

Fired Works

Macon, Georgia: Still Makin' it with Clay

FLASHBACK 2005: MACON, GEORGIA — Who would have thought that a homespun pottery sale organized by a small group of clay-focused friends would evolve into the largest pottery show in the state, just a decade later? With more than 6,000 pieces of pottery for sale by 65 ceramic artists from Georgia and the Southeast region this year, “Fired Works” is now Georgia’s largest annual show and sale of functional and sculptural pottery.



Pictured, clockwise from above:

Entrance to the historic Native American mound at Ocmulgee National Monument; the Round Building at Macon’s City Central Park; downtown gallery of the Macon Arts Alliance.

The 10th Annual Fired Works Regional Exhibition and Sale takes place April 11-19, 2015 at the Round Building of Central City Park in Macon, Georgia, just 90 miles south of Atlanta. Sponsored by the Macon Arts Alliance, this unique production has gained popularity and momentum ever since its 2005 inception. As a result, the show just keeps getting bigger and expanding its offerings to meet the demand.

What has been a week-long event in recent years kicks

off with an additional three-day opening weekend experience this year, to celebrate the show’s successful journey to the 10-year landmark.

First and foremost will be the Fired Works Preview Party, from 6 to 9 p.m. on Friday, April 10 at Macon’s beautiful Round Building in historic Central City Park.

The show and sale officially opens to the public on Saturday, April 11. Visitors of all ages will have the opportunity to get their hands dirty with various interactive opportunities. Fired Works includes special events like clay workshops for children ages 5-12, workshops for teens, and

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MACON MUST-SEES

The Round Building — The principal site of Fired Works at historic Central City Park. Originally built in 1871, then reconstructed after a 1904 fire, it has been painstakingly restored to its original beauty, serving as the perfect backdrop for the annual show and sale of more than 6,000 pieces of pottery.

Lights on Macon Illumination Tour — Take a stroll down the block with a local host to see a few of the neighborhood's antebellum mansions in a different light. www.lightsonmacon.com

The 1842 Inn — Soak up the ambience of Macon's only four-star, four-diamond luxury inn with hors d'oeuvres and a glass of wine or cocktail, and lively conversation with other guests. <http://www.1842inn.com>

Downtown Grill — Tucked into one of downtown Macon's historic alleys and best known for its delectable selection of steak, fresh fish, and lamb entrees, Downtown Grill is a favorite among locals and visitors to Macon. <http://www.macondowntowngrill.com>

Georgia Bob's Barbecue — A local favorite that happens to be near I-75, garnering "favorite" status by travelers from near and far. "Georgia Bob's prepares barbeque and food products today as it has been done in the South for over 150 years." <http://georgiabobs.com>

Tic Toc Room — Enjoy dinner and conversation at the downtown hip, historic Tic Toc Room, where Little Richard performed in his early years. <http://hotplatesrestaurantgroup.com>

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the very popular "Cocktails and Clay" workshops for adults. Artist talks, pottery demonstrations, plus "Pottery Roadshow" appraisals are also planned. Live music and food at Central City Park are also in store with "Pickin' & Pottery" (dates to be determined). Tickets are just \$5 each.

As in the past, Fired Works continues its successful partnership with nearby Ocmulgee National Monument by arranging special tours and activities there during the ten-day 2015 celebration. The goal: to expand awareness of the Ocmulgee River region's connection to pottery making. Archaeological ceramic evidence has revealed more than 15,000 years of continuous human habitation there. Featured exhibits at the monument will focus on folk pottery and its place in the history and culture of the Southeast.

Featured Folk Potters for 2015 Event

Clint Alderman began making pottery coil building and pit-firing in 1995. By 1999 he had built a wood-firing kiln and was making traditional folk pottery under the guidance of Edwin Meaders and Michael Crocker. He established a new shop and kiln in Habersham County in 2009, where he currently resides. His works are among the collections of the Folk Pottery Museum of Northeast Georgia and the Atlanta History Center.

Bruce Bley has had a lifelong interest in pottery. His work is inspired by the sights and scenery near his home in the North Georgia mountains. He loves crafting pottery because it recalibrates that focus in his life. Each piece is more than just a mug or bowl, he says; each piece embodies a time, a place, and an emotion.

