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



The Washington Guild of Goldsmiths

Newsletter Summer 2025

Adding colors to jewelry has been implemented in so many ways throughout history with stones, beads, oxidization, and more. In this issue we will focus on a wonderful technique, enameling!

Enameling is rich and sophisticated. It has been used in a variety of artworks around the world from ancient times through today. Laura Fortune, our special feature, will tell us how her pieces speak to her and how she uses enamel in a fun, modern, and witty way. Also, don't miss the informative and useful articles and videos on enameling.

Happy summer and happy reads!

Abby Schindler Goldblatt: "Red Progression" Wall Sculpture, Copper, enameled, electro-formed, fold-formed. Metalwork-2010

Letter from the President



Dear WGG Members,

Summer is nearly upon us! Our cool and rainy spring has begun to give way to warmer temperatures. The warm green glow of the trees as they catch the spring and summer sun invite us to bathe in the natural world and find rejuvenation in the changing of the seasons.

In this issue we focus on **enameling**. We have two articles on technique and a short tutorial. In addition, you'll see my summary report of the recent **Creative Craft Council Biennial Show** at the Strathmore Mansion in Bethesda, MD.

This exhibition showcased the breadth of creativity within our community. Congratulations to everyone who participated and to our many WGG award winners!

Planning has already begun for our next Metalwork exhibition in 2026. Reach out to Nick Barnes if you'd like to get involved.

As always, the Guild depends on the energy and commitment of its members. We currently have several open positions on the board, including **WGG President**, **Third Tuesday Coordinator, and CCC Representative**. Not sure you're ready for a full board role? No problem: There are plenty of opportunities to assist with ongoing tasks and events. Every contribution helps keep our Guild vibrant and thriving. Reach out to any board member to learn more about how you can get involved.

Be kind, be patient, and above all—**keep making art**.

Art for all,
Kit Aikin
Acting WGG President

Third Tuesday

This past spring, we had the pleasure of virtually welcoming two exceptional artists to join our community as Third Tuesday presenters. On April 15th, Tom Herman delighted us with his timeless pieces, inspired by organic forms and geometric balance. Then, on May 20th, WGG member Wayne Werner presented his remarkable work, skillfully combining traditional gold and platinum smithing techniques with an artistic vision that pays homage to the fertility cults of the ancient world. We are grateful to both artists for sharing their inspiring creations with us.

If you happen to miss any of these live virtual events, don't worry! Our Zoom events are recorded and shared exclusively on the members-only WGG YouTube channel. Be sure to check your email for the links.

We're also incredibly grateful to SNAG for featuring our Third Tuesday events in their *Riveting News* newsletter and social media.

We need YOU! The WGG is seeking a member to take the reins of our Third Tuesday virtual events. Want to get involved and help shape these incredible conversations?
Reach out to us at: 3rdtuesday@washingtonguildofgoldsmiths.com

Please stay tuned for future virtual Third Tuesday jeweler/artist conversations.

We'd love to have you on board!
Carol-lynn Swol and Jan Solomon
Acting Co-Coordinators for the Third Tuesday Virtual Events

Workshops

There will be a one-day workshop, “Gold Powder on Silver,” on Saturday September 13, 2025, from 10 am to 5 pm (more or less!) at The Art League Jewelry Studio.
This is a whole new branch of keum boo, the art of applying pure gold to silver jewelry. Instead of using pure gold foil, we apply finely powdered 24k gold with a fine bush. This is particularly useful when working on curved or detailed surfaces! The powder is then fused to a finished silver piece with all its soldering done.

If you are interested, please contact Nil Van Order at nilvanorder@gmail.com or Estelle Vernon at evernon@estellevernon.com.

Creative Crafts Council News!

The 35th Biennial Creative Crafts Council Exhibition ran from March 15 through May 24, 2025 at the Strathmore Mansion in Bethesda, MD. One hundred seventy (170) artworks were selected from 614 submissions. Work from 12 artists was accepted into the Jewelry and Wearable Art category. Ellen Cohen and Carol-lynn Swol volunteered their time as technical advisors to assist with judging. Several WGG members won awards for their work.

