For best view on your cell phone, turn to landscape.



The Washington Guild of Goldsmiths

Newsletter
Winter 2024

A new year is upon us, and it's a good time to reflect on all the achievements we have accomplished as well as all the challenges that helped us learn and improve.
The WGG Newletter team feels very fortunate for the great collaboration with all our dear members and fellow artists. Each and every issue is special thanks to you!

In this issue, Sandra Zacharia shares her experience at Milano Jewelry Week, while Jeff Bulman tells us about his unusual path to discovering his passion for jewelry design and creation. Louis Kutyla, a 24-year-old DC native, is this issue's special feature! He explains how an unfortunate event opened up the door to the jewelry-making world. There's more to explore, too!

Enjoy and happy holidays!

Ring by Artist : Jeff Bulman

Letter from the President



As 2024 draws to a close, I want to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to serve as your Guild president and Third Tuesday coordinator. It has been a wonderful experience contributing to our community and working alongside such talented and dedicated artists.

I would like to extend a special thank-you to our outgoing vice president, Jan, for her invaluable contributions to the Guild. I also extend a warm welcome to our new vice president, Kit. Additionally, I want to express my sincere appreciation for the continued support of our treasurer, Michael, and our secretary, Anne, as well as all our dedicated board members. Their hard work and commitment are essential to the smooth operation of our Guild. (Please note that the use of only first names was deliberate as a means to thwart new spoofers from obtaining the full names of the officers and board members from our website.)

In the coming weeks, you'll receive renewal notices for your Guild membership. We encourage you to renew promptly to ensure continued support for our Guild's activities and events.

A Friendly Reminder: Please be cautious of email or text phishing attempts that may mimic official Guild communications. **Never share** personal or financial information through a text or email, even if the sender *appears* to be from the Guild. If you're uncertain about the authenticity of a text or email, please reach out to a board member for verification. If a communication seems suspect, please also feel free to reach out to me.

Thank you once again for your support and understanding as I need to turn my attention homeward. I look forward to remaining an active member of our Guild community.

I wish to take a moment, as I am stepping down as Guild president, to encourage more members to volunteer to serve in both leadership and in intermittent roles to support the Guild. Whatever your time allows, there is a need for your help. Please get involved.

Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous new year!

Sincerely,
Carol-lynn

METALWORK 2026

Venue: Waverley Gallery
Date: May 2026

Many thanks to our members who have stepped up to help with organizing committees for METALWORK 2026.

However, we are still looking for interested folks to lend their expertise to the areas listed below by rounding out these committees and making sure that METALWORK 2026 will be a memorable show.

Please contact Nick at wggmetalwork2026@gmail.com or 301-641-1503 if you need to chat over what the work entails.

Catalog, Postcards, and Graphic Promotions

- Liaise with our catalog designer, proof readers, photography, and PR social media committees to ensure continuity, timelines, and delivery.
- Collect printed catalogs and postcards and deliver them to the venue for collection and distribution.

PR Show Promotions and Social Media

- Work with our existing communications and social media team to expand the WGG presence online.
- Liaise with graphic promotions to produce graphics and labels for the show and to develop and set up an online catalog form, such as the WIX tester.

Show Receptions and Promotions

- Organize METALWORK 2026 invitations and opening reception in conjunction with the Waverley Gallery and in accordance with their regulations.
- Organize participating members' artist talk(s) and/or demonstrations to be held throughout the run of the show.

Future Shows Committee

- Seek out, apply, and book venues for the 2028 and 2030 METALWORK shows.

Nick Grant Barnes
WGG METALWORK 2026 Coordinator

Spotted at Milano Jewelry Week!

Sandra Zacharia

Milano Jewelry Week, held in October in Milan, Italy, is known for celebrating innovation, craftsmanship, and artistry in jewelry design. It offers an unparalleled platform for jewelry designers to connect, learn, and showcase.

The event was held at the beautiful Palazzo Bovara. Walking in, I felt an immediate sense of community among the international network of designers. As an artist, the idea of presenting my work to a discerning and diverse audience was exhilarating and very intimidating until I arrived. We

all had so much in common that it was easy to feel comfortable and connect. I got to stand by and watch as visitors looked into my showcase and discussed my work, usually in Italian, but as long as they're talking...



