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CONNECTING PEOPLE, ART & NATURE

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Take my heart.
Make it a gate.
Open it wide
To all the world.
—JTH

PHOTO: OTTO RIGAN

connecting people, art & nature

HIDDEN LEAVES

VOL 11 - ISSUE 2

FALL
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He Walks The Emerald Gate

In Memoriam: James Hubbell, 1931 - 2024

Jim's Farewell

The presence of the Emerald Gate seems to rest in the background of my consciousness. One only partially grasps the personal journey into a new world, which often requires a painful death of parts of oneself and one's beliefs. I imagine the feeling of death and hope of resurrection is not uncommon among my fellow humans.

Perhaps the thing is to sit quietly and give thanks for the endless gifts, for music, for the feel of a pen or a sheet of paper, for the light on the mountains, and for friends, those of you I know and those of you I will never know.

Just as those who have gone before stood by as I have tried my hand at life, I will give you my heart to walk together over the amazing boulders life is always placing in our path.

To the adventure of life! I wish you well and to your own gates.

—JAMES HUBBELL, "TO WALK THE EMERALD GATE"

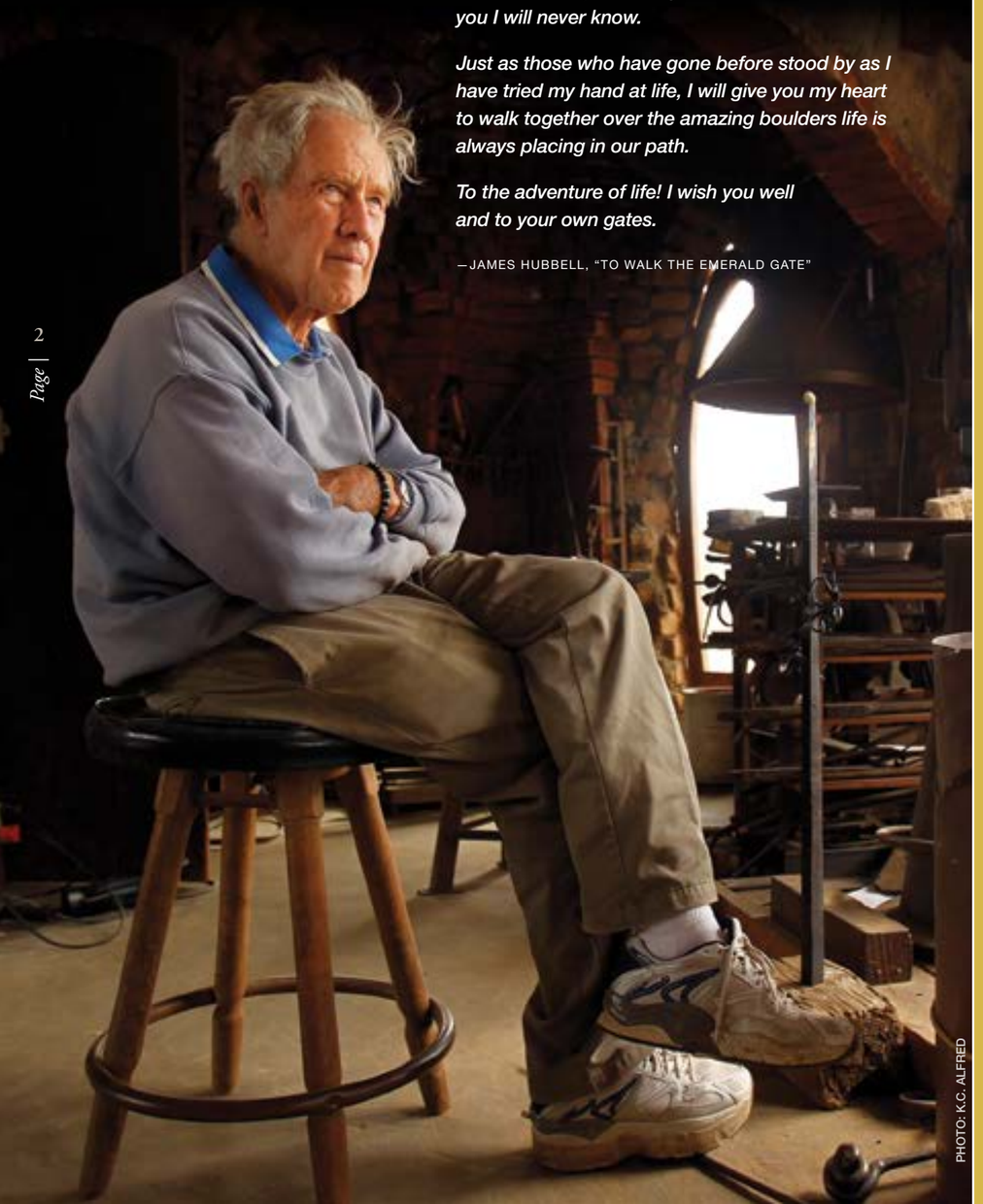

PHOTO: K.C. ALFRED

HIDDEN LEAVES

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Cover
Gaia's Domain, Laminated Glass and forged silver by James Hubbell, 1986
PHOTO: Laurel Costa

Editors
Peter Jensen & Marianne Gerdes

Contributors
K. C. Alfred
David Bardwick
Laurel Costa
Laurie Dietter
John Durant
Katie Gardener
Marianne Gerdes
Bert Hubbell
Dylan Hubbell
James Hubbell
Peter Jensen
Simon Luethi
Otto Rigan

Graphic Design
Laurie Dietter

Printing
Neyenesch Printers, San Diego

Ilan-Lael Foundation
PO Box 1221
Julian, CA 92036
760.765.3427
ilanlaelfoundation.org
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PHOTO: LAUREL COSTA

Joy and Sorrow | MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Many people and events made this year extraordinary. Like so often happens in the Hubbell universe, 2024 took on a life of its own, with what James called "the joy and pathos of being human."

