

KENTUCKY CRAFT LUMINARIES

Sharing the Stories



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Kentucky Craft Luminaries: Sharing the Stories
Frazier History Museum
November 19, 2018 – March 24, 2019

Background

In Kentucky, creative arts are a vibrant part of everyday life. Musicians and storytellers, quilters and boat builders, master cooks and gardeners — all the people who take pride in *handmade* and *homegrown* — make up our heritage and play a key role in our economy. Early settlers made what they needed for their own household, work, and entertainment, and traded with their neighbors. Weavers, potters, glassblowers, basketmakers, and metalsmiths saw that others valued their artistry and would barter or buy their wares. The Frazier History Museum, in collaboration with the Kentucky Craft History & Education Association (KCHEA), presents *Kentucky Craft Luminaries: Sharing the Stories*, an exhibit featuring artworks and stories from some of the most accomplished and talented artisans in the Commonwealth.

Exhibit Pieces

Today the craftspeople of Kentucky continue to work in both traditional and innovative craft forms, influenced by their predecessors while blazing paths for the next generation. *Kentucky Craft Luminaries: Sharing the Stories* celebrates this legacy with a selection of artworks made by Kentucky's leading artists and craftspeople. On display will be artworks from a wide variety of folk art and craft traditions, including quilts, ceramics, beadwork, fiber art, woodcarvings, furniture, and string instruments.

Each object embodies the unique vision and craftsmanship of the luminary who made it. The acrylic-painted woodcarvings of bespectacled geese wearing blue shoes and hats reflect the whimsy of Minnie Adkins, a folk artist from Isonville who has been whittling ever since her father gave her a pocketknife in the 1940s. Jennifer Heller Zurick's vessels, which are woven out of black willow bark that Zurick harvested from the banks of the Kentucky River, pay tribute to the beauty and bounty of nature. And Owen County textile artist Rebekka Seigel's quilt spotlights the legendary Appalachian folk singer and dulcimer player Jean Ritchie.



"Jean Ritchie" by Rebekka Seigel. Quilt.

Artists

The 18 artists in the show constitute a fifth of the more than 90 individuals that have been interviewed over the last decade as part of KCHEA's Craft Luminary oral history project. A video in the gallery space will share excerpts of the interviews conducted with some of these artists, along with craft collectors and organization members. Each artist has her own unique relationship with the state of Kentucky.

Leona Waddell, for example, started making baskets as a child in Cub Run, Kentucky, then went on to co-found the Mammoth Cave Basket Makers Guild. George Wakim was a violinist when he left his native Lebanon to study civil engineering at the University of Kentucky, but in Lexington a seasoned luthier showed him how to make his own ouds and violins. And for 40 years Mary and Robin Reed have been making art with corn shucks, poplar bark, and other materials harvested from their creekside farm in the Daniel Boone National Forest.

Programming

The Frazier will be working closely with members of the Kentucky Craft History and Education Association to celebrate the Commonwealth's craft heritage through a diverse lineup of events and activities. The programming includes workshops, moderated conversations, artisan demonstrations, school field trips, teacher development sessions, homeschool programs, and family activity days.



Collaboration

The Frazier Museum is proud to collaborate with the KCHEA on this project. The Frazier documents and reinterprets stories from Kentucky's history, and the KCHEA is leading the effort to document the craft history of Kentucky, bringing stories to life and making them accessible to the public in an educational format.

Additional Info

The exhibiting artists are Minnie Adkins, Isonville; Philis Alvic, Lexington; Dan Neil Barnes, Lexington; Dave Caudill, Louisville; Wayne Ferguson, Louisville; Linda Fifield, McKee; Sarah Frederick, Louisville; Susan Goldstein, Lexington; Walter Hyleck, Berea; Terry Ratliff, Martin; Mary and Robin Reed, Irvine; Arturo Alonzo Sandoval, Lexington; Rebekka Seigel, Owenton; Leona Waddell, Cecilia; George Wakim,

Lexington; LaVon Williams, Lexington; and Jennifer Heller Zurick, Berea.

LexArts provided funding support for *Kentucky Craft Luminaries: Sharing the Stories* through its Fund for the Arts. The exhibit was originally presented at LexArts, August 27 – October 10, 2015, featuring different artworks by the same craft luminaries, as well as Tim Lewis, Isonville; Frank Neat, Russell Springs; and the late Fred Shepard of Murray, Kentucky. Additional support was provided by numerous private contributors with a matching donation from UBS.

About the Kentucky Craft History & Education Association

The Kentucky Craft History & Education Association is an organization that gathers, conserves, and presents the history and ongoing impact of crafts in Kentucky. The KCHEA documents and preserves this

history through the individual stories of artists, leaders, and significant contributors; the documents, publications, photographs, and written papers that record the details of craft artists and institutions; and the crafts, tools, and materials that illuminate the traditional and creative processes.

For more information please visit www.kchea.org.

About the Frazier History Museum

The Frazier History Museum is a world-class museum located on historic West Main Street in downtown Louisville. The museum is the home of the Kentucky Bourbon Trail® Welcome Center, the official starting point of both the Kentucky Bourbon Trail®, and the Louisville Bourbon District, a unique walkable experience with distillery attractions. The Frazier shares a commitment to drinking responsibly.

An affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, the Frazier documents and reinterprets stories from history using artifacts, gallery talks, and live daily performances by a talented staff of costumed actors known as “teaching artists.” The museum houses one of the largest collections of toy soldiers and historic miniatures on permanent public display in the world, *The Stewart Collection*.

For more information please call (502) 753-5663 or visit www.fraziermuseum.org.



“A” Teapot on Tray” by Walter Hyleck. Ceramics.

(Header) Detail of “Pattern Fusion No. 12: Motherboard 3” by Arturo Alonzo Sandoval. Fiber art.