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TENNESSEE EMERGING MAKERS GAIN VALUABLE SKILLS FROM MENTORS

Master craft artists pass down knowledge to carry on Tennessee craft traditions

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (February 16, 2016) – **Three emerging Tennessee artists are making the most of their opportunity to work as an apprentice under highly skilled master artists in Tennessee Craft’s [Master Artist Apprentice Program](#).** Now in its seventh year, the Master Artist Apprentice Program produces time-honored and innovative results from a partnership between Tennessee Craft (formerly TACA) and the Tennessee Arts Commission. The program is designed to carefully select and reward three artist pairs with a grant to ensure craft art is not lost in Tennessee. By connecting emerging and experienced makers with resources and opportunities that continue Tennessee’s fine craft tradition, Tennessee Craft accomplishes their mission and artists make their mark on our state’s handmade legacy.

All artists in the program are asked to choose challenging goals that will catapult their skills and knowledge as craft artists and business people. The Master Artist Apprentice Program was created to help artists reach the next level of their professional development from one-on-one mentorship, not typically available in most learning environments.

[Apprentice Lesley Patterson-Marx \(Nashville\)](#), an instructor and monoprint studio artist, looking to improve her skills and career in textile arts is partnered with **[Master Artist Teresa Hays \(Franklin\)](#)**, a textile artist specializing in hand-dyed and marbled printed clothing and accessories. Teresa says, “Every good pupil challenges the teacher and every good teacher learns from the pupil. I am hoping this apprenticeship will lead to a longer conversation between us that will continue to push us both further with our work.”

Lesley and Teresa are deep into their readings, research and field visits. The next step for Lesley is to set up a large marbling tank to print on fabric using traditional and experimental patterning techniques. They plan to have a collection of 30 fabrics printed in the next 90 days. By the end of their seven month commitment, Lesley will have designed garments that are wearable works of art as well as artwork meant to be displayed. She will also have a reference book of fabrics to further her skills after the program is complete. Follow their work together on their **[Facebook page - MAAP: Exploring the Surface with Textiles](#)** dedicated to the project.

[Apprentice Rose Spurrier \(Knoxville\)](#) is learning to make sculptural forms using slab, coil and pinch techniques with clay while experimenting with various surface decoration methods. In addition to mastering skills, she is learning to see and recognize good form in order to make visually complex work that reflects her individual voice in clay. **[Master Lisa Kurtz \(Knoxville\)](#)** says, “I feel strongly as an Appalachian potter that it is my role as a craftsman/potter and teacher to preserve, teach and carry on the techniques and good craftsmanship that came before us to today’s young artists and craftsmen. They are, after all, our future.” Lisa and Rose will also dive into marketing and selling artwork through various platforms.

"I want to participate in the Master Artist Apprentice Program because it offers a wonderful opportunity to allow artists to share and grow within the art community and to be able to provide an appreciative public with a stronger, more dynamic range of craft artists," says [Master Jammie Williams \(Ashland City\)](#). Jammie Williams is a professionally trained oil painter and sculptor who lives and works in Nashville, Tennessee. He learned traditional sculpting techniques while serving for several years as chief assistant to nationally known sculptor and former Master Artist Apprentice Program Master Artist Alan LeQuire. Jammie has sculpted many portraits for the Country Music Hall of Fame including; Roy Clark, Barbara Mandrell, Charlie McCoy and Reba McEntire among several others. He is also a member of the National Sculpture Society and the Portrait Society of America.

Jammie is paired with [Apprentice Brenda Stein \(Nashville\)](#), independent studio artist and woodturner. Brenda's work can be found in select galleries and many private collections, as well as the permanent collection of the Tennessee State Museum. For her time in the Master Artist Apprentice Program, Brenda is exploring clay sculpture, which is a new medium for her. She will learn to cast and mold human heads and hands. This requires the study of human anatomy and learning classical sculpting techniques using proportion systems, mold making and casting in plaster, plastic resin, rubber and polyurethane foam as well as all safety protocols for each medium. Brenda's goals are to create one 1/2 life-size detailed human head, two 1/3 life-size heads based on her own artistic vision, and three sets of hands portraying various expressions.

The public can experience the results of this year's awarded pairs in an exhibit held at the Tennessee Art Commission's gallery September 23 – November 11, 2016.

For more information please visit: <http://tennesseecraft.org/programs/maap/>

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About Tennessee Craft

The Tennessee Association of Craft Artists (TACA) is now Tennessee Craft. Since 1965, the organization has worked to continue and create Tennessee's fine craft tradition. With more than 500 members throughout the state, Tennessee Craft serves as the premier connecting point for local, independent makers and their audiences through Craft Fairs, exhibitions, professional development and educational programs.

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