

FALL 2014



Photo: John C. Thomas Fisheye

## Melding Art and Science

**It's a typically busy afternoon in the Gaffer's Guild studio in Sweeney Hall. The furnace is blazing away as two students carefully shape a red glass vase on the end of a long rod.**

As an area of study and a medium, glass has played a distinctive role in Iowa State's tradition of connecting science and art across academic disciplines. In fact, when ceramics engineering faculty established the Gaffer's Guild in the 1960s, they set up glassblowing operations not in the fine arts department, as is typical with many universities, but in the College of Engineering.

For more than 40 years, the Gaffer's Guild has enabled materials science and engineering students and others to blend the art of glassblowing with the science of ceramic engineering. The guild is open to anyone seeking a creative outlet, but it's also an instructive experience for science and engineering majors. Learning glass blowing – whether student or civilian – begins with studying how to use heat and gravity to control the flow of the

molten glass. After all, gravity won't take a break while students think about what to do next. Successful (and safe) glassblowing requires a detailed understanding of the physical and chemical properties of materials.

Michael Zeller, a 2014 biochemistry graduate from Pella, Iowa, said he got hooked on glassblowing because it makes for a nice change of pace when he's stressed about coursework. "I really like the way the glass moves. You can make subtle tweaks to it, and then those small things are amplified and you can do some very cool effects."

Tanner Borglum, also a new graduate in computer engineering from Plainfield, Iowa, said he got into glassblowing because "it's a very interesting way of creating things – like nothing I've done before."

He appreciates the science in play – basic physics and the effect of different temperatures on the glass – but in the end, he just likes getting together with fellow gaffers and creating fascinating, complex pieces of art.



Photo: Special Collections

### THE SCIENCE OF TRADITION

**It's no surprise that one of Iowa State's most beloved landmarks has a history of blending calculation and artistry. The 10-bell carillon chime installed in the Campanile in 1899 was the first scientifically tuned bell chime outside of England. Today, the carillon has 50 bells.**

Contributed Photo



## Stationed in Rome

Following his research around the globe, **Thomas Leslie**, holder of the Pickard Chilton Professorship in Architecture, can be described as an academic treasure hunter.

For the 2013-14 academic year, Leslie was based in Rome, Italy, to research Pier Luigi Nervi, an Italian engineer who taught at Rome University from the mid-1940s to the 1960s. Leslie spent a month in 2012 traveling around Rome to gather evidence that Nervi's work was in dire need of documentation and preservation.

Leslie's success with this project landed him the 2013-14 Booth Family Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome – the first recipient in Iowa

State's history. Once settled, Leslie traveled to Nervi sites in Milan, Turin and Florence, and visited other structures in Tortona, Mantua, Navona and Paris, uncovering important projects by Nervi that are not yet documented.

Leslie's research, which connects design, construction and engineering, will impact his classroom back home. He will return to Iowa State with a trove of newly uncovered material from the Parma and Rome archives, and he plans to assemble a small team of graduate research assistants to develop digital reconstructions of unbuilt projects that have never yet been seen in three dimensions.

## PAYING IT FORWARD

Artist and two-time Iowa State alumnus **Theaster Gates** was recently awarded a \$3.5 million grant to continue his work using the arts to revitalize communities on the south side of Chicago. "What I've tried to do is leverage my understanding of art and how people view art to help them reimagine what can happen in poor neighborhoods," he said. While at Iowa State, Gates received two private scholarships – one as an undergraduate and the other as a graduate student.

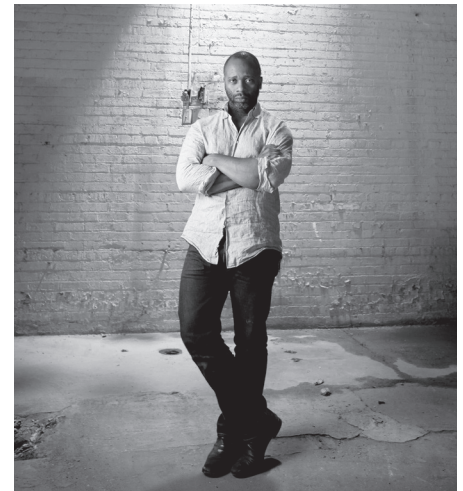


Photo: Jim Heemstra



WIN THIS!

