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Throw down with N.C. potters at Mint Museum Randolph

By Michael J. Solender

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Exploring the storied, rich tradition of North Carolina pottery can involve traversing the entire state, from the historic Catawba Valley and Seagrove to deep into the mountain communities of the Blue Ridge and beyond.

On Saturday, area residents will find 50 of the state’s top potters displaying a variety of work all under one tent at the 10th annual Potters Market Invitational at Mint Museum Randolph. As many as 2,000 visitors are expected.

“It is an extraordinary gathering,” said Andrew Glasgow, 51, former director of the American Craft Council. “Visitors will find the best group of North Carolina potters in one place at one time.”

Glasgow will be on hand for the event, providing a keynote lecture on “Looking at North Carolina Pottery with a Collector’s Eye.”

“We look forward to showcasing the wide variety of styles and techniques created across the state,” said Barbara Perry, former Mint Museum curator of decorative arts and a volunteer for Delhom Service League, the beneficiary of the event. “Visitors will see pottery that ranges from traditional, such as ash and salt glazed pottery, to more cutting-edge work such as that displaying Japanese influence and style.”

Perry said potters are selected to participate based on the quality of their work. Many sharing their work come from long, pedigreed family histories of craft with traditions being passed down from generations, while others have been trained at some of the most celebrated ceramics schools in the country.

- PREVIEW

Potters Market Invitational

WHEN: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday.

WHERE: Mint Museum Randolph, 2730 Randolph Road.

TICKETS: \$10 (includes museum admission).

DETAILS: 704-337-2000;

www.mintmuseum.org.

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Tammy Leigh Brooks, 54, of Hickory is excited to be presenting at Potters Market for her 10th consecutive year. The highly regarded potter and self-described "raw artist" is known for sculptural pieces built using a coil technique. Her unusual and elaborate "Polish Chickens" are on display and part of the permanent collection at the Mint Museum, Randolph.

Work on display will range in price from \$25 to \$4,000.

Glasgow, who will lead a tour of the Potters Market after his talk, said North Carolina pottery holds an important and significant place for historians and collectors.

"The multigenerational heritage of North Carolinians making pots extends back eight or nine generations to the 18th century," Glasgow said. "This is only rivaled out West by some Native American Indian tribes. Secondly, the ability to support as many unique potters who effectively market their work, show in galleries and experience the type of community we have here in North Carolina is truly special."

The event is organized by and benefits the Mint Museum's Delhom Service League, an all-volunteer organization and ceramics affiliate of the museum that was founded in 1975. Its mission is ceramics education and promoting interest by studying the world of potters and their cultures.

Specifically, proceeds from the event will be used to acquire pottery and library materials for the museum.



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