Nan Lopata, Excellence in Enamel

Jenny Peng-Windheim, 1st Place and Honorable Mention in Jewelry and Wearable Art

Ellen Kreiger, 2nd Place in Jewelry and Wearable Art

Jody Sachs, 1st Place in Metal, Excellence in Jewelry, and the People's Choice Award

Nil Van Order, Innovation in Jewelry

There were two "Meet the Maker" events during the exhibition. Participants from the WGG included Jenny Peng-Windheim and Rachel Carren.

Moving forward, the Council noted there was inconsistency in how jewelry artists categorized their submissions. The Council will consider whether future biennials may require all jewelry to be submitted under the Jewelry and Wearable Art category.

Congratulations to everyone who was accepted into the show and to our WGG award winners!



CREATIVE CRAFTS COUNCIL *Biennial*

National Enamelist Guild – Excellence in Enamel Award

Nan Lopata – The Oracle

Jurors: Alludes to the greater art world.
The dead clock is timeless. Has a bohemian kind of feel.
It is a conversation starter.



CREATIVE CRAFTS COUNCIL Biennial

CCC Award
Jewelry – 1st Place

Jenny Peng Windheim - Kusadama No. 2

Jurors: Love the delicacy, color and geometry. It is a sculpture. It holds your attention and draws you in.



CREATIVE CRAFTS COUNCIL Biennial

CCC Award
Jewelry- 2nd Place

Ellen Krieger – Flowers Grown in Brooklyn Broach

Jurors: The more you look at it, the more you see.
Reflective qualities are beautiful.
For a small piece, it has a big punch.



CREATIVE CRAFTS COUNCIL Biennial

CCC Award Metal – 1st Place

Jody Sachs – Apple Jelly Jar with Spoon

Jurors: Just delicious.
Form follows function.
Beautiful craftsmanship.



CREATIVE CRAFTS COUNCIL Biennial

Washington Guild of Goldsmiths – Award for Innovation

Nilanjana Van Order – Live and Let Live

Jurors: There is something daring about it. There is humor to it. It is almost like evolution over time.

To visit the CCC website, know more about the biennial, the winners and their work, please click here.

Zooming in!

Live and Let Live – the necklace of elephants – is my entreaty to the world for kindness to and preservation of animals. It is the first in a series of "Live and Let Live." It is made with vitreous enamels on fine silver using champlevé and cloisonné techniques. Like many others, I draw my inspiration from my surroundings—the physical and political.

I am not sure when jewelry drew me in as art form. After wanderings through architecture, urban planning, and such like, I came upon the art of jewelry. I was exceedingly fortunate to be taught by world-class teachers, Nick Barnes and Abby Goldblatt, at The Art League in Alexandria, VA. The Enamelists Gallery at the Torpedo Factory Art Center in Alexandria also keeps some of my pieces. Just from the perspective of jewelry art, it has been a joyful decade.

Nil Van Order

WGG workshop coordinator/ CCC award winner

Photo credit: Nil Van Order



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 alteration 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-served basis.

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

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

METALWORK 2026

Venue: Waverly Street Gallery (https://www.waverlystreetgallery.com/)

Show dates:

- Opens Thursday, May 7, 2026, 1pm - 6pm
- Reception Friday, May 8, 2026, 6pm - 8pm
- Closes Saturday, May 30, 2026, 6pm
- Gallery hours, Thursday - Sunday, 1pm - 6pm

The groundwork for **METALWORK 2026** is well underway, and full details for show applications will be available in the fall 2025.

But don't wait 'til then. Now is the best time to start designing, fabricating, and finalizing your ideas for your entries for **METALWORK 2026.**

Getting your pieces initiated, built, even finished, and put away this summer will give you peace of mind that your work is ready for the show, rather than waiting until that busy school term or holiday season, when all you can think about is "sales" or school projects and **METALWORK 2026** is a far off mirage, way off on the horizon of **2026**. But then you get the **METALWORK 2026 application** deadline reminder. Jury day is just around the corner. That piece you had envisioned for **METALWORK 2026** is still sitting on your bench, unrealized. Or worse, the signature stone breaks during setting...ARRRRGGGGGHHHHH!!!!!

