

✦ INNER
GARDEN

ANNUAL REPORT 2013



Remember – Roerich, 1924



Preface

Alchemy is an Art of Change - the evolution of one thing to another by a carefully conducted sequence of transformation that brings the Arcanum within to light. The processes involved are valid for both the internal and external. Practice in the lab, study of cryptical works, meditation, reapplication in the lab - together these practices may lead to a series of internal and external changes. Practitioners of Alchemy could be qualified in modern day language as Managers of Change. Our students may go by the title of **Philosophers of Nature**, but a most interesting common denominator of those who study the Noble Art is the experience of a continuous and profound metamorphosis, similar to the way a dedicated effort in any other Art may change us.

Traditions and wisdom of old continue to serve as a basis for study, as these traditions aimed to pass on universal laws and universally applicable knowledge, which have been tried and rectified over many centuries. This may help as a foundation as well as enhance our flexibility to adapt to the changing world around us. Many active Orders and Brotherhoods still aim to perpetuate such ancient and noble wisdom.

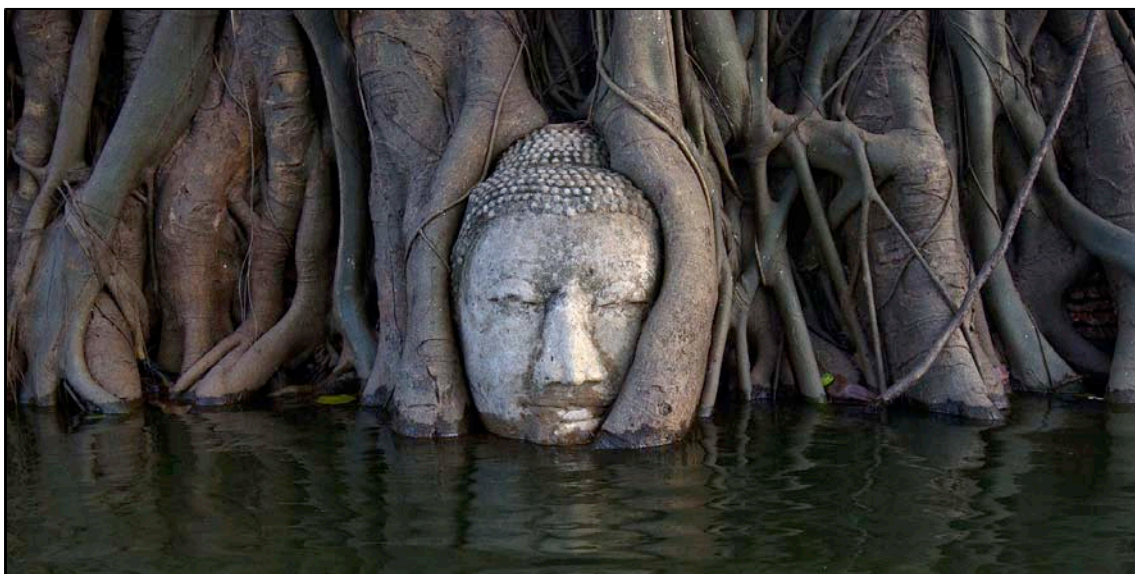
One such brotherhood is the Order of the Frères Aînés de la Rose+Croix. The story goes that it was in the Bayt al Hikmah and the Arab world that the founders of this Order studied Alchemy. At the time of persecution of the Templars in 1314 a small group of Knights managed to escape to England, with the aim to return to France once the political climate would improve. So they did, and in 1317 they founded the Order. This was no military Order, but one dedicated to pass on a secret path to the **Philosopher's Stone**. The Knights felt they owed their knowledge to the Arabs who had taught them. Hence the Règle of 1317 contains an honourable mention of Saladin.

Having been part of the Frères Aînés, I am grateful for the teachings I received and honours bestowed: the Grand Cross of Merit, the title of Grandmaster – the only one besides the current Grandmaster. Unfortunately, recent blogs under name of the Order contain a political element that cannot be reconciled with the Order's original tolerant outlook. A change not for the better, and one I choose to forfeit. The Oath of the Order of “simplicity, charity, and obedience (to the Holy Hierarchy)” may be better pursued independent from this development. However, I won't forget the teachings and those who taught me. I move on. I am thankful and will remember.

Moreh.

