

Seasons of Growth

Art Links Sheboygan

Year One, September 2019–March 2020

An initiative supported by the Seeding Vitality Arts
in Museums grant through Aroha Philanthropies

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Art Links Sheboygan is a series of free workshops for individuals age fifty-five-plus. In the inaugural 2019–20 season, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center offered three eight-week classes: mosaic, stained glass, and fiber arts. Regional artists taught the classes, which were enhanced by excursions and lessons with the Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum and with support from the Senior Activity Center of Sheboygan.

Workshops are supported by Aroha Philanthropies' Seeding Vitality Arts in Museums initiative. JMKAC is one of twenty recipients of the grant, which promotes community partnership and creative aging.



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Image on right: Marilyn Morrissey and Vicky Schneider smile for the camera during the Art Links Sheboygan mosaic class at the James Tellen Woodland Sculpture Garden.

Foreword

In the fall of 2019, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center had the tremendous opportunity to offer a fully funded suite of three, eight-week art classes promoting creative aging. Through the generosity of the Seeding Vitality Arts grant from Aroha Philanthropies, people age fifty-five and better were able to partake of something immersive, intense, and inspiring: the Art Links Sheboygan program. Each class—mosaic, stained glass, and fiber arts—required a commitment to attend all eight sessions, and to participate in culminating events and exhibitions of work.

The rosters filled quickly with participants from Sheboygan County and the surrounding areas; there was high demand for an opportunity to learn, create, and socialize. Recruitment of students would not have been possible without the hard work of our community partners: the Senior Activity Center of Sheboygan and the Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum. Their collaboration was essential not only to the promotion of the Art Links program but also to the content of the classes, as well as to the exhibition of the finished works of art. Their efforts and ours were validated by the emergence of waiting lists for all three classes!

Enrollees were asked to bring their ideas and their willingness to jump in the deep end—and that, they did. Not only was there eagerness and enthusiasm from the students but also a grateful response to the amenities and opportunities the classes offered them. In one of the earliest meetings of the mosaic class, one student remarked that she could never afford the supplies for this art form on her own, and a few others were simply compelled to shout, “Thank you!” while they happily worked on mastering tile cutting.





The program kicked off in September 2019 with the mosaic class, which met in the historic Boy Scout lodge at the James Tellen Woodland Sculpture Garden—an artist-built environment in Sheboygan cared for by the Arts Center. The forested, rustic setting was inviting and enchanting in early autumn, and most students had never visited before. Participants found the workspace to be a private oasis—a well-kept secret that reinforced their sense of ownership over their artwork and the experience. The workshop was taught by Milwaukee-based artist Becca Kacanda, whose practice entails, in part, covering vessels and grottos with traditional mosaic materials as well as found, natural objects such as seashells and pennies. Her expertise with tools and techniques, combined with her free-flowing design sensibility and genuine enthusiasm for the whims of others, made her an encouraging and empowering teacher.

James Tellen Woodland Sculpture Garden (site detail), c. 1942–1957. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

The mosaic class students produced eclectic and colorful chairs in response to the prompt: *How does Sheboygan's history intertwine with your own personal history?* To support participants in considering their connections to Sheboygan, the Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum staff shared their vast knowledge and artifacts from Sheboygan's past with the Art Links cohort. At a visit to the museum, Program Coordinator Chloe Seider and Curator Tamara Lange educated participants on the history of Sheboygan's furniture-making industry, which earned it the nickname "Chair City." A handsome collection of locally made turn-of-the-twentieth-century chairs greeted the class inside the exhibition and anchored the conversation around aesthetics, materials, and common practices of the era. Many members of the group had personal connections to the factories and businesses mentioned, mostly through family ties and a lifetime of residency in Sheboygan County.

Students in the Art Links Sheboygan mosaic class learn about the history of "Chair City" from Tamara Lange at the Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum.



Just as important as the factual learning that took place were the surprising and subjective emotional responses to this experience. After five weeks in the class, when asked to pause and reflect on the experience, students shared profound effects of the journey they were on with Art Links. One maker described her previous life as a “recluse,” never leaving a wheeled chair in her home as she rolled from room to room enjoying her solitude. She deemed her mosaic chair “magical,” as it pulled her from her home and delivered her to the art world of Sheboygan. Ultimately, it delivered her to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, where she is now happily un-retired and working as the security services coordinator!



The stained glass classes began in late October, taught by another Milwaukee-based artist, Jon Schroder of Cobalt Glass Studios. He and the other Art Links teachers represent the best of regional talent in their respective art forms, and it was a thrill to see his confidence and passion up close. This class was small, and quickly became an intimate and industrious group.

Students in the Art Links stained glass class observe proper techniques from instructor Jon Schroder.

Image on right: Chloe Seider of the Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum gives a walking tour of local churches to participants of the Art Links stained glass class.

In the lower level studios at the Arts Center, Jon demonstrated standard techniques as well his own preferred variations. Students happily took risks and wasted no time becoming acquainted with scoring tools, glass cutters, grinders, and soldering irons. The class was inspired by a walking tour of elaborate stained glass windows found in local churches, which was graciously hosted by Chloe Seider of the Historical Society and Museum. On this tour, Chloe spoke of the German immigrants who settled in Sheboygan and their legacy of fine stained glass work. In these sacred spaces, the windows' images are narrative, beautiful, and sometimes informative. The Art Links stained glass participants conveyed stories and symbols of their own, in window hangings featuring everything from pelicans to pine trees. The influence of nature, and often of Lake Michigan, was unavoidable as source material for these makers.

A most beautiful takeaway from observing this class was the way in which participants helped one another. There was an active and constant spirit of assistance and support as each student discovered where their strengths lay; the fastest at foiling the edges of the glass helped their neighbors foil, and the most confident cutters lent a steady hand when needed.





The final class in the Art Links Sheboygan series, fiber arts, began in January and was taught by one of Sheboygan's most respected local artists, Patty Aker. Fitting for a silk painter, Patty is both gentle and soft, as well as bold and ambitious. Many of the students who signed up for fiber arts were already devotees of Patty's or were experienced in other textile areas like quilting, sewing, or embroidery—all of which would prove relevant to the embellishment of their silk paintings in the end.

Invigorated by the retrospective of fiber artist Lenore Tawney's work that was showing in the Arts Center's main gallery at the time, participants wielded a rule-bending mentality and a commitment to being meticulous as they began their projects. Tawney's groundbreaking woven sculptures often reference clouds and water, which provided a central theme to the collaborative piece created by all members of the class as well as Patty. For the Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum's contribution to this class, locally made quilts spanning many decades were shown at a private learning session with Curator Tamara Lange. Quilts, as functional and formulaic items, offered contrast to the experimental weavings of Tawney.