The early months of 2024 started with an exhibition, one of the most successful in the history of the Ilan-Lael Foundation. *James Hubbell: Architecture of Jubilation* at the San Diego Central Library - Judith Harris Art Gallery was a one-man show featuring the life, work, and cross-border impact of James Hubbell. It was a featured event of World Design Capital 2024 San Diego - Tijuana, attracting over 8,000 visitors during its four-month run, smashing attendance records and capturing the imagination of a new generation.

In the Spring we welcomed Ada Limón, Poet Laureate of the U.S., to a poetry-themed luncheon at Ilan-Lael. Jim's embrace of nature and all it inspires is akin to Ada's own poetic muses. This visit led us to develop a new Visiting Artist Program that saw seven plein air painters and photographers plus a poet create works inspired by Ilan-Lael that are currently on exhibit at the Union Hall Gallery in San Diego through November, and for sale on our ILF Gallery page on our website.

Closer to home, we spent 2024 making needed repairs to the historically designated buildings at Ilan-Lael. Many thanks to generous grantors and all of you who supported 2023's Summer of Love campaign. In addition to the restoration projects, we've also enhanced our landscape with new parking, trails, and accessible pathways and gathering spaces. We hope you'll come visit and see how good Ilan-Lael looks!

All of these events were exciting, but tempered by the sorrowful news of James' passing on May 17th. We sought solace with you, our Ilan-Lael family, through a series of well-attended tributes over the summer that united us in our sorrow and admiration for our dear friend James.

What to do when such a bright light has been extinguished? James wrote down his thoughts often, instructing the Foundation about his wishes for how Ilan-Lael should carry on. He asked us to keep making art and inviting people in to experience the power of creativity. He asked us to put his art to work, exhibiting, sharing, and making it accessible to as many people as we can reach. Learn how we are answering Jim's wishes throughout this issue.

He also advised us to use our resources to meet the needs of our community. He was very proud of the impact we made in programs like Healing The Healers (for front-line health-care nurses and others) and Watershed Explorers, a youth art-environment education program. And we know he is cheering us on in new programs that are debuting next year to serve the youth in our Julian community. He encouraged us to continue building parks around the Pacific. We will stay engaged!