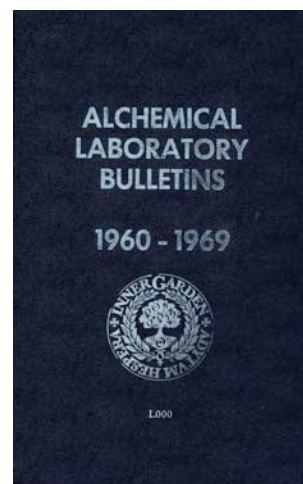


Activities 2013

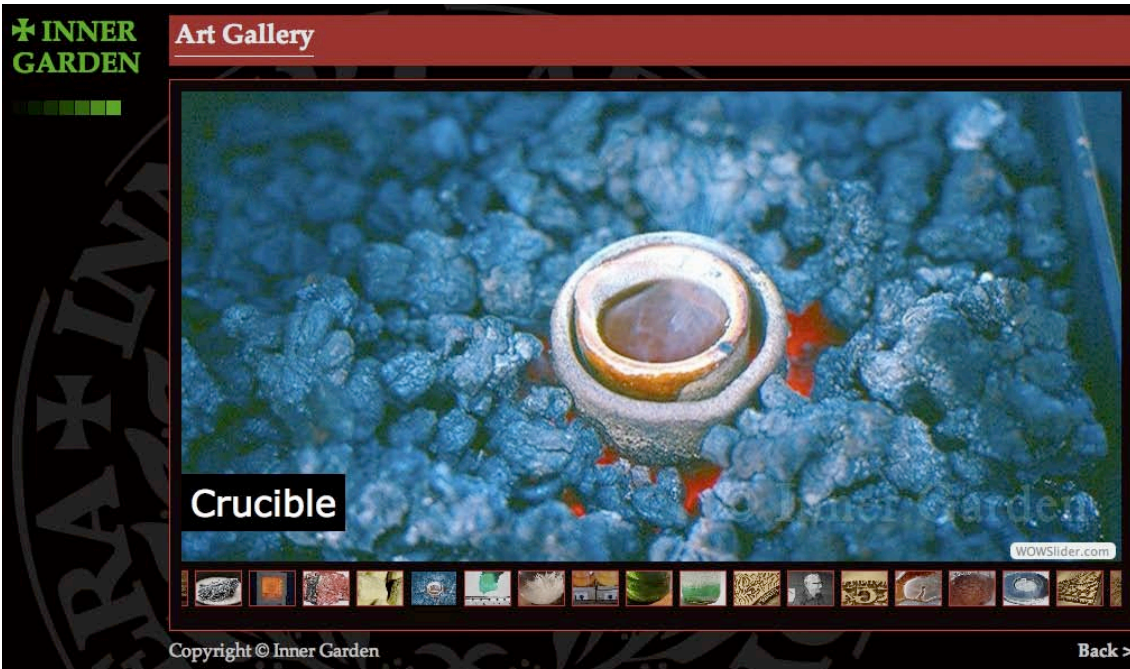


This year we added a preliminary exercise called **Vigil of Nature** to our introductory Alchemy course. This exercise used to be given by Frater Albertus to a number of his students, and has now been clarified and written down as an exercise by Br. JML in addition to note N000. It presents a practice that is intended to help beginning students to develop an intimacy with Nature and an inner link with the elements and forces and laws of Nature – a link that lies at the roots of our Art.

The “Turba Philosophorum” or “Assembly of the Alchemical Philosophers” from the 12th century CE is a good example of the insights and wisdom that may be gathered from a steady observation of Nature. The Turba introduces many of the key themes of the alchemical tradition in a number of alchemical dicta. Such reading may complement the practice of the Vigil of Nature. **Inner Garden** also supplements reading material to warm the student up to practical operations. For that purpose the Alchemical Laboratory Bulletins 1960 – 1969 were digitized and bundled as pdf.

