the Palm Springs Art Museum (Feb. 18 through May 24, 2009). Among the Los Angeles-area artists featured in the exhibition are UCLA ceramics professor Adrian Saxe, Long Beach weaver Jim Bassler and ceramist Steven Portigal, art department chair at Cerritos College.

A complementary illustrated book "Craft in America: Celebrating Two Centuries of Artists and Objects," with a prologue by former President Jimmy Carter, is due out in October.

More information is available at www.craftinamerica.org.

— DIANE HAITHMAN

HUMAN CHAIN: Denise and Samuel Wallace's "Crossroads of Continents Belt" is made of hand-fabricated sterling silver with hand-cut stones.



AMAZING GRACE: L.A.-area woodcrafter Sam Maloof's double-seated walnut rocker.

GENE SAXE PBS/Clarkson Potter