Since James and Anne retired in their 90s and moved not far away from Ilan-Lael, we have been forging a new path. We have been answering his call to find new and meaningful ways to bring his art and that of others closer to our community. More than ever, this year has shown that Ilan-Lael is a family. We are spread across the globe but united by James' magic: his irrepressible creativity, emotive beauty, and his poignant grasp of the joy and pathos of being human. Long live the spirit of James Hubbell.

—Marianne Gerdes

In Praise of Mystery: A Poem for Europa

By Ada Limón

Arching under the night sky inky
with black expansiveness, we point
to the planets we know, we

pin quick wishes on stars. From earth,
we read the sky as if it is an unerring book
of the universe, expert and evident.

Still, there are mysteries below our sky:
the whale song, the songbird singing
its call in the bough of a wind-shaken tree.

We are creatures of constant awe,
curious at beauty, at leaf and blossom,
at grief and pleasure, sun and shadow.

And it is not darkness that unites us,
not the cold distance of space, but
the offering of water, each drop of rain,

each rivulet, each pulse, each vein.
O second moon, we, too, are made
of water, of vast and beckoning seas.

We, too, are made of wonders, of great
and ordinary loves, of small invisible worlds,
of a need to call out through the dark.

"In Praise of Mystery: A Poem for Europa," written by U.S. Poet Laureate, Ada Limón, is engraved on NASA's Europa Clipper traveling 1.8 billion miles to the Jupiter system.

Below: Ada photographed in 2024 at Ilan-Lael.

PHOTO: LAUREL COSTA

A LIFE'S JOURNEY James Hubbell, 1931 - 2024

EARLY YEARS

[1] *James Hubbell was born in Mineola, New York in 1931, the son of Julia Jones and James Hubbell Sr. and brother to Harry (Bert) and sister Roberleigh.* ILF **[2]** *As a young man, he traveled for a year to Africa and Europe and experienced new cultures and the great art works.* QUENTIN KEYNES **[3]** *While serving in the Korean conflict as a base artist he studied art in Japan.* ILF

INSPIRED BY NATURE

[4] *His art was based on a philosophy of seeking inspiration in nature. Materials often included natural and found objects from his property or nearby sources.* OTTO RIGAN

FAMILY, HOME, ILAN-LAEL

[5] *In 1958, he married his soulmate Anne Stewart, and together they embarked on building a one-room stone cabin with their own hands near Julian, California. They named it Ilan-Lael, a "tree that is a gift from God."* HUBBELL FAMILY **[6-7]** *This primitive beginning eventually grew into a compound of 14 separate buildings with flowing organic shapes that quickly attracted local attention.* ILF **[8]** *A family portrait taken in the living room appeared in an article in San Diego Magazine in1967.* JOHN WAGGAMAN **[9]** *Jim and Anne raised four sons here. Family, the beauty of nature and Anne's loving encouragement have anchored James' creativity over the course of their life together.* JOHN DURANT **[10]** *James and Anne started their non-profit Ilan-Lael Foundation in 1983 to further their interest in bringing art to the masses and introducing non-artists to art-making opportunities.* MARIANNE GERDES

ARCHITECTURE OF JUBILATION

[11] *James explored concepts in organic architecture and design that were a unique expression of San Diego. Here, an early stained-glass window piece.* SIM BRUCE RICHARDS **[12]** *James became a member of Creating Civic Community "C-3", Allied Craftsmen, and other art organizations that introduced him to luminaries in San Diego's art and architecture community.* KIRA CORSER **[13]** *James carving a wood pillar in his studio.* OTTO RIGAN **[14]** *He spoke often of "an architecture of jubilation," a philosophy never more evident that in his legendary Boys' House built for (and with) his four sons.* DON MUSIAL **[15]** *Rainbow Hill is one of several homes designed and built by James Hubbell in San Diego.* KIRA CORSER **[16]** *Major commissions like "The Doors of Abu Dhabi" meant gathering a large team of immensely talented artists and craftsmen. James believed in collaboration!* OTTO RIGAN **[17]** *An inspiring and capable teacher, he invited students to dive head first into the journey of art and embrace the mysteries of the process. By working with James, many artists say that they found their own creative voice and courage to devote their lives to making art.* VINCE COMPAGNONE **[18]** *One of James's most celebrated architectural designs was The Sea Ranch Chapel.* MICHAEL GERDES