Me and my daughter Yasmin
Photo Credit: Sandra Zacharia



The theater where they held the awards ceremony
Photo Credit: Sandra Zacharia

There were talks and exhibitions throughout the city. Sometimes, they were interesting, and sometimes they may have been interesting, but the presenter apologized that they were uncomfortable speaking English, so they hoped we wouldn't mind that their talk would be in Italian. It didn't matter, though. Exhibitions were happening in the same space, and so many artists and gallery owners worldwide were happy to connect. Participating in curated exhibitions and live demonstrations allowed me to share my work and the process and story behind each piece.



Some of my pieces modeled by my niece Orla
Photo Credit: Sandra Zacharia

Milano Jewelry Week publishes a beautiful book with the participating artists' work. They send that book, *Artistar Jewels 2024*, to galleries worldwide. They also published a magazine, *The Jewelry Drops*, available throughout the city during the show. They held a beautiful awards ceremony in Teatro Lirico, with a cocktail party beforehand. Several cocktail parties were held that week, an excellent opportunity to dress and layer on the jewelry. We didn't need much excuse, though. I traveled with my daughter, niece, and sister-in-law. We had fun gathering each morning at my Airbnb and layering on the jewelry after breakfast.



Me and my sister-in-law Nadia
Photo Credit: Sandra Zacharia

Being invited to participate in a world-class show of this caliber caused me to look closely at my work and see it as I thought others would. This was the most significant benefit of participating in the show.



A happy me! It was a rewarding experience
Photo Credit: Sandra Zacharia

Member Spotlight

The path to becoming a jewelry designer varies incredibly from person to person. Some know from early on that this is what they want to do, and they pursue their dreams accordingly. Others take more circuitous and unexpected routes that can even be surprising to themselves. The route traveled by **Jeff Bulman** to become a jewelry designer and maker combines both the purposeful and the unexpected. Read on to find out about Jeff, his path, and his art. Also, be sure to go to his Instagram page (@Jeff.Bulman) to view more of his work.

It has been a long and interesting journey to where I am today, which is focused on designing and creating jewelry. Although I couldn't have predicted it, I see that over the course of my life, I seem to have come full circle.



5 carat Ruby Cabochon set in 14k yellow Gold Ring Photo Credit: Jeff Bulman

After high school, I attended the Philadelphia College of Art, where I earned an undergraduate degree in environmental design. That was quite a while ago **(**1969**)**. At the time, the program was referred to as an interior design course! After graduating, I spent many years in various fields. For example, I worked in the Maryland suburbs for a Herman Miller office furniture dealer. Then in 1991, an opportunity to go into the restaurant business presented itself.* It was a far cry from a degree in design, but it was an exciting prospect. It's turned out to be an enjoyable venture, especially since I love good food! I've been in the restaurant business now for more than 30 years, but the pull to design and create reemerged.



I finally came back to my love, design, in 2016. That's when my journey took me to SilverWorks Studio and Gallery in Glen Echo Park, Maryland. I found my passion there and haven't looked back. It's been eight years since this journey began and with luck it will continue for many more years.

Sterling Silver/ Hand blown and carved glass Pendant Photo Credit: Jeff Bulman



Sterling silver, gold, handblown glass, and precious and semi-precious stones comprise most of my work. I love these materials, especially stones, as much as I love good food! I also love to challenge myself, sometimes with less-than-ideal results, but this is how I learn. One such challenge was making a ring with a 15-carat stone in a handmade prong basket. I had never set a stone that large and it was one of the first baskets I had made. When I finished the ring, I knew it wasn't right. I showed it to a friend for a reality check. She agreed that I needed to redo the ring. I learned from the mistakes, redid the ring, and—guess what?—the ring sold!

3.37 carat pink Tourmaline set in 14k yellow Gold Ring Photo Credit: Jeff Bulman

As to inspiration, I look to nature, sculpture, paintings, and architecture. Sometimes a design idea just happens to come into my head. A new tool will also open a door to a new way to express my work. A stone may seem to ask to be set in a certain way. This is always an interesting time in my

journey.

For me, the best part of these past eight years are the friends I've made. They are not only fun to be around, they are also honest in a kind and helpful way. Constructive criticism is a great teacher, and I thank them.