Each student's embellished silk painting was to feature a "life symbol." The interpretations of this concept were fascinating and varied. Birds, butterflies, mountains, plant life, nods to Danish and Dutch heritage, poetry, and zodiac signs all appeared as significant to the seasoned and energized ladies who took this class. In the oral history interviews of class members that were recorded during this time, one participant became visibly moved as she noted that the hours spent in this class—dedicated just to herself, to her own joy, to making something for the fun of it—was something that had not happened in a long time. She, like so many others, was profuse in her gratitude and delight.



Image on left: Docent and class participant Wendy Schmitz gives a tour of *Lenore Tawney: In Poetry and Silence* to her classmates in the Art Links Sheboygan fiber arts class.

Cathy Jones applies blue dye to her silk piece, "The Danish Heart," in the Art Links Sheboygan fiber arts class.



Just after the conclusion of the first Art Links Sheboygan season, the Covid-19 pandemic struck and defined our spring, our summer, and our world. Through the continued support of Aroha Philanthropies, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center received pilot funding to offer an online class for the creative aging community. Taught by Saint Paul-based artist Amy Mester, ten previous Art Links participants joined the pilot project to help Arts Center staff understand how to best connect through virtual programming during this uncertain time. The project was a polymer clay bird, inspired by the works of Albert Zahn, Nek Chand, and Levi Fisher Ames. Those who signed up for this virtual experience were extremely pleased to continue the momentum they had built in their other Art Links classes. Defying stereotypes of the aging population, the virtual platform was not only an option for students, but a good and feasible one.

The breadth of work produced in the Art Links Sheboygan program is not to be missed. One can find delight and encouragement in the works of a group of makers of every skill level. Family members of the artists may experience amazement as they see for the first time what creative potential was lurking in their loved one but never revealed until now. The exhibition represents collaboration amongst community partners, a dedication to lifelong learning, and an aspirational yet open-minded approach to life and the creative process. Our heartfelt belief in the value of creative aging initiatives is present in every aspect of the show, on view at the Arts Center from October 2020 to January 2021, and in this book. We hope that the community at large will see that maturity and life experience do not obscure creativity, they fuel it.

Mosaic

My experience as an Art Links instructor was pivotal, challenging, and inspiring. My first memorable moment came early as I brainstormed what direction this mosaic project should take. As I drifted to sleep one night I recalled The Chair City Cookout I attended at the James Tellen Woodland Sculpture Garden the summer before and realized “Aha! Mosaic chairs are the solution to this project.” I love the moment when creative answers seem to materialize out of thin air. That’s the exciting moment when you know magic is unfolding. And it did!

Some people might underestimate the creative powers of seniors, but after working with them you quickly realize that the lifetime of experiences they carry becomes a very powerful force, especially when they gather together. Every single participant was incredibly dedicated, resourceful, and self-motivated. They did not shy away from any aspect of this challenging project—from learning to break and nip tile, cut glass, and grout their mosaic. It’s a messy process, but they were not intimidated. We had fifteen students and three teachers working in a tiny studio with loads of materials: tile nippers, glass cutters, hammers, buckets of adhesive and grout, sponges, piles of tiles and of course, so many chairs. It was chaotic, but somehow it worked. I’ll never forget the moments when my students brought back chairs they had taken home to work on, completely transformed into fully realized works of art. I was so amazed by this group of seniors and very thankful to have the opportunity to host this class with the support of Xoe Fiss and Claire Carlson.

—Becca Kacanda, teaching artist



Chair-y Tree by Cher Ebersole

I really don't have any formal background in art of any kind. I simply try different things and try to do them with my own odd twist. Since I am a bit of a punster, that was the reason to "cherry" pick the "Chair-y" Tree. I "wood" definitely take the class again. It was very fun. The instructor was wonderful and full of helpfulness.



Image on left: The Art Links Sheboygan mosaic class poses with instructor Becca Kacanda at the James Tellen Woodland Sculpture Garden. From left: Rosanne Thompson, Ruth Harker, Janna Soerens, Marilyn Morrissey, Nancy Stephani, Becca Kacanda, Christine Carr, Cher Ebersole, Marla Payne, Ann White, Sharon Schlundt, Susan Bauman, Bob Ingram, Joyce Harms, Dana Mueller, Vicky Schneider.

All mosaic chair images: Chairs decorated by participants in the Art Links Sheboygan series, 2019.

Mary Nohl Chair **by Dana Mueller**

This is not an artist statement per se. More accurately told, this is the serendipitous story of what this Art Links mosaic workshop meant to me, my first-ever hands-on art workshop since grade school.

Like I always say, life is timing. Here's my story.

For thirty-five years I lived in Fox Point, very near the home of Mary Nohl. I often walked a loop that took me past her house and always marveled at her wonderful cement/stone sculptures. If Mary was out in her yard, we waved. During this time I acquired several ceramic pieces of Mary's at local resale shops.

Fast forward twelve years. I moved about fifty miles up the road from Mary, to Oostburg, into a little house on Lake Michigan. A passionate "rockhound," I walked the beach daily, picking up pockets-full of stones.

I joined the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. I saw most shows but attended no openings (except Nek Chand and Mary Nohl), classes, or events.

Now this is the part where the most fortunate timing caused me to notice, in my JMKAC members' guide, mention of the first Art Links informational meeting happening that very evening! Even more fortunately, I *attended* the meeting, and as the mosaic workshop was described, I hunched that it might enable me to make use of my stones, and registered for the mosaic workshop immediately.

At our first meeting, at the Sheboygan County Historical Society, we learned about Sheboygan's past as the Chair Capital of the World. And at our first workshop, I must say, I became somewhat apprehensive when we were asked to think about a "special chair in our life." Uh oh. No chair came to mind, but thoughts of Mary Nohl's stonework did. BINGO. And so...the centerpiece tile of my chair is an interpretation of the fish image prominent on the east side of Mary's home. The stones, used instead of mosaic tiles, mimic Mary's sculptures. And the red/black/gray mottled paint treatment was inspired by pictures of Mary's own, hand-painted interior.

I love this kooky chair. It came together because of the able, always encouraging support of three great instructors. The time flew by as our small group worked hard and fast. Busy as we were, we still managed to bond as a group.

Endless thanks to the JMKAC for this totally enriching experience. More, please.