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

[19] *James spent 30 years designing and building* Colegio La Esperanza, *a school in Tijuana* ILF **[20]** *Kuchumaa Passage on the grounds of Rancho La Puerta in Tecate, MX was James' first attempt at building public art in a limited time frame with a team of non-artists, the prototype for Pacific Rim Park.* JOHN DURANT **[21]** *In 1994, James began his most ambitious work, Pacific Rim Park, which to date has built eight parks adjacent to the Pacific Ocean. James sees the ocean as a way of connecting many cultures in ways that transcend political and economic boundaries.* LORENA HENSELER

VISIONARY

[22] *His work has championed the forces that shape us: the good and the bad, the irregular and imperfect, and the joy and pathos of life.* ILF **[23]** *James photographed in his Ilan-Lael living room in 2021.* JOHN DURANT **[24]** *It was James' wish that his Ilan-Lael home and the magnificent studios where he created his artworks continue to inspire future generations of artists, architects and builders.* LAUREL COSTA

Visit ilanlaelfoundation.org/epilogue to read James's message, see more photos and learn more about his life.

PHOTO: HIDEKO YOSHIKAWA

COLOR PHOTOS: SIMON LUETHI

PHOTO: HIDEKO YOSHIKAWA

BROTHERS IN ARTS

They lived an ocean apart but with spirits united

By Laurel Costa

Above, a young Bert and his "studio."

Above, clockwise: hundreds of whimsical clay creatures line paths in his home's "Soul Garden" in Japan.

Bert and wife Hiroko in their home near Mt. Fuji.

Right: James (left) and Bert hanging out in their teens in Rancho Santa Fe, California.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF HUBBELL FAMILY

James Hubbell and his brother, nicknamed Bert, shared a remarkably special connection. This spring they both left the earth within weeks of each other, reconnecting in the cosmos. They lived on opposite sides of the vast Pacific Ocean: James in Santa Ysabel and Bert and his wife Hiroko in an extraordinarily beautiful hand-built home in Yamanakako at the base of Mt. Fuji.

Despite not seeing each other in person for decades, their philosophies and values mirrored each other in many ways, and their constant communication provided mutual support throughout their intensely creative lives. Each brother seemed to match the other with audacious philosophies and the determination to make the world a better place through art.

James' lifelong wish was for all people who share life at the edge of the Pacific to live in peace, like family. Few knew that he not only practiced this philosophy on an international scale by creating Pacific Rim Park, but also by loving a distant, but deeply connected, "brother Bert" who lived in Japan.

Early on in their marriage, however, Bert and Hiroko lived near Jim and Anne in San Diego (1961-1963). While in San Diego, Bert created hundreds of ceramic sculptures featuring creatures in every imaginable form. The impressive collection of his 400-plus sculptures is archived at Ilan-Lael and it represents just a tiny portion of his life's work.

As long-time Hubbell family friend architect Robert Thiele pointed out during a tour of Ilan-Lael, "Bert's sculptures are reminiscent of Yokai, a Japanese art form used to bring to life your inner fears and anxieties to better defeat negative thoughts."

Bert was certainly exploring inner peace and spirituality through the arts. His letters, sculptures, drawings, and scrapbook-like art projects detail his grandiose thought process, speaking of the cosmos, humanity, and Mother Earth's interconnectedness. In his non-linear writing and drawing styles, he maps ancient and modern historical events through poetry and personal experience. He often references his brother James' pivotal life experiences alongside his own, drawing parallels and giving them cosmic meaning.

It's almost dizzying to experience Bert Hubbell's artworks, but equally thrilling to imagine the inner workings of his infinitely creative brain exploring vast topics. He clearly experienced a vivid spiritual life and developed philosophies that even those who have studied his work may not fully understand.

For the fascinating photos and story of Bert's life, visit IlanLaelFoundation.org/Brother-Bert.