*Jeff is the owner of the Original Pancake House in Bethesda and Rockville, Maryland and in Falls Church, Virgina.

Announcement

The newsletter team would like you to be part of the upcoming issues. Here's how:

Did you experience an unexpected hurdle while making a piece? Did you successfully overcome it and is this piece now one of your favorite pieces?
Was it a different technique you used or maybe a design alternation that saved the day?

If so, would you like to share your story with the WGG community?

We would love to hear your experience!

Send us a short paragraph (about 250 words) with a photo of the piece. If you don't have a photo, send a sketch.
Your write-up will be included in the newsletter on a first-come, first-serve basis.

We need you! Don't hesitate to join in!

WGG Newsletter team.
Contact us here: wggnewsletter@washingtonguildofgoldsmiths.com

Special Feature

Louis Kutyla



Portrait photo credit: Jennifer Azzariti

WGG: Who is Louis Kutyla? Tell us a bit about yourself!

Louis: I'm a 24 year old jewelry maker from DC currently working on my thesis in jewelry design at Istituto Europeo di Design (IED) Milano. My mother is a ceramicist. My father can best be described as a jack of all trades having worked in a number of mediums throughout his life (collage, carpentry, textiles, drawing, etc.)

From a very young age, my parents encouraged my brother and me to explore a wide range of materials and art forms. The garage and basement of our family home were filled with all kinds of tools that allowed us to work with wood, metal, textiles, etc. There was never a moment in my childhood when I didn't have an ongoing project. My brother and I have built everything from boats to musical instruments to elaborate forts made out of discarded Christmas trees. This upbringing is undoubtedly what has propelled my brother and me to pursue careers in the arts, my brother in architectural blacksmithing and me in jewelry."

WGG: How did you discover your love for jewelry making? How did it all start?

Louis: When I was very young, I used to be obsessed with this television show called *Craft in America*. My favorite episode was one on Jan Yager, a Philadelphia-based contemporary jeweler who became famous for her mixed media work that utilized materials found around her neighborhood. (Years later, I actually ran into Jan at 40th Street Station on my way back to school from winter break. This was a cool full-circle moment for me.) After watching that episode, I began playing around in the basement with roofing copper and random bits of scrap metal that I would fix together with electrical solder and a soldering iron.

For a number of years this fascination with jewelry stuck with me, but it was never something I planned on pursuing in any real way; that is, until the fateful day I broke my femur! Faced with 16 weeks on crutches and unable to run or climb, I started searching the web for art classes in the Washington, DC area and stumbled upon SilverWorks Studio and Gallery at Glen Echo Park, Maryland. I enrolled in a five-week class with my brother and basically from there the rest is history. Blair Anderson, the owner of Silverworks, took me on as a junior artist in residence. It was supposed to be a year-long arrangement that ended up lasting until I graduated high school four years later.



Photo credit: Brian Anderson

WGG: You chose Tyler School of Art and Architecture at Temple University in Philadelphia to start your academic journey. How did it shape your future decisions?

Louis: When I was looking at colleges, the main criteria for me was the quality and quantity of the equipment in the jewelry department. Of the schools that I toured, Tyler's facilities were worlds ahead of the others. So, when I was accepted there, it was a no-brainer for me. What I failed to consider is the number of courses outside of the jewelry department I was going to have to take. This became a real problem for me because I was so engrossed in the jewelry, I was making that I didn't make time for anything else. I failed a bunch of academic courses in my time at Tyler simply because I would skip class in order to spend more time in the studio. When the pandemic hit and I was forced to go home, I took a step back and realized that Tyler probably wasn't the right place for me. In fact, at that time I had no real intentions of going back to school at all.



Photo credit: Louis Kutyla

WGG: Tell us about Antwerp, Belgium!

Louis: After I dropped out of Tyler, I moved to Antwerp to study stone setting at the Alexandre School for optical diamond setting. Here I learned to use pneumatic engraving equipment, microscopes, and a huge array of equipment that I never really had access to before. Attending this course was probably the single best decision I've made in my life. It introduced me to a completely different world of techniques that took my work to places I never thought possible. I've always been a fairly detail-oriented person, but learning stone setting and especially micro-pavé, redefined my ideas surrounding craftsmanship and precision. The other great thing about that course is it made me highly employable. On my return to DC, I found a job teaching setting in less than a week.