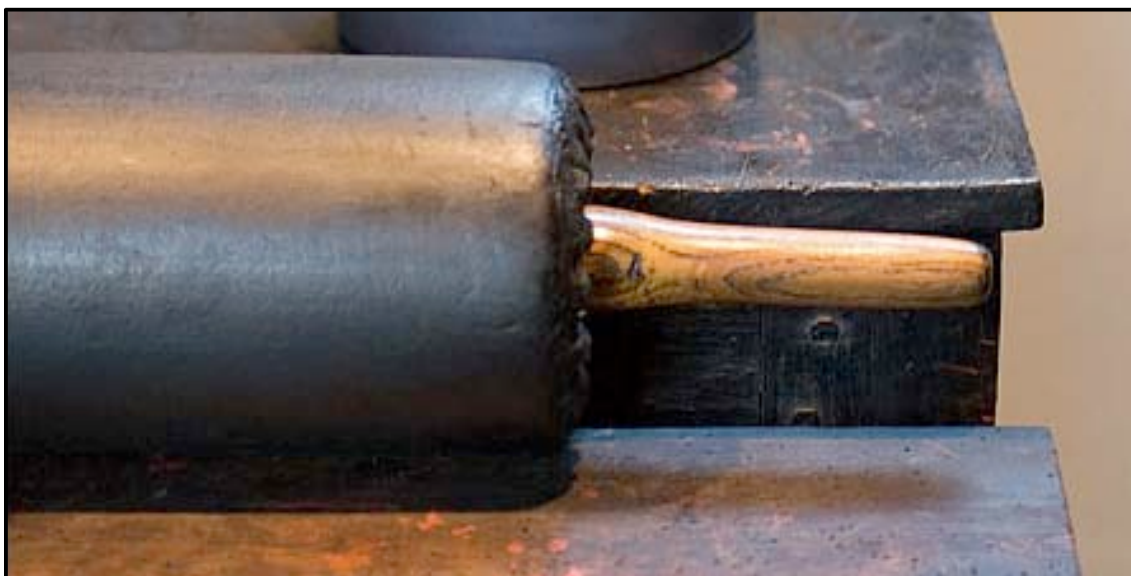


An Art Gallery has been added to our website. You can now browse through a slideshow of strange, curious, beautiful, rare and everyday pictures from the Royal Art. It is at times amazing to see the changes of the matters we work with. The changes in fragrance and colours are considered most valuable and telling, so the occasional photograph helps to record and remember.



Thanks goes out among others to Br. Ibn Hamda and Dr. Schein for their contribution to the Gallery. We welcome contributions of other pictures as we intend to expand the gallery in the future.

Publications



Inner Garden did not release new publications this year. However, there is an interesting book which will be made available soon, namely: “Azoth” by Basil Valentine.

Acquisitions

Moreh has donated an ioSafe Rugged Portable Hard Drive to the Foundation. A significant part of our library and lessons are distributed and archived digitally, so the importance of a good durable backup is obvious. This rugged disk is quite well protected from the Elements and will keep our digital archive safe.



Research

Highlighted in this report is a 2013 paper titled: “The Gentle Taming of the Dragon” that has been added to the Partner section by Br. Ibn Hamda. The Dragon in this case refers to “Galena”, the main ore of Lead. This is ore presents an important starting matter for many alchemical works. For example, it is used for a specific **Wet Path** to the Philosopher's Stone (with vinegar, also called the acetate path). This paper explains and presents a method to convert Galena into lead carbonates using mild conditions, that thus preserve the vital seed and result in the easy to process Cerussite mineral (which is more difficult and expensive to obtain directly).

It requires diligence and good armor (a glass and mask).

Galena
We begin with grinding galena into an irreducible powder. The finer the better. We recommend starting outdoors with a tightly woven cloth rag and a hammer. Wrap your matter in the cloth rag then pound it with the hammer and it will crumble through into tiny pieces and eventually into a powder. Be careful so fine galena particles will penetrate the cloth and contaminate your work area, so work outside or place the cloth in a strong plastic bag.

Galena
Once the galena is powdered, continue to grind it in a mortar and pestle until very fine. Small particle size here is very important as it speeds up the conversion process greatly. We recommend using a sieve with a mesh size of less than 50 microns (aquarium suppliers have nylon mesh with sizes 1, or nylon 40 mesh from various suppliers). With access to a jet mill, or even a simple hobby tank tumbler fine particle size is reached with minimal effort. In the example below we use a small hobby tumbler with 500gms of galena in a stainless steel tank with stainless steel balls. We obtain about 200gms of sub 50 micron powder each 24 hours of tumbling.

Galena
The second matter is Niter. Niter is a natural form of sodium carbonate (washing soda) along with bicarbonates and a small amount of other salts, which was ubiquitous in ancient Egypt and in fact used the manufacture of modern household cleaning chemicals. Niter was used by the ancient Egyptians for household cleaning, steel purification, food preservation, leather processing, mineralization, and other uses too many to count. It was used later by the Romans for glass and ceramic making, as well as a metallurgical flux.