"Sculpture is the language I use to express what I feel inside"

—BERT HUBBELL

A visit to Bert's Soul Garden

By Dylan Hubbell, grandson of James Hubbell, grand-nephew of Bert Hubbell

Bert Hubbell sent letters to my grandfather James and my uncles Drew, Torrey, Brennan, and Lauren for many years (Drew is my father). Not too long ago my brother Connor wrote to our great uncle that he wanted to visit someday. Bert took that to heart and held Connor to it.

"When are you coming, Connor?" Bert asked, sharing that his health had been declining and it was important for Connor to get over there. Connor signed up to work with WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) and spent three months working on several farms throughout Japan's countryside. After that experience I joined him to explore the big cities of Japan and, most importantly, to meet Uncle Bert.

We had tried contacting Bert prior to our visit, but no one answered the phone and voicemail was full. We assumed it was just Bert being Bert. We decided to trust that we could show up unannounced in classic Bert and our grandfather James' fashion.

We were not without some prior knowledge of how to find him. Our parents Drew and Pam, and our uncle Brennan, had visited Bert and Hiroko in their youth and had given us photos of the entrance gate and vague directions of where they thought their house was located in the foothills beside Lake Yamanaka, in the shadow of Mount Fuji. We went to the local post office to get help in finding Bert and Hiroko's home. We gave the workers the address, and they asked if we were looking for a friend.

"We are looking for our Uncle Bert!" Laughter rang through the post office; I don't think they believed us.

They gave us maps and offered to order us a taxi so we wouldn't have to walk in the rain, but we both agreed that Bert would prefer us showing up wet.

After walking halfway around the lake, we found the turn off and started looking for the entrance gate. At this time, the sun came out and Mt. Fuji began peeking through the clouds. A good omen of course! We must be getting close. When we arrived, there was no doubt that it was Bert's house because a familiar Hubbellesque feeling came over both of us.

Walking through the entrance gate transported us into a magical world not unlike arriving at our grandparents' home in Santa Ysabel. We walked down stone steps beneath tall pines growing amidst volcanic rocks covered in moss. Little clay people greeted us along the way to a wooden front door carved with Mount Fuji. We were excited to finally meet Bert and Hiroko!

After ringing the doorbell, peeking through boarded-up windows, and yelling for our great uncle, it was clear that he was not home. Little did we know that both had been very ill, and hospitalized in an unknown location. While he wasn't there physically, we still were able to learn a good deal about him by wandering through his "Soul Garden"—Bert's lifetime of work and prayer all in one place.

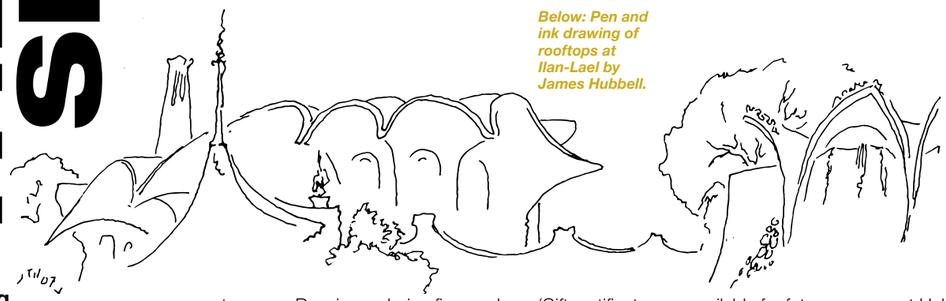
"Out of the big world of garden earth… soul garden is a miniature poem of cosmic earth… soul garden reveals the eye innerly… in heart religious for nature… a visitor pilgrim in stepping enters pilgrimage of all one… one all…"

Poetry was on display everywhere, with themes of Mother Earth, natural disasters, cycles of life, junk and waste, spiritualization vs. technology, civilization, nuclear war, the unborn, and more. His work was a prayer for all these things. The hundreds of sculptures and clay figures throughout the "Soul Garden" protect the world from the harms that come with civilization, and pray that humans can find the good.

While we didn't get to meet Bert and Hiroko, the spirit of their home gave us insight as to how they lived and what they cared about in this world.