WGG: You're currently living and studying in Milan, Italy. Was it a dream you had since the beginning?

Louis: Not at all. I briefly looked into a school in Florence when I was initially searching for colleges, but I was advised against applying by my college admissions counselor. I ended up here because after a year of teaching and setting semi-professionally, I realized that my design capabilities were still very rudimentary. I was making a lot of the same sorts of things over and over again. On top of that, I felt that without a degree and some more formal design training I was destined to be a bench jeweler for the foreseeable future, which really wasn't an appealing prospect for me.

WGG: Which is more challenging, the design phase or the execution?

Louis: I'm definitely naturally more inclined toward making than I am to design. Working with my hands comes somewhat naturally to me. My pieces also tend to be pretty involved in terms of the process of execution, which keeps me on my toes. Design offers a bit more of a challenge. I get a lot of push back when I say this, but I don't feel like I'm a very creative person, at least in the traditional sense. Design for me is an agonizing process of sitting, usually for days on end, in front of my sketchbook until I'm able to formulate something. I hear people talk about sudden inspiration a lot...So far it's not something I've experienced.

Photo credit: Louis Kutyla



WGG: What lessons learned would you like to share with our readers?

Louis: Learn to draw!!! For the majority of my life, I've written it off, but one of the biggest things I've learned in the past few years is the importance of drawing. The act of drawing is not only a really powerful tool for idea generation, but it's also the language with which designers communicate.

Learn as much history as you can. Not only is there an immense amount of inspiration to be found in what's been done before, it's also been really powerful for me to understand that art and design do not exist in a vacuum. Everything we produce is part of an ongoing story and it's so important to examine your practice within the broader context of history.

If you have the financial capability to do so, buy a microscope. If you can make something look even decent under high magnification, how great it will look to the naked eye!

WGG: We know that climbing is a favorite hobby/sport of yours. Does it have any influence on making jewelry?

Louis: It's probably not the answer you're looking for, but no, not at all. Since moving, I've mostly replaced climbing with running, but this doesn't really affect my answer. Even though I'm no longer a competitive runner, my mentality toward running is still about pushing myself physically. It's totally disconnected from my work.



Louis Kutyla Rock Climbing
New River Gorge, West Virginia

Photo credit: Claire Wright

WGG: What's next for you?

Louis: At a friend's recommendation, I have been recruited for a position with a Dubai-based company specializing in fine jewelry production. My role encompasses two primary responsibilities. First, I will oversee employees across all departments in the company, managing the day-to-day production and keeping on top of issues that may arise. Second, and perhaps most exciting, I will lead the research and development of technical design. In this capacity, I will be responsible for devising optimal production strategies for new designs, addressing technical aspects, such as connection mechanisms and structural solutions. Additionally, I will work to enhance the practices and workflows of the production team, driving innovation and efficiency in our processes.

WGG: Recently, you embarked on an adventure around Lake Como in Italy. How did you come up with this idea, and what would you like to share with us about your journey?

Louis: Como and the surrounding mountains have become somewhat of a special place for me since moving to Italy. As my time here is winding down, I decided I needed to do something to "close the chapter," so to speak. I decided that I was going to try and run the entire perimeter of Lake Como in under a day. It's a 107-mile run that has only been completed once as far as I'm aware. I trained for months and assembled a team of friends to help me by shuttling food and other supplies to the pit stops we had planned out ahead of the run. Unfortunately, I was only able to complete 70 miles of the planned 107. I'm not an experienced ultramarathoner at all, so pacing was a huge problem from the get-go. I ran the first marathon in three hours flat. This was definitely the thing that stopped me from finishing the run, but it’s also something I'm immensely proud of. If you would've told me nine months ago that I'd run a three-hour marathon and go on to run 43.8 additional miles, I would have laughed in your face! It’s more about the journey than the destination anyway...or something like that.

Tips and Tricks!

T&T 1

Here is a clever use for a disc cutter shared by @warped_wire_studio

"Creating a jump ring that aligns to a curved shape is easy if you have a circle punch (disc cutter). The fiddly part is holding the little jump ring at the edge of the hole punch. That's where this tape hack comes in handy. Use the same size punch for the jump ring as you did for the component, to match the curve!".
Press here for the video and more information.