Learning from Alice **by Marilyn Morrissey**

Lewis Carroll's story of *Alice in Wonderland* spurred my imagination when this project started. It is full of wonderful life lessons, and at a time of great change for me, this wisdom was very helpful. If Alice hadn't chosen to tumble down that rabbit hole, she wouldn't have encountered the wonderful friends she found in Wonderland. Our quirks make us unique and amazing, and the awareness that we're all a bit crazy gives us the opportunity to grow, and evolve, and help each other along during our life journeys. It's wonderful looking at a story through another lens and learning from the simplicities in life.



Every Plant has its Virtue **by Susan Bauman**

Long before Sheboygan was known as “Chair City,” it was home to Native American tribes that lived intimately with plants and animals, believing each to have its virtue, its spiritual nature, and purpose. That man-nature relationship was the inspiration for my chair. That relationship can be witnessed at Sheboygan’s Indian Mound Park, where we find “that man is part of, not apart from, nature.” The native plants there were, on the most part, used for food or medicinal purposes.

The roasted root of the Jack-in-the-Pulpit (center), or Indian turnip, was used as a source of food and medicine. The coneflowers, not only a symbol of strength and healing, were also used medicinally. (These plants can be found at Indian Mound Park, along with many others.)

Everything we know we learn from nature—how to slow down, find calm and balance. I find strength and inspiration every time I walk in the woods, especially during this time in history.



A Moment to Rest **by Marla Payne**

I am a self-taught artist, and I enjoy living and loving art through every available medium and opportunity. My chair is titled *A Moment to Rest*, and it is my way of allowing a sneak peek into some of the mental and physical battles that I fight each day.

I had been sick my whole life but never knew it... it was just my life and I had no idea it wasn't normal to feel what I did. Alcohol and drugs were my escape. I am now clean and sober for twenty-nine years, but I still grapple with many hidden illnesses.

The Phantom of the Opera had to hide because he knew that his flaws would prevent people from getting to know the real him; he couldn't let the world get to know him.

When I made this chair it became a way to let inner beauty come out in the art while I hide in a real world of fear and pain. There is a conflict going on in that chair, but the music allows healing to take place. It is a chair that represents change and acceptance. I have learned that we don't see things as *they* are; we see things as *we* are!



Healing of the Sheboygan River **by Janna Soerens**

The healing of the Sheboygan River is the inspiration for my mosaic chair. Fourteen miles from the mouth of the Sheboygan River to Sheboygan Falls were dredged in 2012 to remove 15,000 truckloads of sediment heavily contaminated with PCBs. Opportunities were available for citizen scientists trained to monitor birds, freshwater mussels, and frogs as the healing of the river began. Since I want to leave a healthy environment for future generations, I signed up and the adventure began!

My mosaic chair represents the story of my discoveries while walking along and canoeing on the river. One tile broken into four pieces represents the contaminated river with the words "Healing of the Sheboygan River" inscribed. The healing river has blue shards of tile meandering with broken fresh water mussel shells along the edge of the river. A second tile shows a frog among the cattails, a bioindicator of a healthy environment. The chair legs and back are painted carrot orange, representing the sunrise and sunset. Another tile of a great blue heron was inspired by my memory of the unexpected sighting I had of a heron with a crayfish in his sharp bill, true evidence of the healing of the Sheboygan River!



Frieda's Garden **by Joyce Harms**

As a child, after school I would often go to my grandmother's house, where butter cookies, the most comfortable rocking chair, and Grandma's backyard garden awaited me. The garden frequently beckoned me to walk its winding paths and climb the small knob at the lot line. It was a place of adventure and imagination amid its lush greenery. In addition to being a dirt-under-her-fingernails gardener, my grandmother also loved working with her hands to sew and create things out of dried flowers, burlap canvas, beads...her basement shelves were filled to overflowing with all manner of objects that called to me with their varying textures and color.

Years later—once my own creative voice emerged—I found myself likewise gravitating to gardening and textiles, and then expanding into glass, with my own basement shelves filling with beads, fabric, wire... I wanted my mosaic piece, *Frieda's Garden*, to represent the impact that my grandmother had on instilling a sense of the creative adventurer in me. I did this by laying down herringbone textile-patterned pathways, planting a leafed-out stylized tree, and incorporating fused glass from other works. Working on this piece I experienced one of the most enjoyable instances of the creative process in action!



Thriving Sheboygan **by Bob Ingram (B.O.B.)**

I never thought of myself as an artist, but in the last few years, I am discovering that I have the desire—the experience will develop that. I certainly believe, after taking the time to make art a better part of my life, that without it (art) the world would be lacking inspiration, and somehow incomplete. Art inspires art, and brings meaning and makes our imaginations into something more real. Well, at the risk of being too verbose, I'll just say that the chair project made possible by the John Michael Kohler Arts Center made me see how (in my mind, anyway) relevant and thought provoking art can be.

I've titled my work: *Thriving Sheboygan*.

A tree doesn't bear all its fruit in one season. Like a tree, our city has seasons of growth and seasons of rest. We welcome the inevitable seasons of nature but worry over the seasons of our economy.

We needn't. We can suffer the loss of a limb—like the chair industry—and continue to thrive. As long as the roots aren't severed, all is well. Sheboygan is well managed and thriving in our rich, fertile history and culture.



The Storytelling Chair **by Nancy Stephani**

The saying goes that experiences are more important than “things.” But sometimes we need the “things” to help us remember the experiences. So when I took the risk and signed up for a mosaic class, little did I know it would bring me to reflecting my past.

I love the stories behind chairs, so when we were given our own chair to create, I found myself taking those “things” and creating my own memorable chair to pass on... The old broken dishes from my mom, a poem, broken pieces of a memory dish, all came together to tell a story from the past.

I hope my chair will be passed down to the next generation, not because of the artistry but because of the story it tells.



Lake Michigan was Calling by Christine Carr

As I started out on my journey to discover the art of mosaic, I was excited to be learning a new art form. The assignment, however, was a bit overwhelming. A chair. A chair with meaning. A chair that had something to do with our lives. My mind wandered to events and activities we did with our children while they were growing up. I started out planning a chair centered around the 4th of July. All the things reminiscent of our fun summer holiday. Then somewhere in the process, I switched gears. I have always had a love/hate relationship with Lake Michigan. Not being a native Sheboygan resident, I detest the saying “cooler by the lake,” especially when it applies to my neighborhood. But the days that are beautiful blue with the sailboats out on the water, it is perfect. That is what I did on my chair. I was happy with the final result. I guess it just evolved. Being a novice, I couldn’t expect perfection, but the process was great fun! Thank you to this program for the opportunity!



Phases of the Lake **by Rosanne Thompson**

Having been an art teacher myself for forty years, it was refreshing to be the student. It was enjoyable to think about the lake and the images it inspired in my mind.

