



Local artisans gear up for the first American Craft Week



How does it do: Potter Marcia Bugg demonstrates her skill while interested parties watch.

PHOTO COURTESY GROVEWOOD GALLERY

by Ursula Gullow

The craft arts have defined Western North Carolina culture for decades. A survey released in 2008 by Handmade in America indicates that the professional craft industry makes quite an impact on local economics as well.

According to the study, \$206.5 million is generated each year in Western North Carolina via artists, consumers, retail galleries, craft schools, nonprofit organizations, craft suppliers and craft publishers. (Visit handmadeinamerica.org for more details of the report.)

Nationally, the craft arts contribute over \$13.8 billion to the economy each year (codacraft.org). That statistic inspired an initiative by national craft lobbyists to proclaim Oct. 1-10 "American Craft Week," which has been officially recognized by both Governor Beverly Perdue and Mayor Terry Bellamy.

In celebration of this year's first annual American Craft Week, galleries, museums, craft organizations and schools from all 50 states will hold events to raise awareness of the craft arts. Here in Western North Carolina, local participants will hold open studio tours, trunk shows, demonstrations, exhibit openings and workshops.

Pattiy Torno, a local fiber artist who plans

to participate in the first annual American Craft week says it's essential to recognize and support the local craft sector. "Asheville has gotten a free ride on the backs of artists and crafts people. We [artists] are one of the main attractions to town. We are a huge draw for the city. The arts have always been a draw."

Visitors to Asheville, explains Torno, are likely to pay for lodging, meals and admission to places like the Biltmore Estate. "But they can walk around the River Arts District all day and they may not buy anything." In other words, restaurants and hotels are guaranteed a boost from visitors attracted to Asheville's creative community — while the creative community isn't guaranteed the same financial rewards.

In spite of her critique, Torno admits that she personally has benefitted from the flow of tourists to her own Curve Studios, prominently situated in the River Arts District.

"We have so many phenomenal craft people in Asheville and such stellar artists," says Torno, "Ultimately it's about getting people to understand the difference between buying pottery directly from a local potter as opposed to buying from a franchise like Pottery Barn."

Visit exploreasheville.com for a full list of craft week events.

This list focuses on Asheville-area events. Please visit exploreasheville.com for regional American Craft Week events, including Jackson and Madison Counties, and events at the John C. Campbell Folk School.

Asheville Art in the Park

Saturday, Oct. 2
Beginning at 10 a.m. and lasting all day
60 regional artists representing the full spectrum of professional craft
Located in Pack Square Park, downtown Asheville

Daily craft demonstrations at the Folk Art Center

10 a.m. — 4 p.m. daily
Scheduled demonstrations include: print-making, hand-building with clay, jewelry making, corn-shuck dolls and wheat weaving, broom-making, lamp-worked glass and polymer clay sculpture.
382 Blue Ridge Vis (828) 298-7928

Daily Demos at Asheville NC Home Crafts

- Oct. 1: "Sit & Knit" knitting instructions & demo — 5:30 p.m. till 7 p.m.
 - Oct. 2: Handspinning demo — 10 a.m. till 1 p.m.
 - Oct. 4: knit & felting a hat demo — 10 a.m. till 1 p.m.
 - Oct. 5: hairpin lace scarf demo — 10 a.m. till 1 p.m.
 - Oct. 6: basket-weaving demo (napkin basket) — 10 a.m. till 1 p.m.
 - Oct. 7: knitting & felting a doll — noon till 2 p.m.
 - Oct. 8: "sit & knit" knitting instructions & demo — 5:30 p.m. till 7 p.m.
 - Oct. 9: basket-weaving demo (egg basket) — 10 a.m. till 1 p.m.
- Grove Arcade, 1 Page Ave., Suite 134

Textile dyeing and printing home furnishings & wearables

Oct. 1 and Oct. 2, 10 a.m. — noon
Barbara Zaretsky of BZDesign will demonstrate dyeing with natural dyes and hand block printing
Cotton Mill Studios,
122 Riverside Drive: Studio D

Rug Weaver Wence Martinez: Trunk show and slide lecture

Oct. 8, 4-9 p.m. (lecture begins at 6 p.m.)
Curve Studios located on Riverside Drive

Meet the Maker: Alan Daigre

Saturday, Oct. 9, noon — 5 p.m.
Chair maker and hand-tool craftsman Alan Daigre will be at Grovewood Gallery demonstrating his technique and inspiration.

Open Studio tours at Grovewood

Saturday, Oct. 9, 10 a.m.
Free, self-guided tours of studios at Grovewood Gallery.