Roger Corn, of Lula, GA, is known for his amazing skills in the technique of pulling up his clay. He can create a piece of pottery by using a very

small amount of clay, making the piece seem light as a feather. He is also known to fire his pieces several times to achieve the beautiful colored glazes that adorn his pieces.

Wayne Hewell is a 5th generation potter. His father, Carl, and grandfather, Maryland (Bud) Hewell were traditional folk potters. A wood-fire potter also living in Lula, Wayne has been potting for more than 31 years. His work is enhanced by surface treatments including Albany slip, red and blue glazes, and good ole' Southern tobacco spit!

Steve Turpin has been a potter for more than 30 years. For Steve, every piece of pottery he creates includes some aspect of his personality; so when someone appreciates that enough to want to buy his pots, he feels a personal connection is made. "To me, that's what it's all about," says Steve.

Informative Web Links

A wealth of additional information about Fired Works and participating artists, the Macon Arts Alliance, and what to see and do while you're visiting Macon can be found at the following Websites:

Macon Arts Alliance — www.maconarts.org

Fired Works — www.firedworksmacon.com

Fired Works Preview Party — <http://firedworksmacon.com/preview-party.cms>

Fired Works YouTube Link — www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2_nCrweJmk

Macon Convention & Visitors Bureau Link — www.maconga.org

Editor's Note: This article was made possible by the contributions of Ruth Sykes, Director of Media Relations at Laurie Rowe Communications; Jan Beeland, Director of the Macon Arts Alliance (MAA); Heatherly Wakefield, Fired Works Curator and MAA Director of Fine Art; Jonathan Dye, MAA Director of Communications; Jim David, Superintendent of Ocmulgee National Monument; and Kathy Hoskins, founding Fired Works board member. Thanks to all for their input and hospitality!



Fired Works Attractions and Excursions

- Ocmulgee National Monument** — Step back thousands of years to discover the earliest use of Georgia's rich clay by the inhabitants who first settled along the Ocmulgee River. See pottery artifacts and expert reproductions at "the place where Man first sat down," according to Native American lore. Enjoy a scrumptious farm-to-table lunch during Fired Works' expanded opening weekend event at Ocmulgee (photos above) and explore the ancient grounds. <http://www.nps.gov/ocmu/index.htm>

- Lizella Clay & Merritt Pottery** — See the wellspring of famous red Georgia clay used by potters worldwide. The Lizella Clay Company was founded by area potter Mark Merritt's father many years ago. A sixth generation Georgia potter, Mark digs, dries, cleans, pugs, and packages the Lizella clay as a one-man operation! He also throws traditional Crawford County pottery and utilitarian pieces. Wife Coni does most of the glazing, and recently started decorating the face jugs and other pieces Mark throws. The Merritts host a popular annual November pottery show in central Georgia's Crawford County, just outside of Macon. <http://merrittpottery.tripod.com/>



Mark Merritt at his at Lizella clay mine/studio



Roger Jamison in his wood firing kiln shed

Pictured above: Various images of Ocmulgee National Monument museum, exhibits, & grounds

- Roger Jamison's Wood-Fired Studio Pottery** — Roger has operated a wood firing pottery near Juliette, GA since 1990. He taught ceramics, design, and drawing at Mercer University's College of Liberal Arts from 1974-2009. His work has been shown in national juried competitions in the U.S. since 1969, as well as in Italy and Japan.

In 1978, Roger was artist-in-residence with the University of Georgia's Studies Abroad program in Cortona, Italy; as well as in 2004 in Japan, where he studied traditional wood firing techniques. Roger works with two related firing techniques using stoneware and porcelain clays in wood-fired salt glazing and in longer firings in an anagama (cave kiln), with wood alone creating natural ash-glazed surfaces.

Roger and his wife Sherrie have a home and studio near Juliette, Georgia, where in 2000 he built a 250-cu.-ft. Japanese-style anagama that holds 500 or more pieces. Roger fires it twice a year with the help of a team of Georgia potters and friends. <http://www.rogerjamison.com/> @