Calcination with Fortified Alkali
As for the materials, we will need for each part of galena powder by weight, 1.5 parts sodium carbonate and 1.5 parts distilled water. In our process, we will subject the Galena-Niter solution to moderate heat (55-60 deg C), stirring (300 rpm or more, but hand stirring will not work) while bubbling air through the liquid. Thus we will need three pieces of equipment that can be readily had or made. First we need a stirring device. An overhead lab stirrer is ideal due to the high power of overhead stirrers and for resistant rapid conversions. However overhead stirrers are very expensive. Half as expensive are low electromagnetic stirrers which are a good choice if you have one. Low cost expensive, is a home made magnetic stirrer. For this you will need a computer fan (1 inch diameter will do), two strong neodymium magnets, and a speed controller, which can be a DC to Pulse Width Modulator (PWM), bought from hobby electronics stores for cheap. Simply glue the magnets on the fan with contact cement and connect the fan to the PWM. The fan will drive the stir rod in the container or beaker. In our setup, the fan is mounted on a wooden board and covered with a shallow pyrex dish cover. The other piece of equipment is an air pump. A small aquarium air pump (4-10 liters of air/minute) and an aquarium stone diffuser will do just fine. Additionally if you do not have a hot plate stirrer, a heat source is needed to raise the water temperature to about 55-60 C. An infrared spiral heating lamp from pet stores or a halogen lamp will work well if you surround your beaker or flask with aluminum foil.

Free stirrer and PWM
Setup and components

Once we have our setup and our finely ground galena, we have the option of removing free sulphur from our powder. This can be done by a simple roasting up to 120 degrees C for about a day. This must be done under a fume hood or inside an anoxic vapour mantle enclosed as well. Alternatively we can proceed with the conversion and remove the free sulphur later.

We prepare the carbonate solution by dissolving the carbonate salt in distilled water. Then the stirrer is attached to connect the aquarium air pump to the solution. The air can be optionally passed through an aquarium aeration diffuser to increase oxygenation efficiency, or simply let the air bubble into the solution. Air is to be injected at all times. Stirring can commence now, and the heat source turned on. At around 55-60 degrees C we can slowly introduce the powdered galena.

The speed of the reaction will depend greatly on particle size and stirring frequency. The low cost home-made magnetic stirrer gave a conversion time of about 48 hours at 55-60 deg C. Some free sulphur can be seen if it was not removed by calcination of the powdered ore. This can be separated by filtration (filter will flow), or eliminated by adding sodium carbonate and continued stirring with air to convert the sulphur to the water soluble sodium sulphate. The precipitation of free sulphur is a good simple indicator of the progress of the conversion reaction, hence our choice not to roast it out at the beginning.

Free sulphur after 12 hours
After 24 hrs
48 hrs

After the conversion, the solution is decanted (it contains dissolved sodium sulphate which can be recovered for other uses), then the converted ore is washed several times with water, until the solution pH is neutral, to remove the sodium carbonate. This is important for the acetate work as we want lead acetate not sodium acetate. The resultant powder colour should be light grey to white, depending on the ore quality.

The method is essentially a wet calcination using mild alkali salts under temperatures of about 55 degrees C. Normally mild alkali salts are too weak to react with Galena, so the salts need to be given an extra notch of power from the **Fifth Fire**, as it is referred to in some circles.

Partners



In line with what has been mentioned in the preface, we would like to emphasize that Inner Garden is open to both men and women and that we do not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion and sexual orientation. We are all connected. Inner Garden is non-political and not a religion. We are in search of wisdom that transcends the duality of either/or and is best classified as a **Philosophical Society**. We consider tolerance an important quality, which may help bring about the kindness that is sacred in human nature.

However, we do not profess blind tolerance and we do not close our eyes to those who intentionally harm people or our environment. A healthy environment, freedom and stability provide the foundation which allows us to practice our Art in peace. We are grateful for the opportunity we have been given to study our Noble Arts and the **workings of Nature**, and we believe it is appropriate that we remain watchful and vigilant to defend our freedom and environment. This way we can add something of value to the greater good as well as to our own lives. This form of care for society has been interwoven into many branches of our tradition – in the west, for example, under the banner of “Chivalry”. As was taught within Order of the Frères Aînés de la Rose+Croix, this included an Earthly and a Celestial Chivalric component.

In light of the Celestial Chivalry, the Frères Aînés bid us to remember that “one day we will leave this world for the next”. This was not meant as a message to renounce the world. It was meant as a reminder to try and find those values in this world that look beyond the material, and to cherish and transmit the virtues that are limitless. It was meant to inspire a legacy of **kindness, compassion,**

care, simplicity, humility. To add something of value to the greater good, acts of kindness and courage, that may live on after we have left this world. Non Nobis...