Post Credit: Metalsmithsociety

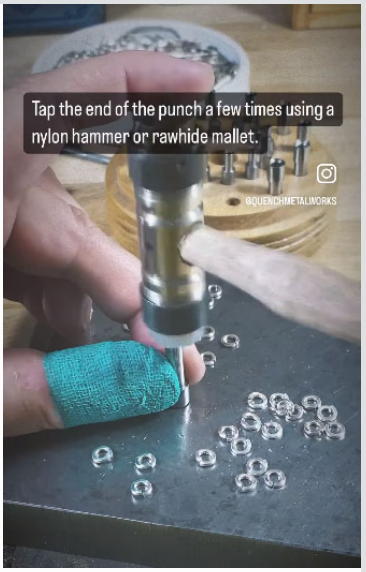


T&T 2

Here is a tip for closing square stock, flat jump rings from @quenchmetalworks

“In my book, there’s no better way to close jump rings. First I use a brass hammer to flatten the jump rings. Next I use a bezel setting punch that almost fits over the jump ring (too big a punch and the punch will hit the steel block so be sure to test that out. I never use a steel hammer when tapping the punch ends as the steel hammer will eventually flare the punch’s end and the punch will no longer fit in the setting hand tool. Unless the flare is ground down. But who wants to do that?”
Press here for the video and more information.

Post Credit: Metalsmithsociety



Special Picks for Our Readers!

WGG Newsletter team has put together a list of jewelry and accessory pieces worth checking out in Washington DC museums (these are only to name a few).

The Hope Diamond (National Museum of Natural History)

"Today, the Hope Diamond remains one of the most popular objects at the Smithsonian, attracting millions of visitors every year. Even now, the Hope retains much of its mystery, and Smithsonian scientists continue to study it to better understand its eventful history and rare beauty."
https://naturalhistory.si.edu/explore/collections/hope-diamond-history

Dorothy's Ruby Slippers (Museum of American History)

"The Ruby Slippers were made famous by Dorothy Gale, a character portrayed by Judy Garland (1922-1969), in the 1939 film The Wizard of Oz. Based on the 1900 novel The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum (1856-1919)... In September 2018, the FBI announced that another pair of Ruby Slippers that had been stolen from the Judy Garland Museum in Minnesota had been recovered. Conservators here at the National Museum of American History examined the recovered pair of shoes. Our conservators confirmed that the recovered pair are consistent with the condition, construction, and material of the Ruby Slippers in the museum's collection."
https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/fact-sheets/dorothys-ruby-slippers

Roman Gold Necklace (Dumbarton Oaks)

"This necklace features links in the shape of double grains of wheat. The precise function of this piece is unclear: although very small for a necklace, it may once have featured more links, or have been sown to a fabric backing."
https://www.doaks.org/resources/online-exhibits/ancient-art-at-dumbarton-oaks/adorning-the-body/necklace-1