One of the perks of being a Washington Guild of Goldsmiths member is showcasing your best work in the WGG-signature biennial showcase, **METALWORK.** The WGG exhibits all its members' juried work. Every member who completes the application form has their work juried for **METALWORK**, and all applicants will have work showcased in **METALWORK.**

The WGG purpose is to provide a means for the exchange of information and ideas, as well as educational opportunities for its members and the public. As members, we have the opportunity to give back to our community of artists; to show our best work; to educate by example; and, to promote ourselves and the Guild to the at-large public, students, collectors, customers, and—to my mind, the most important—those coming up behind us, so they too have an opportunity to thrive.

METALWORK 2026 runs for 16 days in May 2026…16 days to let your work talk volumes…16 days for the WGG to show off why we exist to support the metal and related arts.

As usual, the WGG biennial show is run by Guild-member volunteers in all capacities. So, if you wish to take part in **METALWORK 2026** and would like to volunteer your skills to help produce yet another stunning showcase for you and your fellow members' work, please contact Nick Barnes, who will point you in the right direction.

Nick Grant Barnes

WGG METALWORK 2026 Coordinator

METALWORK 2026 Committee Roles that Need Your Help

PR Show Promotions and Social Media: Work with our existing WGG communications and social media team to expand the WGG presence. You will produce graphics and labels for the show and related activities, such as the "LINKED" auction, and develop an online show catalog format, such as the WIX tester we set up for METALWORK 2024.

Catalog, Postcards: Liaise with our catalog designer, proofreaders, photography, and PR social media committees to ensure continuity, timelines, and delivery. Collect and deliver printed catalogs and postcards to the Waverly Street Gallery for distribution.

Transportation: Research, borrow, rent, and book a van/truck to be used to move the show's cabinets from storage in Beltsville, Maryland, to and from the Waverly Street Gallery in Bethesda. Organize volunteers to help move the cabinets from storage into and out of the gallery, and back to storage.

- Approximate timeline is May 3 for load-in and May 30 for load-out. Final details will be made nearer to the show dates.
- Liase with Nick to visit the storage unit to view cabinets.

Future Show Venues: Research, apply, and book venues for the 2028 and 2030 METALWORK shows.

As usual, the WGG biennial show is run by Guild-member volunteers in all capacities. So, if you wish to take part in **METALWORK 2026** and would like to volunteer your skills to help produce yet another stunning showcase for our members' work, please contact Nick Barnes, who will point you in the right direction.

Nick Grant Barnes
WGG METALWORK 2026 Coordinator

Special Feature



Laura Fortune

Portrait photo credit: Laura Fortune

"I get a thrill out of designing with humor and color while using the ancient technique of enameling." -- Laura Fortune

Indeed, Laura is an extraordinary designer whose creativity, skill, experiences, and point of view combine to produce uniquely beautiful, colorful, fun, and witty jewelry. We are certain that newsletter readers will also find inspiration in Laura's artistic journey and how she learned to trust in herself as a designer. In addition to our interview with Laura and the accompanying photos of her work, be sure to explore her website at https://www.laurafortune.com/

WGG: Who is Laura Fortune? Please tell us a bit about yourself.

Laura: I grew up in northern Florida with a strong interest in arts and crafts and a desire to go out of state for college to experience a new region. Being creative and nomadic are still the most compelling aspects of who I am.

I went to college in New York at Alfred University and SUNY New Paltz, where I received a BFA in metals. I began working for jewelry designers while in school as a summer intern for Jim Cotter in Vail and then for Annette Ferdinandsen in the Hudson Valley. My first job out of college was in New York City (NYC) for TenThousandThings. Then I worked for Ted Muehling for a decade.