Working with mosaic was completely new to me, and I enjoyed the excitement of learning a new process. That said, sometimes the new materials were a little frustrating! But the artist and the Arts Center staff who ran the workshop were so helpful. By the end, I felt like I put forth a good effort and was very pleased with the result of my work.



The Enchanted Chair **by Ann White**

As somewhat of a recluse, the Art Links mosaic project's first impact on my life was that it got me to leave my home and studio, and to collaborate with other artists working in a medium new to me. The setting was in the woods at the James Tellen house, which opened my eyes even further to artist-built environments. It was not only an educational, but an inspiring experience. Now, no surface in my home is safe from being covered with mosaics!



Woodcraft Rememberings by Ruth Markworth Harker

The mosaic chair is crafted of broken tiles, glass, porcelain, fragrant wood shavings, and found items. It shows a lively stream, water bubbling up from a drawer chock full of “rememberings,” and singing over rocks to reflect rich colors and textures of tall, old forest trees. These are the life symbol inspirations for the mosaic chair workshop. Central to the design, I have chosen words from my poem to inscribe on a glazed tile. (Breathe in heady, honeyed scent of lumber fresh sawed and sanded lustrous, mellow. Pluck shavings as they tumble from boards planed smooth, curl ringlet 'round my finger.)

For me, Art Links: Mosaic was more than the hard work and satisfying experience of creating a chair seat of broken glass, a chair no one will ever sit upon. It opened a drawer full of childhood “rememberings,” drawing from rich local history of the chair-making industry and my personal legacy of all my “grandfathers.” Colors, shapes, and textures, enhanced by my own words, spoke to me of my ancestors working with wood. These lent a context and depth that connected my past to my present. Just thinking...in the “world of ducks” there are dabblers and divers, so it must be in the realms of art. I was barely ankle deep into the creative process, yet it tugged at me and drew me in, at times, consumed me, but I gladly let it take me “whither it went...”



Lakeshore Guidepost **by Sharon Schlundt**

The unique and beautiful setting of Sheboygan, bordered on the east by the blue waters of Lake Michigan, inspired my chair. The lighthouse is the symbol that claims the city. The gift of this great body of water is what first attracted families to its shore. It provided the life blood, source of precious water, a waterway of transportation, and an extraordinary location for recreation. All these elements have combined to make Sheboygan the city of chairs, cheese, churches, and children.

We have found the lake waters always cooling on hot sticky days, a place to hang up a hammock and listen to the sounds of the seagulls, the waves, and children playing in the sand. Experiences like those refresh and cleanse the mind and restore the soul. We have come to the shores early to see the rising sun, and in the evening to watch a rising full moon with its golden path coming just to you. We have come to its shores to watch the pelicans and seagulls ride the waves, and we have come to listen to the water in motion, sometimes a gentle lapping, sometimes a thunderous crash. The waters have been the path for a parade of colorfully lit boats, or a serene scene of gliding sailboats. The waters of Lake Michigan are Sheboygan's greatest gift.



Stained Glass

I usually jump at any opportunity to teach my craft, but being asked to teach an Art Links class was especially exciting. I have helped grow the hobby community in the Milwaukee area for years, so I liked the idea of stepping out of my city and leading a class that focused on a different regional art-making community. Not to mention that getting a chance to collaborate with the John Michael Kohler Arts Center was a dream come true. I love the Arts Center, and have always admired the art and artists it supports. I was so excited to use those amazing facilities to teach my life's work.

The best part of the experience was teaching a group of artists who were eager to try something new, and they all brought their own unique experiences and backgrounds to the process. Their perspectives shown through in the ways they approached learning the techniques of the craft and in the ways they chose the subject matter of their work. Everyone had very personal stories to tell about their connection to the community, and that's the best part of teaching classes for adults. Usually I teach kids, who are pretty close to blank slates as far as technical and life experience. Watching the Art Links group get right down to work on something they have never done before, while chatting away with old friends and new, will be what I remember the most about my time with them.

—Jon Schroder, teaching artist



**You Never Leave
Art in Your Journey
by Rhonda Frank**

My sister said, when I invited her to an art show, "Oh no—I hate art galleries. Show me the door." But when we see a quilt, a painting, a carving, she will comment, "How beautiful!" or "How creative." Most people like her do not realize that art is all around her, and actually calms her and makes her smile. To me life is art. The colors and shapes around us and the beauty of the environment. Every day when I walk I see art in an old piece of wood or the color of a house. My Art Links piece is all the above. The color, the texture, and community are in it. It calms me and makes me smile. The Art Links program is all of that. It helps you open yourself to share with others: friends, faith, and family.



Image on previous page: The Art Links Sheboygan stained glass class poses with instructor Jon Schroder at the Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum. From left: Jon Schroder, Maggee Quillicci, Fran Wenzel, Melanie McMurray, Jan Youwer, Rhonda Frank, Susan Baumgart, Jan Nelson, Joyce Harms, and Bonnie Grossenbach.

All stained glass images: Stained glass created by participants in the Art Links Sheboygan series, 2020

It's All About the Lake **by Melanie McMurray**

My last art project involved popsicle sticks and the Girl Scouts, so I was apprehensive about joining an art class. I've enjoyed viewing art, I am impressed with the accomplishments of others, but I did not feel confident to attempt anything creative on my own. With the Art Links class, I was able to stretch my comfort zone and give the creative process a try.

The inspiration for my piece is Lake Michigan, as I have lived in Sheboygan for a majority of my life. The influence of the lake is a large part of life in this area. My project changed right up until its completion, just as the lake changes day to day, even minute to minute.



Sunrise from My Window **by Bonnie Grossenbach**

Every morning when I wake up, I check the weather conditions out my living room window, and see the lake, and watch the sunrise. To see Cedar Lake and its vast changes due to the weather, I am totally amazed. Like the shores of Lake Michigan, I am in awe of its beauty.

The day which I chose to replicate for the subject for my stained-glass piece, the lake was totally calm, and it acted like a mirror showing the reflection of the sunrise! The colors ranged from red to black with oranges, yellows, and beige. It was a spectacular sight!



Something Red at the End **by Fran Wenzel**

I knew a few basics and wanted to learn more about stained glass when I heard about this class. What I didn't know was that this experience would tie my love of glass to the community and history of Sheboygan. It was really enjoyable to work with a great group of people and experienced instructor, and I looked forward to each session. Since then I've continued to create with glass and I use the skills I learned.

The piece I created makes me think of the path I needed to take to move to this area nearly seven years ago. A twisty route of life decisions and circumstances led me here, and lots of pieces had to fit into place. I knew I wanted to be near Lake Michigan because it always gives a sense of calm and also inspiration.