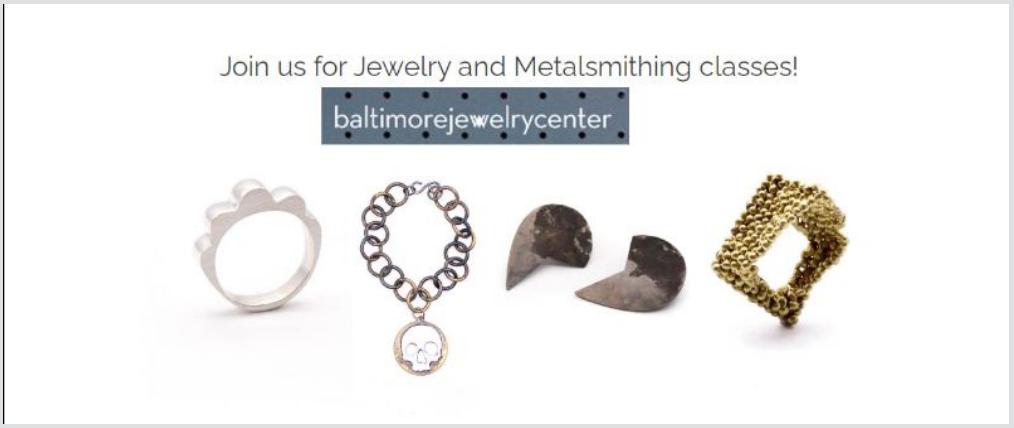
Hillwood museum

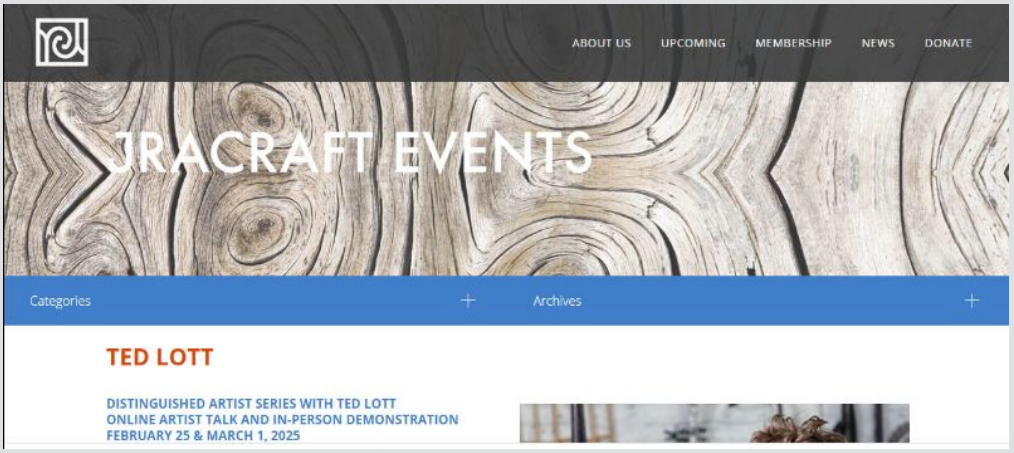


"Marjorie Merriweather Post, the American heiress, businesswoman, and philanthropist, was known not only for her wealth and social influence but also for her exquisite taste in jewelry. Her collection includes some of the most remarkable and historically significant pieces ever created. In this video, we explore the dazzling world of Marjorie Merriweather Post's jewelry collection, highlighting each piece's stunning artistry and rich history."

Youtube video credit: The secret Garden of Gems.

Events in the Area!





Smithsonian Craft Show

Preview Night Benefit: April 23, 2025
Show Dates: April 24 - 27, 2025



Learning Opportunities:

The WGG has compiled this list of locations that offer jewelry and metalsmithing classes in the DC-Maryland-Virgina region (aka, the DMV). We'd love to expand it! If you know of other venues offering classes and workshops, email us at: wggnewsletter@washingtonguildofgoldsmiths.com. Also let us know if you offer instruction and where you teach.

- **Baltimore Jewelry Center** https://www.baltimorejewelrycenter.org/classes-workshop
- **Jewelryclassdc** https://jewelryclassdc.com/
- **Joy of Glass** https://www.joyofglass.com/
- **Montgomery College Jewelry and Metalsmithing** https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/academics/departments/art-rockville/student-artwork/jewelry-and-metalsmithing.html
- **SilverWorks Studio and Gallery at Glen Echo Park** https://www.silverworksglenechopark.com/silver_works_glen_echo_park/home.html
- **The Art League** https://www.theartleague.org/
- **Wear Ever Jewelry** https://weareverjewelry.com/

The Washington Guild of Goldsmiths (WGG)

The Washington Guild of Goldsmiths is a cooperative association, a community of creatives whose members' skills, energy, and enthusiasm promote its successful programs. One of its purposes is providing a means for the exchange of information and ideas, as well as educational opportunities. We welcome new members who share our goals!

Not a WGG member?
Join us today!

The Washington Guild of Goldsmiths is dedicated to furthering knowledge and interest in all things metal. We welcome jewelers, metalsmiths, artisans, and other interested individuals. Join our lively group to share ideas and techniques and to improve your skills. For more information, click below.

Membership

Would you like WGG to feature your work here?
Get in touch with us!

We want to continue featuring our members, their work, achievements, recognition, and awards! So if you are interested, please send a brief paragraph about yourself (450 words or less) and a photo of your work to wggnewsletter@washingtonguildofgoldsmiths.com.

We are so excited for you!

WGG Board of Directors Officers and Coordinators