

IN HER STUDIO: ANNE CRUMPACKER

PGC member profile by Laura Krum

In a light-flooded room on the third floor of the historic Smith Block near the Skidmore Fountain, Anne Crumpacker creates. The world renowned bamboo sculptor established her studio here in 2011; a decade later and with countless artistic accomplishments and accolades to her credit, Anne says the deep inspiration she has always felt in this “amazing space” still endures.



Anne in her Portland studio ~ photo Matt Miller PNCA '11

The building that is home to her studio holds special meaning for Anne. In the 1960s, her father purchased the 1872 property and artfully renovated it in collaboration with distinguished architect Walter Gordon. Sixty years later, classic mid-century design elements, the results of Gordon’s influence, remain juxtaposed against original sixteen foot ceilings, exposed brick walls, and arched windows that overlook the Willamette River. The main room’s spare furnishings include large, movable work surfaces and a handsome vintage drafting table belonging to Anne’s grandfather. Stunning examples of her work are installed throughout the space. Apropos to her chosen medium, Anne’s studio is an icon of restraint and calm.

It was in the 1990s in Tokyo that Anne stepped into a bamboo installation created by Hiroshi Teshigahara and experienced what she describes as



Ensō: Unexpected Silver Lining
Crosscut Bamboo, Irish Waxed Linen Thread, Korean Rice Paper, Gold Leaf 51" x 7" 2018

photo Mario Gallucci

“a palpable elevation, the sense of deep order and connection present in a sanctuary or sacred space.” Thus began Anne’s lasting enchantment with bamboo, as did the unfolding story of bamboo as the instrument for her artistic expression.

Anne generously credits PGC and the GCA with encouraging her artistic path. Among her creative passions is Ikebana, a practice she began in 1990 with a group of PGC members under the tutelage of ikebana sensei Maxyne Davis. Around this time, Anne also entered the GCA Floral Design Judging Program. Anne says it was her training and continuing education in the judging program that introduced her to the elements and principles of design and which ultimately inspired her to attend art school, where she learned to apply those concepts to new mediums.



Ukifune - Floating Boat
Portland Japanese Garden 2016
photo Dan Kvitka

Anne’s enchantment with bamboo followed her to art school. While a student in the Applied Craft and Design program at OCAC/PNCA, a trusted mentor posed this challenge to Anne: “Bamboo art is ubiquitous. What will be your unique contribution to the bamboo art world?” Seated at her grandfather’s drafting table with this challenge on her mind,

Anne was experimenting with her materials when she happened onto previously unexplored

possibilities for manipulating the bamboo. Two signature techniques emerged: crosscutting, which refers to cutting culms into circles of various widths, and cross currents, which involves splitting the circles of varied widths into semi-circles. In these ways, Anne works with, rather than against, the natural properties of the bamboo and brings both depth and movement to her sculptural works.



Ensō: Lean to the Light (detail) ~ photo Jonathan Ley

Anne describes her art form as “interweaving scale, proportion, light, and shadow to create living topographies.” Each piece she brings to life requires complex engineering involving preparation of the bamboo, precision cutting, drilling, tying, and adhering. Methods for creating her work have evolved over time through trial, error, and persistence.



Ensō Luminary: Go Where the Current Takes You

*Owners Cottage, Matakauri Lodge, Queensland, NZ
photo Emanuel Grosch*

In 2019, Anne was commissioned to create a bamboo sculpture for an outdoor installation at the Hard Rock Hotel Maldives. Understanding that a crosscut bamboo piece would never withstand long-term exposure to the elements, Anne instead applied her aesthetic and her engineering savvy to a new array of materials: aluminum tubing cut into rings, stainless steel plates, and fused glass. The result is a uniquely luminous ensō, or Zen circle, spanning six feet in diameter and weighing 400

pounds. This piece permanently resides at the entrance of the hotel, a magnificent example of the range of Anne’s talent.



*Ensō: Hard Rock Hotel Maldives
photo Joseph Hewitt*

Anne says that “everything in my life has lead me to where I am now.” She approaches her art practice with disciplined intention and routine. She describes herself as “always working” in the sense that she is alert to inspiration; she is never without a notebook in which to capture ideas as they are revealed.

Anne’s sage words to all creatives: “It is never too late to start something new. Work every day—or think about your work every day—because you never know when inspiration will strike. Always write down ideas that come to you. Creating floral designs or works of art is hard work and requires problem solving. It takes time and lots of practice for designs to evolve and be fully resolved. However basic the elements and principles of design, they are essential and the foundation of a great floral design or work of art. A meditation practice can expand illumination.” Visit Anne’s website for more [Crumpacker Bamboo Art](#).



*Bamboo Art: Crosscut & Interconnected
Portland International Airport 2014 ~ photo Bill Bachhuber*