No surprise that one of the first things I did after finally moving here was go to the lakefront to take the long walk to the red lighthouse at the end of the pier.



***Withstanding
the Storm***
by Susan Baumgart

I have always loved all things creative from an early age. It wasn't until age fifty that I discovered acrylic and watercolor painting.

It was slow going at first but gradually I saw my pieces improve. For the last seven years I have been the instructor of painting at the Sheboygan Senior Activity Center.

When starting this project, we were asked to do a piece that reminded us of Sheboygan County. What is more iconic than our lighthouse?

The name of the piece is *Withstanding the Storm*. It is a representation of our lighthouse being battered by Hurricane Sandy.



***“Between every two pines
is a doorway to a new world...”***

—John Muir

by Jan Nelson

I was born, raised, worked a stressful job, and lived all my life in the hustle and bustle of Chicagoland. When I retired I was ready for a new world, and I found that new world on a little lake, surrounded by woods, in beautiful Wisconsin!

No one could have ever told me how much I would love living here.

Not only have I found peace and tranquility, I have found a new me. Opportunities abound! I have been introduced to so many wonderful ways to broaden my horizons.

I had never worked with stained glass before, but was given this chance to create my glass pines—the doorway to my new world. Who knows what will come next?!



My Ocean by Jan Youwer

As a child who grew up by the ocean, time spent near large bodies of water evokes my happiest early memories.

Learning to swim with my father. Chasing the birds. Feeling the movement of the water. And with the setting sun...the longing for it all to begin again.

As a transplant to the Midwest, I often felt as though I didn't belong here. Thank you Lake Michigan for being my ocean.



The Bee **by Joyce Harms**

I have been fascinated with the interplay of colors in glass since a very young age...the sun streaming through stained glass windows in the church where, as a young child, I fidgeted away the hour on Sunday mornings...the multicolored cat's eye and shooter marbles in my big brothers' collections...

Fast forward to when I first played with glass as an adult, taking a weeklong glassblowing class in central Tennessee, where I learned of "glory holes" (the furnace), the punty, glass frit, and a whole new world of supplies, equipment, and language. What a glorious week that was, and my love affair with glass had begun!



Over the years since my Tennessee glass immersion, I've dived head first into glass fusing, glass mosaic, bead flame working, and stained glass—and I love them all! In my mind, it is the process of "connection" that differentiates the media, with heat being the force in fusing and flame working, and "cold connections" marrying the glass in mosaic and stained glass. What fun to be able to play in such variety.

The bee as a subject for my stained glass piece came from a book of wonderfully illustrated insects that I purchased at one my glass-fusing retreats. My hope is to also make mosaic and fused versions of *The Bee* as a study in how the three treatments convey a differing sense of the creature...or not!

Fiber Arts

What a marvelous experience it was to teach sixteen lovely ladies for eight consecutive weeks! We shared time and life stories together resulting in fiber creations reflecting our life's journey of ups and downs.

I'm thrilled to share my adventures and experimentation into textiles and art. I wasn't sure that my knowledge and expertise could extend to sixteen hours of instruction, but the ladies participating buoyed me along with their talents and challenged me to explore more avenues! We all grew and expanded our skills.

Each lady chose a life symbol, be it butterfly, leaf, turtle, etc. and created a 24 x 24 inch silk tapestry. The life symbol was designed with "holes" to signify the pitfalls of life. Those designed holes were repaired using various fiber-art methods, ranging from felting and darning to beading and embroidery, indicating our healing of life's traumas.

A large abstract collaborative tapestry titled *Tributary* was created using our city of Sheboygan as inspiration. The ladies agreed that the lake and rivers are a great influence in our lives in this place. Each participant made a stamp of a water feature—clouds, rain, snow, and river. The Sheboygan River was the foundation of the piece, and each individual water icon was included.

I am so grateful to Aroha Philanthropies, John Michael Kohler Arts Center and staff, especially Xoe Fiss, Claire Carlson, Timon Tupper, and Ashley Stubbs, who helped make this event run so smoothly.

—Patty Aker, teaching artist



Guided Journey **by Jenny Hochschild**

I used the image of a hawk as my subject matter in the project because I feel the great bird is my spirit guide. Hawks have exceptional sight and therefore make a trustworthy guide through life.

I placed the hawk in flight over a vast landscape of forest and stream to showcase its inspiring grace and vision.

The sky is of brilliant color filled with clouds, some cut out to represent the scars we all carry and the ability we have to heal, like the way clouds fill in space as they come and go.

One of the parts of this project that I found interesting was the way we had control over some aspects but had to let some happen on their own. We used a resist to hold the paint in some areas but in those areas we had to accept what the paint wanted to do.

I also greatly enjoyed the community of working in a room filled with artisans. We all needed each other to make it happen, and it was fun!

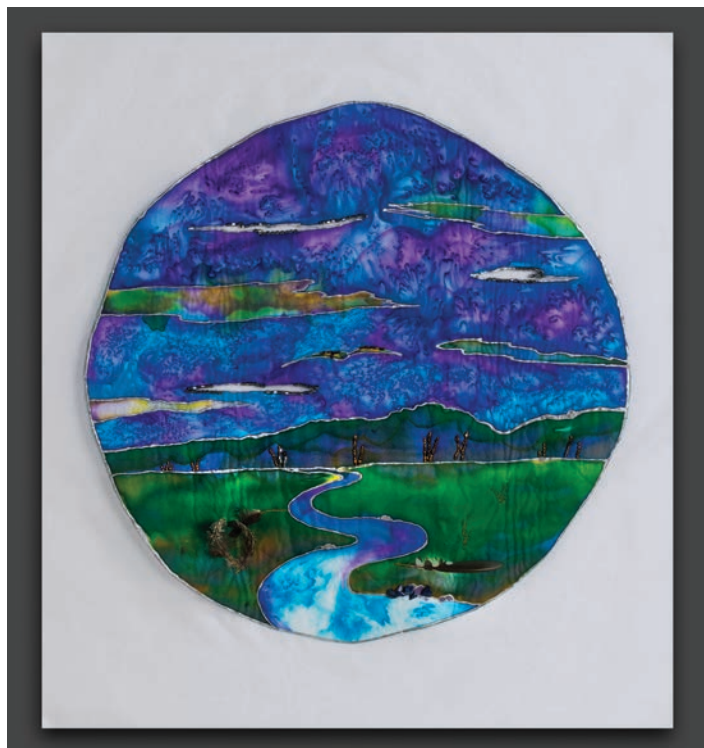


Image on left: The Art Links Sheboygan fiber arts class poses with instructor Patty Aker at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. From left: Cathy Jones, Mary Wagner, Joan Kramer, Sharon Schlundt, Michelle Howland, Sandy Doeber, Faye Hughes, Patrice Worel-Olson, Ruth Harker, Karen Lawrence, Vicky Schneider, Jenny Hochschild, Linda Newton, and Patty Aker.