Top photos: beyond mere whimsy, Bert's sculptures told stories of peace and brotherhood. His home was a semi-traditional retreat in a forest near Mt. Fuji.

THE STUDIO SPARKS!



Below: Pen and ink drawing of rooftops at Ilan-Lael by James Hubbell.

Far left: The studio foundry attracts talent young and old. Connor Hubbell shapes metal framing that supports the Triton Window.

Lower left: bottom: Mosaic glass artist Emilie Ledieu offers regular mosaic workshops in our Ilan-Lael Studio.

Above left: Stained glass artist Cindy Mushet-Shriver creates and teaches in the studio where she learned as a teenager.

Above right: Julian-based wood worker Dan Thoner etches a door with a Hubbell-inspired flowing design.

The demand for art and art education remains strong

By Marianne Gerdes
Photos by Laurel Costa

Sparks are flying at Ilan-Lael. Our world-famous studios, home to James Hubbell's prolific energy for over 60 years, continue to create works of arts and crafts in ways old and new under the stewardship of the Ilan-Lael Foundation. James Hubbell left these buildings, along with tools, kilns, forge and materials, to the Foundation with instructions to keep the creativity happening. Having this asset at our disposal has opened up many new possibilities for ILF and the community.

Our studio artists are accomplished and award-winning, with impressive design portfolios and incredible creativity, plus years of experience apprenticing with James. Book a visit to our studios and let Ilan-Lael and our artists be a source for your inspirations and dreams.

Restoring and renewing existing Hubbell works

Artists Cindy Shriver and Dan Thoner are busy repairing and restoring Hubbell works. A prime example on the table now is the epic Albatross/Mermaid window, an 8-foot-wide round stained glass window that once framed the crashing waves for diners in the Triton Restaurant in Cardiff. Spindrift, blown sand, and salty fog took a toll on the window, which is now being repaired, polished, and redesigned to stand alone as a work of art. It will be displayed in an oak frame designed and built by Dan Thoner, our talented woodworker and creator of many memorable Hubbell door designs. Once complete, the window and frame will be available for viewing at Ilan-Lael in 2025, and at exhibitions in San Diego and beyond for years to come. Repairs are being financed in good part by generous donations from our board members Michael Pinto and John Howard.

Be a Hubbell studio artist

Art workshops taught in our core practices of metal, stained glass, and mosaic continue to be a popular activity. Small classes are taught by accomplished Hubbell-trained artists. Attendees experience individualized instruction in our three onsite studio spaces (depending on the craft) as well as group learning that maximizes the sharing of creative ideas. In 2025 we will expand our offerings with classes in ceramics, nature crafting, and wellness retreats. Be inspired by artistic surroundings and amazing natural beauty! (Gift certificates are available for future workshops and classes.)

As one workshop attendee attests: "A rainstorm during the class! I loved how the tour of property and history was also our opportunity to gather plant/flower clippings for our art. What an amazing day full of creativity and fun!"

Programs to help artists learn and grow

For many decades artists and would-be artists came to learn from James via hands-on experiences in metal, glass, and woodworking. That tradition continues for a new generation of apprentices and student learners. Few know the value of this opportunity better than our current glass master, Cindy Shriver, who came to work at Hubbell Studios as a 15-year-old from Julian and is still with us four decades later.

Great news!

A new feature of Hubbell Studios will incorporate educational programs for Julian area high school students thanks to an arts grant from a local non-profit. ILF will help support community well-being for Julian's young adults by providing access to the arts, culture, and nature at Ilan-Lael. With open doors, inclusion, connection, and access to our studios and master artists, we will help students develop their creativity and bolster confidence and well-being. And who knows? We may discover our next great studio artist!