These 13 years of being a studio assistant were invaluable for honing my skills as a metalsmith with attention to details and the importance of balancing function and design in jewelry.

I wanted to leave NYC and develop my own work. While on a solo trip through Spain and Portugal, I fell in love with Lisbon and decided to move there.

WGG: You consider moving to Portugal for five years a wonderful experience. How did it shape your life and your work?

Laura: Upon my first trip, I was immediately struck by the obvious appeal of Portugal--the colors and tile patterns, the good weather, proximity to other travel, and affordability at the time. I also met a group of Portuguese artists who shared an atelier and one who is an enamelist. This group of friends is like no other that I have had in my life. Having this type of community and connection, making time slow down, and spending time together made me understand a difficult reality of the culture that I came from. Work hustle and commerce are not life in Portugal. There are fewer choices in the supermarket. Tools and materials are also harder to come by; so making do with what's available is natural. A simple life with simple joys.

As for my work, I had the designs of other jewelry artists in my hands, and I needed to reconnect to my own style. During the first few years I was exploring and experimenting with drawing, jewelry designs, and enameling. I would travel back to the US to sell work. I learned that my humorous pieces grabbed most of the attention from customers, which was delightful because it was the work that resonated with me.

When the pandemic hit, I moved to a small beach town outside of Lisbon and found a studio in an underground garage. The inability to travel back to the US allowed me to sit still and create more special work. I designed and documented the creation of my first cloisonné enamel collection. Years of living in Portugal inspired that work.



Diner Bracelet- Photo credit: Laura Fortune

WGG: You wrote on your website: "It's such an exciting feeling when you have unlocked your personal style..." This statement is impactful because most artists take a long time to figure out their own identity and style. Would you share with us how you knew that this style spoke to you?

Laura: Intuitively, we all have a style. However, as artists it often takes a long time to lean into what that is and to trust there is a market for it. The drive to sell work or know what customers will like can become overpowering factors for what we make. I had this style when I was in college, but I put it on the back burner because I worked for really successful jewelry designers. Their work was nature inspired; and, I didn't see how my lawn-ornament jewelry was going to find its way.

In 2022, I was at a residency on the North Fork of Long Island, drawing lawn chairs to practice the lattice patterning with cloisonné wires. I made a necklace with five lawn-chair medallions. It was a decadent piece that I wasn't concerned with selling; I wanted to make it to humor myself. It sold immediately after I posted it on

Instagram to a collector who has continued to champion my creativity. That was the beginning of trusting that my personal style and point of view are worth leaning into.

WGG: It must be invaluable watching customers admiring your work and having conversations about a piece. Do you recall any particularly interesting conversation that you would like to share with us?

Laura: While I was participating at the *MAD About Jewelry* show at the Museum of Arts and Design in NYC, a woman arrived in front of me admiring my work and decided to purchase a "Lawn Chair Ring." She explained she had traveled from out of state to see the lawn-chair pieces because she worked at a senior center. Inspired by my work, she had created an activity where the seniors shared stories about lawn-chair memories in their lives. It was a special moment to know my work inspired this nostalgia, and she was happy to return and enjoy this piece with the seniors.



Lawn Chair Necklace
Photo credit: Laura Fortune

WGG: Where do you go for inspiration?

Laura: I have lived in many types of places and I am really attracted to signage, excess, people, pop culture, and the absurd. I don't need to go far for any of that. It's everywhere. I travel a lot; and, as pieces and images might not strike me at the moment, they stay with me and arrive down the road.



Above Ground Pool brooch
Photo credit: Laura Fortune

WGG: How brilliant! Each piece you make tells a unique story. In addition to your metalworking and enameling skills, tell us how you came to incorporate your drawing skills to produce such beautiful, fun, and witty scenes from everyday life.