All fiber art images: Fiber art created by participants in the Art Links Sheboygan series, 2020.

Pisces and Gemini **by Joan Kramer**

Birthdates: March 16, 1944, and June 2, 1946

Married June 3, 1967

This silk painting captures the fisherman, Richard, who enjoys his inspirational time on the water and his wife Joan, the swimmer.

It was August 2, 2019, when Joan retired from nursing, academia, and the Kohler Sports Core. With the freedom to now revisit her fabric skills, developed by a mother who sewed and a fourth grade teacher who taught knitting during lunch breaks, by age twelve Joan was sewing under the guidance of 4-H leaders and received the *Good Housekeeping* High School Senior Award for her 'home economic' skills. Born out of the depression, Joan sewed, knit, and crocheted to clothe and repair attire for her family.

It was this family's John Michael Kohler Arts Center (JMKAC) membership that inspired Joan to partake in a January 17, 2020, fiber arts class. Developed from the JMKAC's exhibition, *Lenore Tawney: Mirror of the Universe*, a class of fourteen ladies exchanged ideas to enhance a JMKAC exhibition in anticipation of the 2021 opening of the Art Preserve.

As vision challenged Joan, she learned that Lenore Tawney started her art endeavor at age fifty-five and eventually worked through blindness; i.e., directing others to complete her projects. The similarities magically transformed Joan to realize enjoyment for her future. As stated in the JMKAC magazine, Vol. 4, 2019 (p.4); "an artist's legacy can subtly and seismically shift another artist's practice, thinking and writing." While far from a proclaimed artist, Joan is shifting through the art of Lenore Tawney.

Following fifty years in the fields of nursing and education, within the limitations of policies and procedures, rules and regulations, Joan's mental synapses were fractured; i.e., not allowing her mind to creatively form an art design. It was pure luck, on a good day, to draw stick people and smile faces. Given her aging concerns, Joan was limited in trying to imagine a format in which to develop a fiber art project. However, it was the luck of this Irish woman, through a retirement gift, that Joan received an adult coloring book that provided a Hallmark image that led to this *Pisces and Gemini* design. The image allowed a road to learn the silk-painting process while reconnecting the mental synapses to return to a life fulfilled by art.

I take this opportunity to sincerely thank those involved in the John Michael Kohler Arts Center and those who led this delightful journey to reignite my artistic desires; i.e., Patty, Xoe, Claire, and Hannah.



Acorn Elementary **by Faye Kleinhans Hughes**

Acorns symbolize humble beginnings, faith, power, knowledge, and endurance. My attachment to acorns comes from the school I attended for seven years as a child—Acorn Elementary.

Acorn Elementary was a humble one-room country school in Sheboygan County. My grandfather, father, and four brothers also all attended this little school, population about twenty-four students. It was a close-knit community; siblings, cousins, and neighbors attended and participated in school programs, parties, baseball games, etc. Mrs. Gannon was my teacher and I loved her.

I have lots of memories about my school, a mix of personal reflections, classic playground and classroom situations and antics. My love for reading was enhanced at Acorn.

Schoolmates played together, learned together, and were part of this local farm community. My family members have a long involvement in education- as teachers, school board members, principals, and school counselors. I am a retired kindergarten teacher and school counselor. The roots of this tradition are at a little country school.

As I worked on the banner, I realized that the acorn represents me, my family, and my childhood community as well as education.

Included in the banner are crochet pieces from my grandmother, bone buttons that were on my grandfather's and father's work shirts, and embroidery stitches that my mother taught me. Education is a key to a happy life, hence the small key.



WHO!

by Linda Newton

As I progressed on my Art Links journey, I rekindled the joy and accomplishment of creating. Newly introduced techniques and past skills combined layer by layer, creating a sampler (not a quilt like we saw at the Sheboygan County Historical Museum), but my life symbol—an owl.

This representation positions the eyes of the owl as the focal point, watching and observing. The colorful but muted pastel body embellished with bits and pieces previously collected items shows life as a whole and subtle irregularities parallel the challenges.

This is a reflection of me, observing, learning, living.



Shaft of Wheat by Sharon Schlundt

Some of my earliest childhood memories were of my mother baking bread in our kitchen. I can still remember the taste of the after-school bread, jam, and tea parties we often had with the fresh yeast smell still in the air. I chose wheat as my symbol to honor my mother. Wheat is mentioned in the Bible as the staff of life, referred to as “amber waves of grain” in *America the Beautiful*. Baking bread is the unified function of mothers and daughters across countless generations. Like my mother and my grandmother, I enjoy baking bread for my family and as a gift for neighbors and friends. My daughters bake bread, as do my granddaughters.

This project evolved over time as I added more details to reflect my story. The use of salt on wet color adds beautiful texture to the piece, just as salt enhances the flavor of bread. The round shape with the embroidered border takes me back to the days when young girls learned different stitches and used them to embellish pillowcases, dishcloths, and other common household items. The feather stitch used here is a reprisal of the stitch I used many years ago in making layette blankets for my own babies. My fascination with fibers began alongside my mother’s sewing machine, which was used often: the fresh crispness of linen, the flexibility of wool, the drape and softness of alpaca, the sheen of silk. As I worked on this project, I was pleased to discover that silk, while appearing very delicate, is actually quite strong.



The Danish Heart **by Cathy Jones**

Hearts + Nature + Nysses = Danes!
The older I get, the more this notion of identity fills me with pride and happiness. This simple art project of materializing my feelings into art took me on a journey from being way OUT OF my comfort zone...to being way INTO my comfort zone. I never would have tried—let alone thought—that turning a blank square of silk into a reflection of my Danish-ness could make me smile (not laugh) out loud—but there it is—it does! This project was that eventful for me. I can hardly wait to hang my masterpiece up in my home...and try another art project outside of my comfort zone!

Through the inspirational and creative leadership of our instructor and facilitators, we each found our own path...while at the same time, grew into an organic community of confidence, collaboratively supporting each other with positive “you go girl” permissions. The exercise of visualizing my Danish-ness, playing with what I thought I wanted, and then experimenting with accidents that happened along the way, to me, is an analogy for life—we can do our best to plan and then we get to embrace punting as it unfolds. How powerful to say, show, embrace who I am and acknowledge with confidence it’s ok, I’m not perfect...life happens...some of me is healed, some of me is in process of healing, and some of me is yet to unfold as needing healing...and learning! What a Gift to remind myself that I’m not “done” yet!