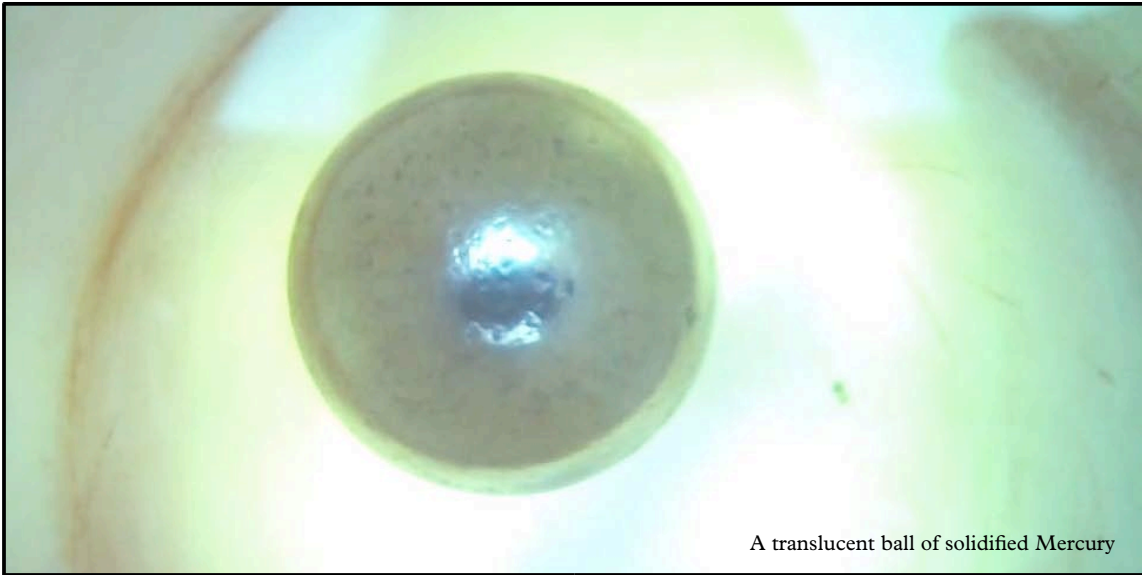
Speaking of Courage, the words of Ramon Lull¹ speak to us from ages ago: “If you want to find true courage and bravery, you will find it where you see faith, hope, charity, justice, strength, loyalty and other noble virtues. Chivalry is not the mere possession of a horse or armour; rather it is an inward possession of the Knight who properly trains his horse, himself and his son with good teachings and virtuous works. In the practice of knighthood the quality of inward resolve is more important than that of physical strength.”

This inward resolve springs from within. This was one of the reasons why the Templar pledge of “Chastity” was excluded from the Oath of the Frères Aînés. Even if this would be a beneficial part of the path for some at a certain stage of life, forcing such a resolve upon a knight by Oath and Initiation would run contrary to the natural development of inner resolve. It would force the knight to renounce part of their earthly existence, rather than being in the world. Such a dictate could affect the opposite, and increase a longing for worldly matters, eventually binding to them with chains. Instead, by **partaking of life** without remorse, one can experience being in the world, but not of it. The Alchemist has his or her head in the cloud, yet stands with both feet on the ground. In daily life this could mean we are tolerant to our fellow-man from the perspective of the abode in the clouds, where we find many common ideals and universal concepts. However, as students of Alchemy we also are taught to remain grounded, so that we may recognize in the here and now whether the application of these concepts and manifestation of these ideals is in sync with the world around us.

Since our forum is private and Inner Garden does not use a blog or twitter, this annual report is one of the few public transmissions about who we are and what we do. In light of our connection with the Rosicrucian Tradition - a connection which precedes the establishment of modern Rosicrucian Orders - and our association with the Frères Aînés, we found it necessary to elaborate on our philosophical viewpoint, and to refute misconceptions that could arise on the basis of recent web blogs about the Frères Aînés.

In 2013 the Foundation received much interest and a select number of candidate-Partners have been admitted. It should be noted that the specific number is not important, as we grow from strength to strength. With the inflow of a few candidates with an orientation towards Indian Alchemy some interesting discussion with regard to Indian and Burmese Alchemy followed. No admissions of Partners took place.

¹ Ramon Lull was a Knight, Philosopher and Alchemist who lived in the 13th century



A translucent ball of solidified Mercury

Annual Account

A copy of our Balance Sheet is available on request for donors to the foundation. We would like to thank all donors and all those who contributed their time and effort in transcribing, translation and compiling research notes and lessons.