## YOUR IOWA STATE TRIVIA

This stunning piece of pottery, handcrafted by Iowa State faculty member Ingrid Lilligren, could be yours! For details on how to enter, see the back page.

The piece was sold at the College of Design sale, where all of the proceeds support students and programs within the College of Design.

## AGRICULTURE ON DISPLAY

The University Museums' newest campus gallery is – at first glance – in an unlikely location: the outer hall of the dean's suite in Curtiss Hall. The Dean's Art Gallery features seven **Christian Petersen** sculptures – including the plaster models for Petersen's Fountain of the Four Seasons – a four-piece pastel drawing sequence by Iowa artist Ellen Wagener, and judging trophies awarded near the turn of the 20th century.

“What are Christian Petersen's four maidens worth to this university? Priceless. What good are they sitting in a storeroom?” said University Museums director Lynette Pohlman.

The dean's gallery is a five- to 10-year exhibition. Pohlman's staff may refresh it periodically, particularly since the university owns so many agriculture-related pieces of art. “We try to place as many pieces as we can around campus,” said Pohlman. “We know they inspire learning.”



Photo: Bob Elbert



Contributed Photo

## A Student's Fight Song

“I consider myself to be a perfectionist,” said **Kelley Okoren**, junior in chemical engineering. Striving to do his best both in and out of the classroom, Okoren refuses to accept defeat.

As a freshman, saxophonist Okoren auditioned for the Iowa State University Cyclone Football “Varsity” Marching Band but was not selected. Rather than becoming discouraged, he devoted the

next year to improving his playing – resulting in a spot on the marching band just in time for the 2013 football season.

“The school spirit and loyalty of Iowa State are what makes me proud to be a Cyclone,” he said.

When marching season draws to a close, Okoren stays in practice by continuing to perform with the concert band.

## CYCLONE STATE OF MIND

Last spring, **Alea Chalmers**, senior in dietetics and member of Cantamus, an all-women's choir, performed at Carnegie Hall with about 160 of her peers. Dr. James Rodde, director of the Iowa State Singers and the Iowa Statesmen, was asked to conduct for Manhattan Concert Productions and invited his students to join him.

“I was in awe looking out into the massive audience, thinking about all the talented artists that have sung in the very same place I was standing at that moment,” said Chalmers. “Being able to represent Iowa State in that way was an honor. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I'm thankful I had the opportunity to take advantage of it due to decreased financial pressure from scholarship support.”



Photo: Gary Clarke



Photo: Anne Krapfl

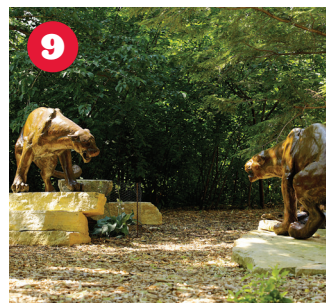
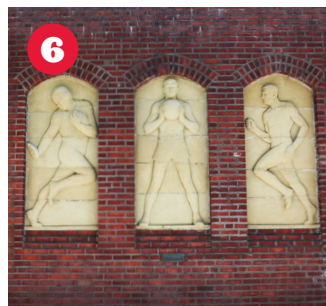
## TRASH FASHION

In a unique observation of Earth Month, students in the creative thinking and problem solving course held a “Trashion Show” this past April, featuring one-of-a-kind garments. The dress that took home the Best Impact award was made from 1,000 Starburst wrappers, and the dress awarded Best in Show was constructed from aluminum foil and 800 plastic forks.

Welcome to **YOUR IOWA STATE**,  
the newsletter that keeps you connected  
with **Iowa State University**. Look inside to  
find out what's happening on campus as  
well as to relive some of your own Iowa  
State memories.

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## YOUR IOWA STATE TRIVIA

Which of the Petersen  
sculptures pictured at  
left is both the oldest and  
the newest?

To investigate your answer  
and enter the drawing to  
win a one of a kind piece  
of pottery, go to  
[www.isuf.info/YISTrivia](http://www.isuf.info/YISTrivia)  
and use your entry code  
(above your name in the  
mailing address).