From the bottom of my Danish heart, thank you!



Education, Intellect, and Magic **by Sylvia Skerrett**

As the eighty-eight-year-old mother of three artistic children, I wished to participate in the Arts Link program to test my own abilities and to experience the pleasure and creativity they enjoy. It gave me the opportunity to learn new skills throughout the various stages of the project.

I chose an owl as the symbol of my life because it represents the deep connection between wisdom, good judgment, and knowledge. Working on my piece awakened in me a sense of wonder and achievement. I regained confidence in embroidery skills learned years ago and experienced excitement I have not felt in a long time. It allowed me to reflect on positive aspects of my life and pride in wanting to continue learning.



Hover by Mary T. Wagner

I've been a writer, a scribbler, and a wordsmith professionally for as long as I've been a grownup. First as a newspaper reporter, then as a magazine freelancer, then an essayist, and finally as a children's book author. Writing even ran through my second career as a prosecuting attorney. The thread that bound them all was the magic of stringing words together to make descriptive pictures in the imagination, to evoke feelings, summon passions, share thoughts, open avenues from one mind to another.

Somewhere along that serpentine road, I also discovered digital photography. It didn't take long to become enchanted with the ephemeral nature of the art form, a happy contrast with the torturous and occasionally agonizing process of wrestling with words and trying to get them "right." With a camera, you've either got the shot or not, and there's no going back to fix it. I'm no stranger to the fragility of life after a serious riding accident, more keenly aware of the spellbinding beauty found in fragments of moments. A butterfly will not linger long on a flower beside me, nor will the raindrops on a field of wildflowers catch the light the same way as they toss in the wind.

Hover, my Art Links fiber arts project through the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, was yet another unexpected journey into creativity. The unfamiliar act of touching a wet brush to dry silk was nothing short of **ignition**, of **point of impact**, as colors meandered and bled outward, constrained by outlines and yet shifting and blending in unexpected directions. The images I fashioned—a hummingbird suspended between arching, menacing waves and tranquil morning glories—hold multilayered symbolism for me in my journey as a person, a writer, an artist. And the adventure continues!



The Fluidity of Life **by Michelle Kunes Howland**

I chose the sea turtle as a symbol or creature I identify with and admire. Sea turtles have endured and adapted to changes in their environment for millions of years. This all takes place with grace and beauty as they continue on their journey. Thus the reason I chose the sparkling beads and many colors. They never appear to be in a hurry, just accepting life as it is.

Turtles lose pieces of their shell just as we lose parts of our lives. They take a long time to heal and are never the same as indicated by the holes in my turtle's shell. The main color, green, represents renewal of life.

The Art Links program, under the direction of artist Patty Aker, offered us an opportunity to experience working with fabric and color to express our personal inspiration as it relates to Sheboygan County.



Spring Hope
by Karen Lawrence

With *Spring Hope*, I drew on my Dutch heritage, the vibrant tulips representing my grandchildren. In those blooms and the bright background, my hopes for the future.

As tulips reappear each spring, when we are so longing for renewal, I find in their strength a lifelong affirmation of faith, joy, and beauty.



Journey by Ruth Markworth Harker

Life symbol inspiration for the painted silk panel were three songbirds, ordinary little creatures that make a difference in their own way.

Beauty in Age—blue songbird. “Tell me a story” relates to oral traditions passed from generation to generation using stars of the night sky. This area includes felting, embroidery, beads, map of Apostle Islands (family summer tradition), words from my poem “Journey” (“she grew up with her head in piney trees, insisting on their white noise rushing in her ears...”), and celebration and learning that comes from holes found in life signifying sadness, things lost.

Wisdom in Nature—green songbird. “We are noticing” tells of respect and gratitude for nature, understanding its “impermanence” and “transience,” and sharing that appreciation with family and friends. Green bird is wearing a necklace of blue tatting that my mother made so long ago. A lively stream with rapids and whirlpools has been embroidered and beaded, and an embroidered rural scene with a hole found in life is partially repaired with weaving.

Strength in Community—rust/gold songbird. Its wing is quilted with a log cabin design reminiscent of vintage quilts shown at the Sheboygan County Historical Museum. Quilting often brought people together in “community.” “Shall I, shall you, shall we fly?” are words sewn onto the bright circle of faces (buttons) that describe relationships built, well-being, and balance. Music from Beethoven’s 9th (Choral) Symphony beautifully fills a hole found in life. The words “resilience” and “imperfections and flaws” have been applied onto this area.



Going to the Mountains is Going Home **by Wendy Schmitz**

As the sister of two artists, I have previously not felt comfortable or motivated to make art. The storytelling aspect of this project appealed to me. Once I had chosen my theme, I gained confidence and the imperfections simply mirrored the journey I was portraying.

As an immigrant, I struggle with the feeling of having one foot in each country, one where I live and one that I love and left. This project allowed me to reflect on my life's journey, to forgive myself some of the choices, and to celebrate my passion, which is hiking in England. The process reminded me that recognizing the wrong turns and pitfalls makes me proud of the journey.



Metamorphosis in Blue **by Patrice Worel-Olson**

Butterflies have long been a favorite life symbol of mine. The metamorphosis they undergo represents the one constant in life—change. Often, we too start out as one thing and end up as another. In between we go through various stages, some lengthy, some brief. We need to move through each one to become what we are meant to be.

Like the holes that caterpillars create in leaves, all of us have scars, visible or invisible. Some heal well enough to be barely recalled, some never heal completely, but we find ways to live with them, and learn from them. Occasionally, those scars can still be painful, long after we think we're finished with them. We often find, though, that we are far more resilient than we believed. The more we've gone through, the more we have grown, and the more beautiful we become as human beings. Flawed, but still beautiful, what I like to refer to as "perfectly imperfect."



It All Started with a Basswood Leaf **by Sandy Doebert**

The basswood leaf is important to me since it represents the wood that I mostly carve. I have been a wood carver for twenty-three years, starting with a community education class. I have always liked exploring any kind of art and classes related to art forms. I started sewing when I was eight, so being able to work on a fiber-arts project was right up my alley. I was excited to be able to participate in the Art Links class. My project just sort of developed as the class progressed. I enjoyed getting to know others in the class and watch their projects grow from start to finish.



Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum

The first group of Art Links met at the Sheboygan County Historical Museum in January 2019 to start their journey with a history lesson on the furniture industry that earned Sheboygan the moniker “Chair City.” Participants’ projects would be inspired by the history of chair production and the James Tellen Woodland Sculpture Garden.