Check out current workshops and class offerings at: IlanLaelFoundation.org

PHOTO: PETER JENSEN

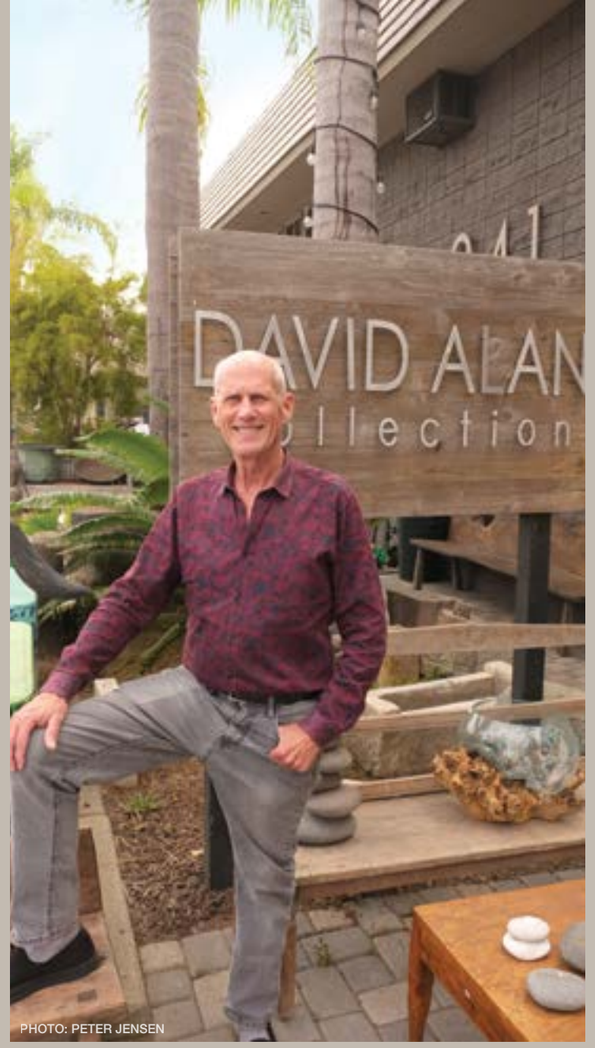


PHOTO: PETER JENSEN

A Life Centered On Beauty

Ilan-Lael supporter David Bardwick seeks and shares beauty in all forms

By Peter Jensen, Ilan-Lael Board of Directors

Polished tree trunks stretch 15 feet or more toward the rafters. Kimonos hang in rows of regal splendor. Rustic jewelry glimmers from vitrines and display shelves. Ancient and new Balinese artworks crowd the floor, showing astonishing craftsmanship as well as a spiritual and devotional sensitivity rarely seen in an industrialized, tech-heavy world.

Most dominant: dozens of Herculean slabs of polished wood with live edges (bark still intact) awaiting a new life as grand, very grand, dining or meeting tables that often weigh over a thousand pounds.

David Alan Bardwick, owner and founder of David Alan Collection in Solana Beach, surrounds himself with three floors of this beauty, as well as his more personal art collection in a comfortable and very calming office. He gathers his store's treasures on his many trips to countries throughout the Far East. In the last two decades, he has made over 50 trips to Bali alone, where he spends a month or more each time. He and his wife Amita have a home there, and David has built and designed others.

Life is not focused on acquisitions and commerce, however, for David and his wife Amita. In Bali, David supports an all-volunteer effort that has delivered thousands of food-and-necessities packages to the rural poor. He began this effort with a friend and Bali resident, Tony van den Hout, about a year into the first Covid epidemic. In India, where she was born, Amita recently spent a month training teachers at the couple's school in Delhi. (Having just returned from a long flight, she was unavailable for this interview.), She opened the school 20 years ago, and it is also funded by the couple's non-profit foundation.

Recently the Bardwicks included Ilan-Lael in their estate planning, earmarking $1 million to help fund our youth-oriented art programs. They feel it is a good—and personal—fit for their philanthropic plans. We began our conversation by asking how he met James Hubbell.

"I'd certainly heard of him. A mutual friend was looking for a private home that could host a fundraiser to benefit Ilan-Lael Foundation's Pacific Rim Park project in Vladivostok. The evenings we and other volunteers spent with Jim while planning the event were just wonderful. We hosted it in our home in Rancho Santa Fe. Amazing! Several bands, even a gospel group, and lots of volunteers.