Laura: Drawing is my first love. I was planning to pursue graphic design but did not want to work at a computer for a living. While studying metalwork at SUNY New Paltz, I had the amazing fortune to have Lola Brooks as the adjunct professor for the enameling class. When the cloisonné technique was taught, it was a fantastic combination of tactile drawing with wire and seeing my silly sketches take life through color and metal. She was a huge supporter of the freshness of it, but I didn't pursue it. A few years ago, I leaned back into my style of cloisonné and now pull from years of observation that are incorporated into my work. For instance, I was having a repair made in my bathroom, and I walked past the door to get an unfortunate and recognizable glimpse of what we all know as "plumber's butt." A couple weeks later, I designed the "Diner Bracelet" and included that small detail which has become the most popular 1mm piece of fine silver on my jewelry display tables.

WGG: What is your favorite piece and why?

Laura: As simple as it is, my favorite piece is the "Above Ground Pool Brooch." I love the shape and the simplicity of the cloisonné drawing along with the colors of summer. Most likely there has never been an above ground pool depicted in cloisonné, and I'm proud of that.

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

Laura: I would return to the process of finding your personal style. Believe in yourself and pay attention to what you pay attention to. If it's objects from nature or a logo from a bag of chips, we all draw inspiration from what we are compelled to understand or replicate. So let it flow and even better if it gets a little weird.

WGG: What's next for you?

Laura: I have been adjusting to life out west with a pair of twin-brother dogs that I adopted a year ago. I have missed my adventurous life, but I can feel it coming back with some exciting upcoming plans. This summer I will be selling my work at the *Cherry Creek Arts Festival* in Denver and teaching a cloisonné enameling workshop at Mesa Arts Center. This fall, I will be taking a neon glass class to develop the ability to draw larger with glass and light! An entirely new adventure awaits.

"I just finished another huge group of cloisonné enamel work. I have my shortcuts for efficiency, but I can't speed that process up. It's tedious! Now turning a corner to metal fabrication, gotta set these!"
Laura Fortune.

WGG received permission to include a video of the artist in action! To watch the video, please click here.



Tips and Tricks!

T&T 1

"It's easy to forget that earring posts need work hardening too, but don't skip it or you risk a wobbly post that bends way too easily 💸

Here are two ways to work harden them:
1️⃣ Use flat pliers to gently twist the post—first one way, then the other. This adds tension and gives a little compression from the steel.
2️⃣ Or, hang the earring off the edge of your steel block and roll a flat hammer over the post to harden and straighten it at the same time.

Both methods are simple, quick, and make a big difference!"

For more details, click on the photo.

Post credit: Metalsmith Society
Instagram @Metalsmithsociety



T&T 2

"Here is a hinge tip from @endeisjewelry for a video she created for @riogrande

'There's something so satisfying about creating hinges—adding both function and an edgy touch to these solitaire pendants.

Once I ball one end of my sterling silver wire, I thread the wire and leave an excess of 10mm of wire for the final ball!

My Smith Little Torch from @riogrande ! It makes pinning hinges easy, thanks to its precision and ability to concentrate heat in small areas—perfect for spot soldering and delicate handcrafted jewelry work.' "

For more details, click on the photo.

Post credit: Metalsmith Society
Instagram @Metalsmithsociety



Special Picks for Our Readers!

"Enameling History and Revolution"
By Karen L Cohen
December 16, 2016
Ganoksin
https://www.ganoksin.com/article/enameling-history-and-revolution/

This excellent article provides a succinct, informative overview of the various individual techniques used in enameling. To give you a sampling, here's an excerpt about one of these techniques:

"Champlevé"
"French for "raised field" or "raised plain." A technique in which enamel is inlaid into depressions in the metal, leaving metal exposed. The depressions are typically made by an etching process, although other methods exist. First done in the 3rd century AD by the Celts decorating their shields, this technique has been one of the favorite forms of enameling."

"Understanding Métiers d'Arts: Enameling"

by Sheng Lee
March 21, 2024
Revolution
https://revolutionwatch.com/understanding-metiers-darts-enameling/

"What makes enamel particularly intriguing in its application to watchmaking is the scale. Dials are remarkably small compared to enameled cases or vases, yet they capture the traditional complexity and beauty of this art. Importantly, an enameled piece is not only visually stunning but also highly durable; it doesn't age or tarnish, and it can even be safely cleaned in an ultrasonic bath without any adverse effects. But what exactly is enamel, and how does it differ from glass or porcelain?"



