



perspectives
ON DESIGN
CAROLINAS

creative ideas
shared by leading
design professionals

AHERN'S ANVIL

Charleston, South Carolina



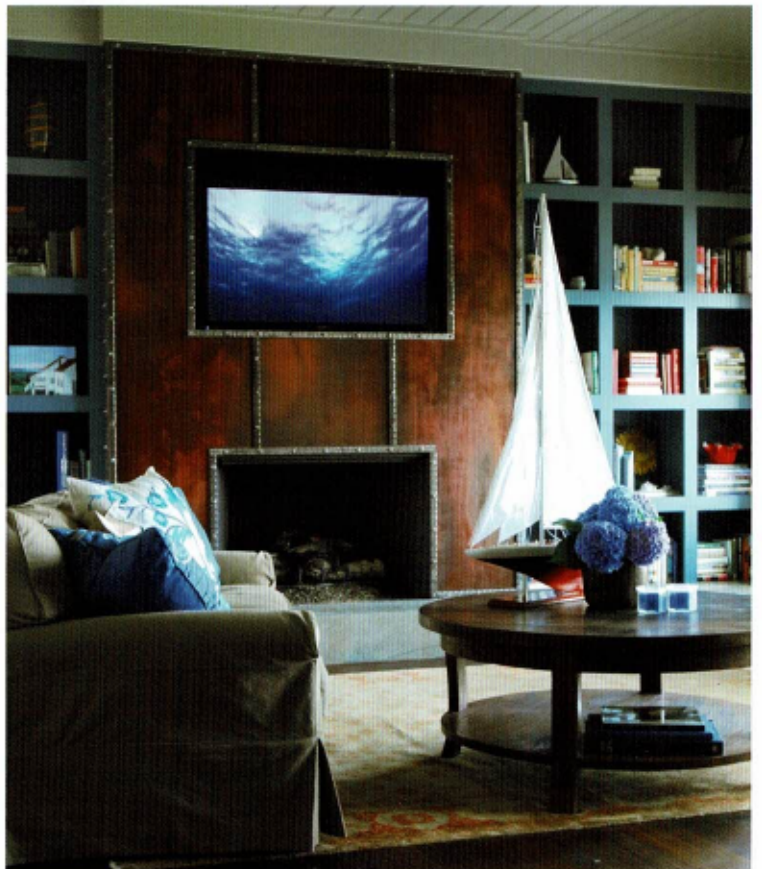
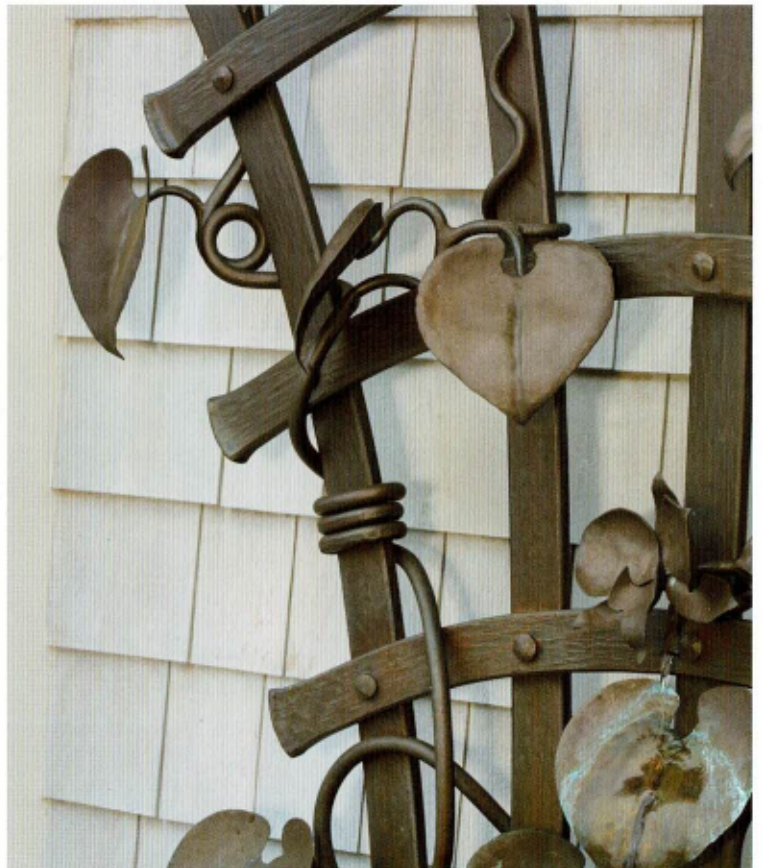
“There’s something magical about being able to manipulate a material that’s so solid and cold into a warm and functional or purely ornamental work of art.”

—Sean Ahern

ABOVE & FACING PAGE: France and the Carolinas seem worlds apart, but they share a rich history of metalwork; I have studied and practiced in both places and I’m inspired by my experiences. My work nods to the local vernacular of metalwork but has more of a global, stylized essence. I never repeat a design, even if clients ask, because every piece should represent the people who will be enjoying it. Whether it’s a mixed media gate or hundreds of linear feet of railing, I personally do all of the conceptualizing and blacksmithing.

Photographs by Keith Bradshaw





“Metalwork should read clearly to passersby but also offer a level of intrigue so that as people examine the art more closely, there are special details to discover.”

—Sean Ahern



ABOVE & FACING PAGE BOTTOM LEFT: The steel and mesh bar sconces complement the chandeliers, which I designed to have a handmade paper shading element and frosted glass behind the mesh for soft illumination.

Photographs by Keith Bradshaw

FACING PAGE TOP LEFT: I've had all sorts of interesting commissions. One client turned an old stone church into a castle and wanted several hand-forged pieces, including elaborate three-foot-tall andirons. The process of heating, hammering and working the metal into shape is tremendously labor intensive but quite satisfying.

Photograph by Warren Lieb

FACING PAGE TOP RIGHT: I like doing outdoor fountains because they present creative and technical challenges—where the water will fall and circulate, how the material will weather. My work connects architecture and nature.

Photograph by Keith Bradshaw

FACING PAGE BOTTOM RIGHT: Mixing mediums affords endless stylistic opportunities. I echoed the room's nautical theme with the fireplace design by oxidizing metal in my studio for a few months to give it a strong patina and then banding it with polished, hammered steel rivets—it has the character of a great rusted ship and the wall emits a warm glow when the fire is going.

Photograph by Paula Illingworth