



Southern Highland Craft Guild in Asheville, NC, Features Works by Guild Members

The Southern Highland Craft Guild in Asheville, NC, will present the *Art of Detailing*, featuring works by Guild Members, on view in the Folk Art Center's Focus Gallery, from Feb. 23 through May 20, 2024.

The Southern Highland Craft Guild opens its first focus gallery exhibition of 2024 with *Art of Detailing*, featuring both traditional and contemporary craft by five members of the Guild. The exhibit will feature wool and silk by Judy Ott, pottery by Michael and Ruth Rutkowsky, sculptural and functional brooms by Peter Werner, colorful glass-blown vessels by Kathryn Adams, and foiled-stamped vessels by Kelsey Schissel.

Originally from New York, Judy Ott is a fairly new member of the Southern Highland Craft Guild (2021). She creates artful apparel in her Asheville, NC studio using techniques such as mixing yarns with varying shrinkage to create three-dimensional cloth, adding magic and surprise to both her felting and weaving work. "Almost all of my work features wool and silk. I love the way the wool shrinks and the silk does not. It allows for texture and nuance of the piece," states Ott. "Both of the felted pieces in the exhibit have a silk base and use merino wool. The woven piece is cotton, silk and merino wool where again the wool shrinks and the cotton and silk do not. That is the reason the piece looks so textural."

Husband and wife Michael and Ruth Rutkowsky are potters with over 65 years of combined studio experience, each creating their own line of work. Their studio is in the foothills of the Black Mountains in Burnsville, NC.

Michael (member since 1989) says, "Mine is a less self-conscious approach to art. Using simple tools and materials spontaneously allowing the ongoing process to suggest its own variations encouraging a more intuitive approach to creativity. My materials are mixed from borrowed formulas that I have adjusted over the years to suit my purpose."

Joining the Guild 30 years later in 2019, Ruth Rutkowsky's work is deeply inspired by water and sky, featuring accents of blue in almost every piece. "Using the sgraffito (etching) technique in parts of my process,



Work by Kathryn Adams

"I have developed a line of work that is purposefully spiritual in nature yet is versatile to include pieces with social commentary or a commemorative message. I invite custom orders for my etched ware."

The sculptural and functional brooms on display are by former University of South Carolina professor, avid demonstrator, and student of master craftsmen Ralph Gates and Carlson Tuttle, Peter Werner. Hand-crafted brooms have traditionally been made in the Southeast by both African-American and Appalachian peoples. Using traditional techniques, Werner crafts two different types of brooms – ones with wooden handles and smaller ones without handles, serving both decorative and functional purposes.

The Southern Highland Craft Guild is a non-profit, educational organization established in 1930 to cultivate the crafts and makers of the Southern Highlands for the purpose of shared resources, education, marketing and conservation. The Southern Highland Craft Guild is an authorized concessioner of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The Folk Art Center is located at Milepost 382 of the Blue Ridge Parkway, just north of the Highway 70 entrance in east Asheville, NC.

Items will be available for purchase online soon. Until then, you can purchase these items through the Folk Art Center by contacting us by e-mail at (info@craft-guild.org) or calling 828/298-7928 starting February 23, 2024.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Center at 828/298-7928 or visit (www.southernhighlandguild.org).

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