"The Art of Enameling"

L'Ecole, School of Jewelry Arts
YouTube, September 13, 2025
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQYseZARgEM

"Marie Oberlin, Master Enameler and Lecturer at L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts and Paul Paradis, Art Historian, Decorative Arts and Jewelry Specialist and Lecturer at L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts will introduce you to the mysteries of enamel, which will no longer hold any secrets for you."



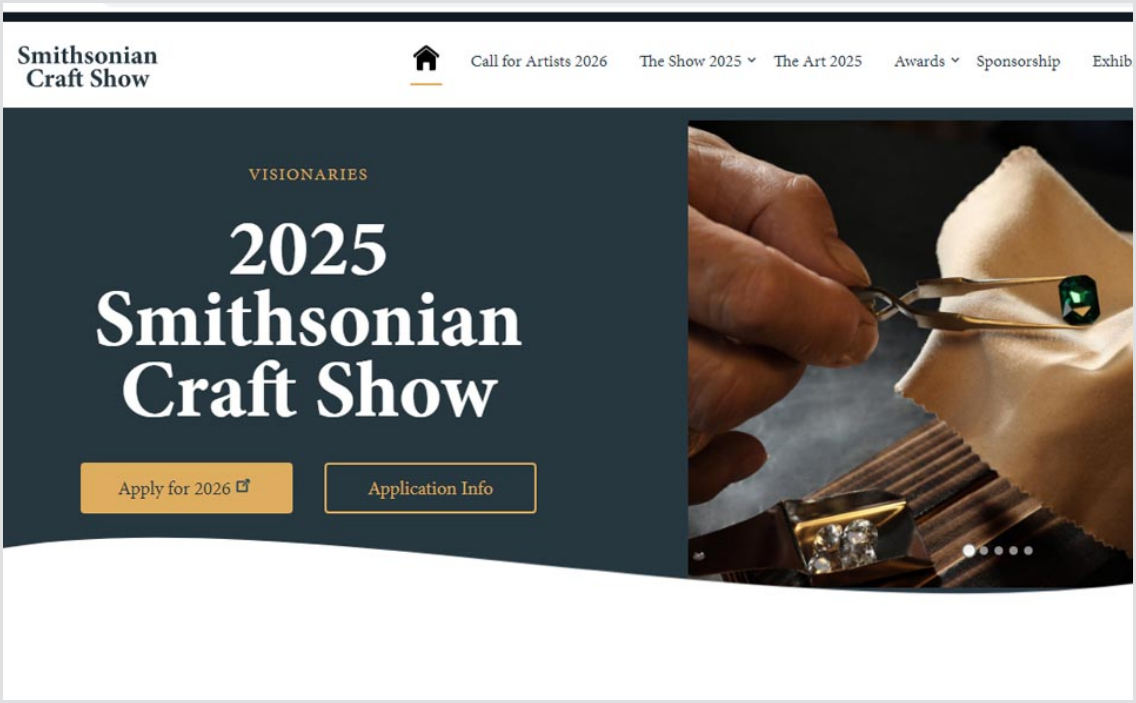
"How was it made: Enamelling a brooch"

Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A)
YouTube, July 19, 2022
https://youtu.be/FOjlwWzJyq0?si=LjPhZoeLhFiCzm9F

"This film shows the creation of an enamelled brooch – from the initial sketch to the final piece. Inspired by 18th-century silk designs, the brooch was made by Jane Short MBE, especially for the V&A's collection…The brooch features two different enamelling techniques: champlevé – where enamel is laid into spaces which have been carved out of the metal base, and basse-taille – where transparent enamels are used over an engraved pattern, allowing the pattern to be seen through the glass."

Events in the Area!





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 write-up about yourself (450 words or less) and a photo of your work to wggnewsletter@washingtonguildofgoldsmiths.com.

We are so excited for you!

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