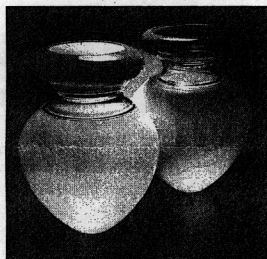


# Montgomery museum offers a stimulating artistic excursion

**SONJA BLOMDAHL**, Incalmo/Glass. Through July 1.  
**STEPHEN SCOTT YOUNG**, Etchings and watercolors. Through July 1.  
**FROM THE FIRE: A Survey of Contemporary Korean Ceramics**. Through Aug. 19. The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts.

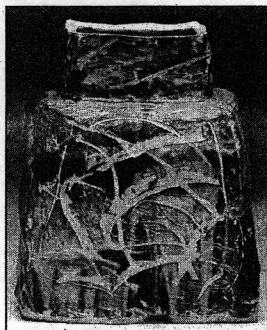


**JAMES R. NELSON**



SPECIAL

Glass artist Sonja Blomdahl created "Yellow/Ruby/Chartreuse" and "Peach/Clear/Teal" with incalmo technique in 1997.



SPECIAL

See Man Kim's "Blind Spot" is part of an exhibit of Korean ceramics showing at Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts.

Using the etcher's needle to delineate an image, Young employs hatching and cross-hatching and sometimes a burin to tender a delicate fading. He has discovered the ineffable thrill of printmaking, of transforming a small piece of copper pressed onto paper into an expressive statement of great subtlety and understanding. Working mostly

with small plates rarely bigger than a paperback book, Young accomplishes this by transforming ink and paper into profound narrative statements. A master draftsman, Young can create atmospheric qualities of exquisite beauty. His figure studies are perfectly elegant, whether he is etching a young ballerina or an old black man who is a storyteller.

The exhibition, "From the Fire," is a survey of contemporary Korean ceramics. It is a breathtaking presentation of fired clay vessels and sculptures. This stunning collection is organized by a group called the International Arts and Artists and sponsored by Hyundai Motor Manufacturing in Montgomery.

Korean ceramics offer a 5,000-year record of creativity. Korea's political history of subjugation and foreign influence at times seemed to diminish its arts to an unfair kind of provincialism. Today, Korean ceramic art takes its rightful position as a cultural and artistic leader on the international scene.

The lasting impression of this show is the art of gesture. Whether it is in the throwing of a vessel or slab arrangements of sheets of clay, the marvelous subtlety of glazes or the extraordinary feeling for space and form, the objects on view are revelatory and delightful. A sense of wit serves as an essential part of the grace in these works. Simplicity inspires complex thoughts. Clay becomes the sensitive means to convey human expression.

The glazes convey softness and warmth. Some resemble pure lard — soft, malleable, flesh-like in their cloud-like opacity. Other glazes crackle, have a metallic glitter, are bright and splashy or muted and evocative. Surface textures range from polished and smooth to coarse and mottled. Above all, these vessels are a tribute and reminder to the ingenuity and spirit of man.

These three shows serve as an irresistible invitation to visit the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts. Along with a fine permanent collection and a delightful little restaurant, they offer a

great way to spend a day.

*James R. Nelson is visual arts critic for The Birmingham News.*

Many art museums take well deserved advantage of a summer schedule to offer lighter fare along with permanent collection highlights. The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts has chosen to challenge that custom and bring three significant exhibitions to its galleries that ensure an unusual draw for the summer months.

Sonja Blomdahl is one of the finest glass artists working today. As a student, she became fascinated with the art of blown glass. Glass blowers are a small, dedicated fraternity and Blomdahl found her way into a welcoming international circle of teachers, friends and fellow artists. After study in Europe, she returned to America and soon established herself as one of the most innovative and creative glass blowers. She became intrigued by a technique called "incalmo," Italian for calm or calmly. By connecting two glass bubbles at their lips, they become one.

Blomdahl's glass volumes are rather simple double bulbs. She rarely digresses from this bulbous form, although she will occasionally add a stopper-like extended top or create lovely wide-lipped bowls. The perfection of her work is found in the graceful banding of colors that create the blurring illusion of a spinning top.

Lighting is an essential element in presenting Blomdahl's works and the museum has done a masterful job in enhancing the glowing inner beauty that emanates from these elegantly simple volumes. This show inspires awe and warmth through discovery and admiration.

Stephen Scott Young is both painter and printmaker. More accurately, Young is an etcher who also paints. His watercolors have a striking kinship to works by Winslow Homer, Andrew Wyeth and Alan Shuptrine. Mostly studies of people, they are delicate, pensive and exquisitely rendered realizations of his subject matter.

But his etchings are his major achievement. In the tradition of Durer, Rembrandt and Whistler, Young manipulates his etching materials with an intensity and freedom that is daunting to those who know the process and miraculous to those who do not.

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 11:00 11:50 12:40 1:40 2:50 3:40 4:30

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**\*PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3** - DLP DIGITAL PG  
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**\*PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3** - SMM PG-13  
 1:30 5:30 9:30

**\*SHREK 3** - DLP DIGITAL PG 11:45 2:30  
**\*SHREK 3** - SMM PG 1:15 4:00 7:25 9:55

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**AT WORLDS END PG 13**  
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From the Birmingham News  
 Sunday, June 3, 2007