"Afterwards, I felt I simply had to go with him and others to Vladivostok. We felt a kinship. For me, it was as if Jim was my mentor. I never spoke to him in that way, but he was my kind of ideal man: Renaissance, who created beauty in whatever art and 'beyond-art' that he touched."

David soon came to know his mentor better, both on the trip and after, and realized that he admired the way James did not specialize.

"I had always thought that if I really focused on something I could get very good at it, but I never had interest in being 'the best.' Life is to play, experience lots of stuff, and Jim was a model of that."

We asked if Jim had a mentoring style, knowing that a hundred or more artisans and artists—accomplished or green and searching for direction—had worked on "Hubbell Hill" (James' home and studios in Santa Ysabel) and many park projects around the Pacific Rim.

"I loved that he was shy and fearless! When we got to Vladivostok I asked him 'What do you want me to do?'"

"I think you should meet as many artists within 100 miles of here that you possibly can. That's your job."

"I thought it was an incredible gift," said David. "He thought that I might buy pieces, support the artists, and see if something good would happen. At that time it was still difficult to deal with Russia.

"I bought a lot of art. Many pieces were by artists who had never sold a piece because they were in disfavor with the government and weren't even allowed to sell works. It was a tough time [sighs]. The Russian empire had fallen apart. There was no money. Vladivostok was the home of their Pacific Fleet and every ship was rotting, rusting. They didn't, apparently, even have money to paint their ships to preserve them."

So you were an ambassador of sorts? we asked. Without outright saying so, David tacitly approved of our assessment, while deferring to James.

"Jim being Jim, he somehow knew everybody. The admiral of the Pacific Fleet took us out on his craft. Every evening there was a performance for our little group, the Pearls of the Pacific volunteers. It was something we will never forget."

Thinking about the future of Ilan-Lael and how the Bardwicks' donation might best be used, David said, "If there's a single word that my life has centered on, it's beauty. I would say the same for Jim. So anything that all of us can do to inspire and bring more beauty in the world [is vital]. I'm sure that being surrounded by beauty alters us fundamentally. What we do. Who we are—on a cellular and even genetic level.

"Let's make beauty more available, help people get up there, use it. I'd love to see our donation make it easier to host field trips for students, and that means more staffing and programs. And I want the donation to live and create more support."

We found a line in a book David wrote in 2020 titled "Monster and Me: Conversations, Adventures and Love" that provided his viewpoint on the same matter long ago:

"I seek and share beauty in all forms … it's the truth at some level, but it's not the truth. The truth is unknown. If you figure it out, wait and tell me in my next life. I'm already thoroughly in love with this life the way it is."

Enigmatic, eloquent, seeking, puzzled, fascinated, knowledgeable … two kindred spirits, James Hubbell and David Bardwick, bent on giving life and others their full measure.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF DAVID BARDWICK

Top left: David and coworkers ready a slab of acacia to be made into a table. Above left: candles flicker in a monastery in Upper Mustang (2023). Above right: with trekker friends in Upper Mustang. Annapurna Massif in distance (2022).

Now More Than Ever

New Memorial Art Fund hopes to finish strong

Bequests, such as the long-range estate wishes of the Bardwicks, are a different way to give … and hugely important to the future of Ilan-Lael. Differently, but equally important, the new **James Hubbell Memorial Art Fund** helps us protect and preserve the internationally-recognized home and studios that he and Anne created and named "Ilan-Lael"—a physical center for arts, education, and culture.

The Fund also carries on James' visionary work in the U.S. and beyond in programs like Pacific Rim Park. And, of course, our "bread and butter," **art and nature education in San Diego County for youths and adults, tours, exhibitions, special events, and collaborations with art-making partners and exhibitors here and abroad.**

Our supporters have given over **$85,000 toward our mission in less than a year. Can we reach $100,000 by the end of 2024?**

Please use the convenient donation envelope enclosed in this newsletter to join the effort, or to make an additional gift.

Scan the QR code below to donate online or visit *IlanLaelFoundation.org/donate.*

Thank you!

Below: James and Anne Hubbell at Ilan-Lael in 2023.

PHOTO: JOHN DURANT