Spratt Chair

The skilled laborers of Sheboygan County, coupled with abundant hardwood trees and accessible shipping options, created a rich opportunity for a regional manufacturing monopoly. Sheboygan County's furniture industry as a combined entity led the area's manufacturing output for nearly a century. How fitting that the first Art Links series incorporated chairs—one of the four “C’s” of Sheboygan history: cheese, chairs, churches, and children.

This example of a dining chair is typical of those made by local furniture companies at the height of the industry in the first half of the twentieth century. Like many of the community's chair manufacturers, George Spratt & Company began as a rake and wooden farm implement manufacturer. By 1891, the company added chairs to their product line. Within two years, the company required year-round operations to fulfill the orders for rocking chairs, child-size chairs, and toy chairs that were rolling in.



Phoenix Chair

This chair is a “twin” to one that is on display in the Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum’s exhibit, *Chair City U.S.A.*, a tribute to the rich history of furniture manufacturing in the county. The chair represents one of the most prolific industries of the area in the first half of the twentieth century and reveals the increasingly discerning eye of the furniture industry to design and aesthetics.

Phoenix Chair Company could be considered both the grandfather and savior of the Sheboygan area furniture industry. Established in the wake of a devastating 1875 fire at the Crocker and Bliss Company, Phoenix literally brought furniture manufacturing back from the ashes in Sheboygan. The growing company soon occupied nearly fifteen acres in downtown Sheboygan along the river, producing a wide range of furniture that graced homes as far away as South Africa and prominent high-profile locations such as the White House ballroom.

Untitled chair by George Spratt and Company, circa 1891. Wood. Collection of the Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum.

Untitled chair by The Phoenix Company, circa 1875. Wood. Collection of the Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum.



Stained Glass

In October of 2019, the Art Linkers took a brisk walk through the autumn air to see local examples of stained glass, learn about their history, and find inspiration for their own projects. With stops at just three locations—Grace Episcopal Church, Jake's Cafe (including the First Baptist Parsonage and the De Ville Home), and St. Clement Church—it was obvious the city offers many lovely examples of stained glass.

The De Villes were a prominent early family that owned a confectionary business and the De Ville Millinery Shop on North 8th Street, the oldest and most popular hat shop operating from 1871 to 1923. The family home, built between 1903 and 1904, featured a wonderful stained glass window on the stair landing. Guests of the De Ville family would be greeted with a view of the window, a popular status symbol at the time, upon their arrival at the front door, and they would pass it on the way up to the third-floor ballroom for parties, dances, and performances.



This window is a mix of organic, Art Nouveau styled stained glass and painted animal scenes with hidden meanings. There is one fox painted in the woods, representing good luck, whereas a group of foxes would indicate great misfortune. A fox also represents opportunity, cleverness, and wisdom. In separate scenes, there are painted bluebirds, symbols of wealth and future joy and happiness. Choosing imagery that would bring luck and prosperity was fitting for a business-minded family.

If you would like to see this piece in person, Jake's Café, a creative community and rentable workspace, is open to the public and invites you to explore its historic structures Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The culminating celebration event for the stained glass class was hosted at the Sheboygan County Historical Museum in December 2019. In addition to showing off their finished stained glass projects, the Art Link participants were able to explore the re-created animated store window displays of the Museum's *Holiday Memories* exhibition. Participants were able to learn about the use of windows during the holidays at department stores such as the local H.C. Prange's Department Store.

After exploring a variety of textiles and techniques, the participants in the Fiber Arts Art Links series visited the Sheboygan County Historical Museum on Valentine's Day 2020. During this final session, Art Linkers learned more about the history of quilt making and then explored various examples made by local residents over the years, ranging from the practical to the exquisite.

Crazy Quilt

Quilts may be the quintessential representation of textiles. Few objects exemplify the convergence of art, fabric, and fashion more than the crazy quilt. Though created near the end of the crazy quilt craze, this example created by Mrs. Claus (Augusta) Holst for her daughter Ruth reflects the common elements of patchwork and irregular fabrics coupled with decorative stitching and embellishments.

Crazy quilts skyrocketed in popularity following the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial exposition. Although appearing to be made in an overall random manner, most crazy quilts were well planned demonstrations of fabric layout and sewing skills. While the pieced fabrics required patience, the ornamental embroidery between the pieces testifies to a maker's artistry and needlework skills. Furthermore, crazy quilts represented the advancement of the textile industry, with rich colors, intricate print details, and romantic textures.



Image on left: Untitled window by unknown artist, circa 1904. Stained glass and lead. In situ at the former De Ville family home, Sheboygan Wisconsin.

Crazy quilt by Mrs. Augusta Holt, circa 1876. Cotton, wool, and mixed media. Collection of the Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum.

Patchwork Quilt

The patchwork quilt made by Mary Lutz represents the intersection of all three Art Links sessions with connections to the furniture industry, pieced design, and textiles. Likewise, the quilt exemplifies the idea of creating a utilitarian object from recycled materials.

Lutz, along with her four oldest daughters, created several winter-weight quilts from upholstery scraps and samples from Sheboygan's Northfield Furniture Company. As a maintenance man for the company, Mary's husband, Martin, rescued material destined for the discard pile for members of his family to fashion into valuable household goods. Like many Sheboygan furniture manufacturers, Northfield found success in the manufacture of fibre furniture in the 1920s, coupling durable paper fibre frames with a multitude of attractive and artistic upholstery cushions.



Patchwork quilt by Mrs. Mary Lutz, circa 1920. Cotton, wool, and mixed media. Collection of the Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum.

About the John Michael Kohler Arts Center

Established in 1967 by the Sheboygan Arts Foundation, Inc., the John Michael Kohler Arts Center is nationally recognized for its concentration on art forms, artists, and ideas that have received little critical attention. Each year, the Arts Center presents and commissions works by contemporary visual artists, dance companies, composers, musicians, filmmakers, and other artists with an emphasis on programming that generates a creative exchange between these individuals and the public.

In 2021, the Arts Center opens the Art Preserve, a new building located on Lower Falls Road in Sheboygan. The Art Preserve presents JMKAC's world-renowned collection of art environments. This field of art making encompasses the work of artists who have transformed their yards, homes, or other built environments into total works of art. In addition, the Arts Center collaborates with Kohler Co. to host Arts/Industry, an internationally renowned residency program providing opportunities for artists to create new bodies of work using the technologies and facilities of an industrial pottery and foundry.

JMKAC also features community events such as a summer concert series and arts festival, and classes and activities for all ages. It also is home to a café and operates two shops. Read about current exhibitions and programs at [**jmkac.org**](http://jmkac.org).



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