



**R & Company to Present Exhibition Featuring a Broad Spectrum of Works
from the Extraordinary Robert Pfannebecker Collection**

Robert Pfannebecker: Friend and Collector of the Arts
On View February 3 – April 14, 2023

On February 3, R & Company will present *Robert Pfannebecker: Friend and Collector of the Arts*, an exhibition exploring the prolific collector and patron's extraordinary holdings of American craft spanning from the 1960s to the early 1980s. The exhibition will feature approximately 70 objects by 30 artists, including **Patti Warashina, Betty Woodman, Dale Chihuly, Diane Itter, Helen Bitar, Jun Kaneko, Richard Marquis, Eleanor Moty, Ron Nagle, and Henry Takemoto**, among others. The featured works will include ceramics, early studio glass, fiber arts, jewelry, and other objects that exemplify the breadth and distinctive quality of American craft and highlight Pfannebecker's forward-looking vision as a collector. Pfannebecker defined his singular collecting style during a time when American craft was breaking away from tradition to embrace both countercultural and Modernist movements of the time. The exhibition will also explore the friendships that Pfannebecker developed with many of these artists and his unwavering and influential support throughout their careers. The exhibition will remain on view through April 14 and will be accompanied by a new catalogue published by R & Company, featuring essays by Patti Warashina, legendary gallerist and curator Helen Drutt English, and James Zemaitis, Director of Museum Relations at R & Company.



Patti Warashina, "Deco for Kottler" in glazed ceramic, USA 1970. Courtesy Patti Warashina and R & Company.

"We are thrilled to present this exemplary selection of objects by a multitude of visionary artists, from one of the greatest collections of American craft in the country. Robert Pfannebecker has made an immense impact on the fields of craft and design and has touched the lives of so many artists throughout his life as a collector, a patron, and as a dear friend," said Evan Snyderman and Zesty Myers, Principals at R & Company. "It has been revelatory to uncover the depth of Bob's collection and the narratives and innovations that it holds. This presentation also reflects R & Company's commitment to illuminating and sharing the history of design and its relationships to contemporary practice."

The Robert Pfannebecker Collection is regarded as one of the most expansive and dynamic private collections of American craft. While working as a lawyer in his hometown of Lancaster, Pennsylvania in the 1960s, Pfannebecker met influential artist, gallery owner and designer **Don Wright**, who introduced him to a network of artists, including **Patti Warashina** and **Fred Bauer**, and encouraged him to begin acquiring works. During



this time, he became closely associated with the artistic communities in Michigan and Wisconsin, including the Cranbrook Academy of Art. Pfannebecker, invigorated by these new relationships, began traveling the country extensively to visit a multitude of art schools and to meet artists directly in their studios—a rarity in the world of craft and design at the time. On one such trip to the Rhode Island School of Design, he met **Dale Chihuly** and **James Carpenter**, who were both creating experimental sculptures in glass, and at Berkeley, he met **Richard Marquis** and **Marvin Lipofsky**, who were also expanding the aesthetic vocabulary of the medium. He began actively collecting their work, along with that of many other artists, including **Wayne Highby**, **David Gilhooly**, **Howard Kottler**, **Eleanor Moty**, and **Budd Stalnaker**. His approach to collecting played a critical role in shaping what would become the burgeoning market for American craft.

By the 1980s, and in large part due to his charismatic nature and the warm and supportive friendships he developed with many artists, Pfannebecker had built one of the largest and most esteemed collections of contemporary craft in the country. The collection represents his aesthetic, which favors playful, colorful, and experimental styles as well as eloquent objects inspired by different cultures, nature, and pattern. Highlights of the exhibition will include a selection of **Dale Chihuly's** early neon glass experiments as well as his Navajo Blanket Cylinders from the 1970s; colorful textile art by **Helen Bitar**; a papier-mache orangutan by **David Gilhooly**; **Jun Kaneko's** glazed ceramics from the 1980s; **Richard Marquis's** surrealist patchwork tea kettles; elegant silver and bronze jewelry by **Eleanor Moty**; **Ed Rossbach's** woven “Mickey Mouse” basket; monumental, figural vessels by **Patty Warashina**; a pitcher, letter holder and other ceramic objects by **Betty Woodman**; and a selection of **Fred Bauer's** irreverent ceramics, among many other striking objects by these and other artists.

Pfannebecker's singular collection grew just as the craft movement was expanding into the gallery sector and being legitimized within the art historical canon by American institutions. Works by many of the artists included in the seminal *Objects: USA* exhibition at the Smithsonian in 1969 would come to shape his collection. Many of those artists are featured in this exhibition. Pfannebecker would later complete an oral history interview for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art in 1991 to discuss his collecting pursuits and the friendships and encounters he had with artists over the years. Until recently, Pfannebecker lived closely with the hundreds of objects in his collection at his home in Pennsylvania designed by Don Wright, where he built three large A-frame buildings on his property to display them. The first exhibition to explore the collection was held at the Moore College of Art & Design in 1980, curated by Helen Drutt English. In June 2021, Pfannebecker decided to disperse his collection so that it could be seen and appreciated by a wider audience. Works from the collection have been placed in major museums throughout the US by the curator Peter Held. This exhibition offers visitors the chance to engage with a stunning selection from Pfannebecker's collection, and to learn more about his impressive vision of American craft that has had a resounding impact on the development of the field as it is known today.



About R & Company

For over 20 years, R & Company has championed collectible design, advancing the contemporary marketplace and actively growing a global collector base and clientele. Its founders, Zesty Meyers and Evan Snyderman, are widely recognized for identifying rising talent, deepening scholarship about collectible design, and developing new avenues for growth in the industry. R & Company maintains two dynamic spaces in New York: its expansive, inaugural space at 82 Franklin Street features a rotating display of interior environments highlighting gallery designers, while 64 White Street offers an active roster of solo and group exhibitions and includes a Library and Archive of more than 7,000 books, periodicals, drawings, and other materials. The gallery is committed to nurturing and sustaining the markets and careers of both emerging and established designers, as well as to maintaining and expanding commercial and academic interest in historical design. Its roster of international designers includes Wendell Castle, Sebastian Errazuriz, Rogan Gregory, the Estate of Greta Grossman, Serban Ionescu, Hun-Chung Lee, Joyce Lin, Jolie Ngo, Katie Stout, Johnny Swing, Studio Job, Joaquim Tenreiro, and Jeff Zimmerman, among many others. With its vision, passion, and expertise, R & Company serves as a critical platform for experiencing 20th and 21st-century objects and discovering innovative, rare, and significant designs.

###

For more information, please contact:

Alina Sumajin or Sarah St. Amand

PAVE Communications & Consulting

alina@paveconsult.com / sarah@paveconsult.com

646-369-2050 / 978-844-4086