

Judges for 2016 Bring Us Your Best XIII

2-DIMENSIONAL

Jen Gordon

Artist, Studio & Exhibitions Manager

Jen Gordon is the Studio & Exhibitions Manager for the Asheville Area Arts Council and the Refinery Creator Space. She has a B.A. in Art History and Studio Art, and a certificate in Museum and Gallery practices from Humboldt State University and has worked in various galleries since 2003. She has been an active advocate for the arts locally in Asheville as well as regionally throughout Western North Carolina since 2009.

3-DIMENSIONAL

Molly Sawyer

Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, Molly Sawyer received a Studio Art degree in 1995 from Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina. She continued with ceramic sculpture, exploring abstract organic form until her return to Atlanta in 1998. There she began to explore the figure in clay while acting as an assistant in a large, student-oriented ceramics studio. 2001 brought her to New York City where she studied from human models at both the New York Studio School and the Art Students League of New York. By 2005 her focus moved to the horse, where this study evolved into a series of equine works. These retain the flowing stylization found in her figurative and abstract work.

After intense focus on the horse, Sawyer returned to more abstracted work. This turn resulted in a series of sculpture entitled "Migration." The impetus for this work is overpowering instinct to move forward regardless of obstacles and to find a balance in life. These pieces act as individual landmarks representing an ongoing part of her evolution as an artist. Through her work, Sawyer is reacting to her own life-changes while praising the strength of the human spirit.

Sawyer's latest exploration investigates the creation of nurturing forms and spaces. She creates this space by collecting in her studio found objects from the natural world. These she combines with other abstract forms with the result being the creation of a space with an other-worldly effect rooted in the natural world by organic elements. These include the ephemeral and sometimes living materials such as rust, moss, bark, raw sheep wool and salvaged wood. Sawyer sees in these materials evidence of the cyclical process of life.

Thus far in her career, Sawyer's work has moved through traditional ceramic and sculptural techniques into more abstracted stages of works. Her sculptures can be found in both private and corporate collections throughout the East Coast including the New York Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Mohegan Sun Casino, and the Ritz-Carlton Boston collections. Sawyer's studio is currently located in Asheville, NC.

FINE CRAFT

Sherry Masters

A native of the Asheville, NC area, Sherry Masters is self-employed as owner of Art Connections Tours. Art Connections, established in 2013, is a company designed to take participants interested in experiencing the art culture of Western NC on a curated tour of artist studios, galleries and art attractions. Masters' background includes over 20 years with Grovewood Gallery where she was involved in all aspects of the business, and was general manager and buyer for 16 years. Prior to Grovewood Gallery Masters worked for the Southern Highland Craft Guild at the Allanstand Craft Shop for 4 years, and for 2.5 years was employed by professional quilter Georgia J. Bonesteel of Hendersonville, NC.

Sherry is presently co-chairperson of American Craft Week, an annual celebration in its 7th year, created to celebrate and build awareness of the craft industry in the United States.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Tim Barnwell

Tim Barnwell is a photographer and author based in Asheville, North Carolina. His career has spanned more than 30 years as a professional photographer and photography instructor, including eight years as Executive Director of the nationally recognized Appalachian Photographic Workshops.

His images have been widely published, appearing in dozens of magazines, including Time, Newsweek, Southern Accents, House Beautiful, American Craft, Outdoor Photographer, Sky and Telescope, Blue Ridge Country, Billboard, U.S. News and World Report, Travel South, American Style, Black & White Magazine, Aperture, LensWork, Astronomy, and National Parks.

Mr. Barnwell is one of the most published photographers in the South. He has been a principal or contributing photographer to dozens of books, and is the author of five of his own-*The Face of Appalachia: Portraits from the Mountain Farm*, *On Earth's Furrowed Brow: The Appalachian Farm in Photographs*, *Hands in Harmony: Traditional Crafts and Music in Appalachia*, *Blue Ridge Parkway Vistas: A Comprehensive Identification Guide to What you See from the Many Overlooks*, and *Great Smoky Mountains Vistas: A Guide, with Mountain Peak Identifications, for What To See and Do in and Around the National Park*.

He has provided principal photography for numerous other book titles, including *Asheville: A View from the Top*, *Pisgah Forest and Nonconnah: The Potteries of Walter B. Stevens*, and *Wladimir de Terlikowski: His Life and Art*.

Mr. Barnwell's is known as a master photographer and printer. His fine art photography is widely collected and has been included in many group and one-man shows in the US and abroad. His images are in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum, Mint Museum, New Orleans Museum of Art, High Museum of Art, Greenville (SC) County Museum of Art, Mint Museum, SOHO Photo Gallery, Newark Museum, and the Bank of America corporate collection.