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



The Washington Guild of Goldsmiths

Newsletter

Winter 2025

Another year has gone by! As a new one starts unfolding, many of us take a moment to look back, appreciate the good things that happened, and learn from hiccups that might not have been expected. Life is a beautiful and ongoing learning experience with all its successes, as well as its challenges.

Jewelry making is not an exception. With any economic or political uncertainties, we, the artists, have to ride the wave to better adapt, either by changing techniques, or choosing alternative materials, or maybe even reaching a different platform of clientele.

In this issue, we talk about discovering alternative materials, learn about upcycling silver, and introduce a new international artist. She is the talented Eunseok Han, who recycles cans to make beautiful intricate jewelry pieces. We also spotlight our talented WGG member, Nilanjana Van Order.

Enjoy and happy holidays to all!

Along the waves. Brooch by Eunseok Han. Photo credit: KC Studio

Letter from the President

Greetings all, and Happy Holidays! As the year comes to a close, I hope each of you takes a moment to recognize the hard work you've put into your craft. Whether you completed a major body of work, mastered a new technique, or simply carved out time for your artistic practice in a very full year, your dedication is what keeps our community thriving. Your collective energy and commitment inspire all of us to continue growing as artists.

Looking forward to next year, I encourage all members to help us grow our community by reaching out to potential new Guild members. Our strength has always come from the exchange of ideas, skills, and enthusiasm among makers, and there is no better way to nurture that than by inviting students, emerging artists, and those who are exploring the metal arts to join us. A personal invitation or a friendly introduction can make all the difference for someone just starting their creative journey.

I also want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who applied to be part of the Metalwork 2026 show. This exhibition continues to be one of our signature opportunities to showcase the depth and diversity of our Guild, and your participation keeps it vibrant.

Finally, as we look ahead to a productive and creative 2026, I want to note that we still have several vacant board positions. If you have time, ideas, or are simply curious about how the Guild operates, I encourage you to reach out to me or other board members. Serving on the board is a meaningful way to shape the future of our organization, and we welcome your involvement.

Art for all,

Kit Aikin

WGG Vice President

Workshops

Making Beautiful, Wearable, Sculptural Jewelry with Titanium and Niobium with

Douglas Wunder



Photo credit: Douglas Wunder

Douglas Wunder and The Washington Guild of Goldsmiths (WGG) are conducting a workshop on **Making Beautiful, Wearable, Sculptural Jewelry with Titanium and Niobium** on **January 10, 2026**, **10am to 5pm** at **Montgomery College.**

This workshop is intended to familiarize one with the understanding in how to transform titanium and niobium into a piece of sculptural jewelry. A strong focus of the class will be on coloring metal with heat and an electrical process of anodizing. Participants will learn how to cut simple shapes out of titanium and niobium sheet metal. Then a layering process and riveting will be introduced, demonstrating multiple possibilities of assembly.

You will create a **pendant** based on discussion and hands-on experience. The workshop is open for all skill levels.

The workshop fee for members of WGG is $95 and $155 for non-members. The nonmembers have the option of becoming members of the guild and availing themselves of the members price. The amount of titanium/niobium required for pendants will be available from the instructor for a fee of about $50 depending on the amounts needed.

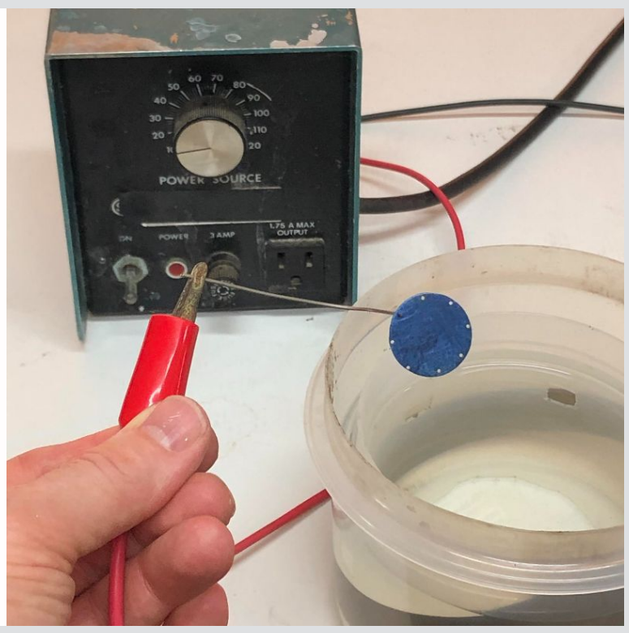
Members sign up
Click here

Non-members sign up
Click here

The last date for registration is **December 31**.

Venue: Paul Peck Art Building
3rd Floor, Jewelry Studio
Montgomery College
51 Manakee Street, Rockville MD 20850

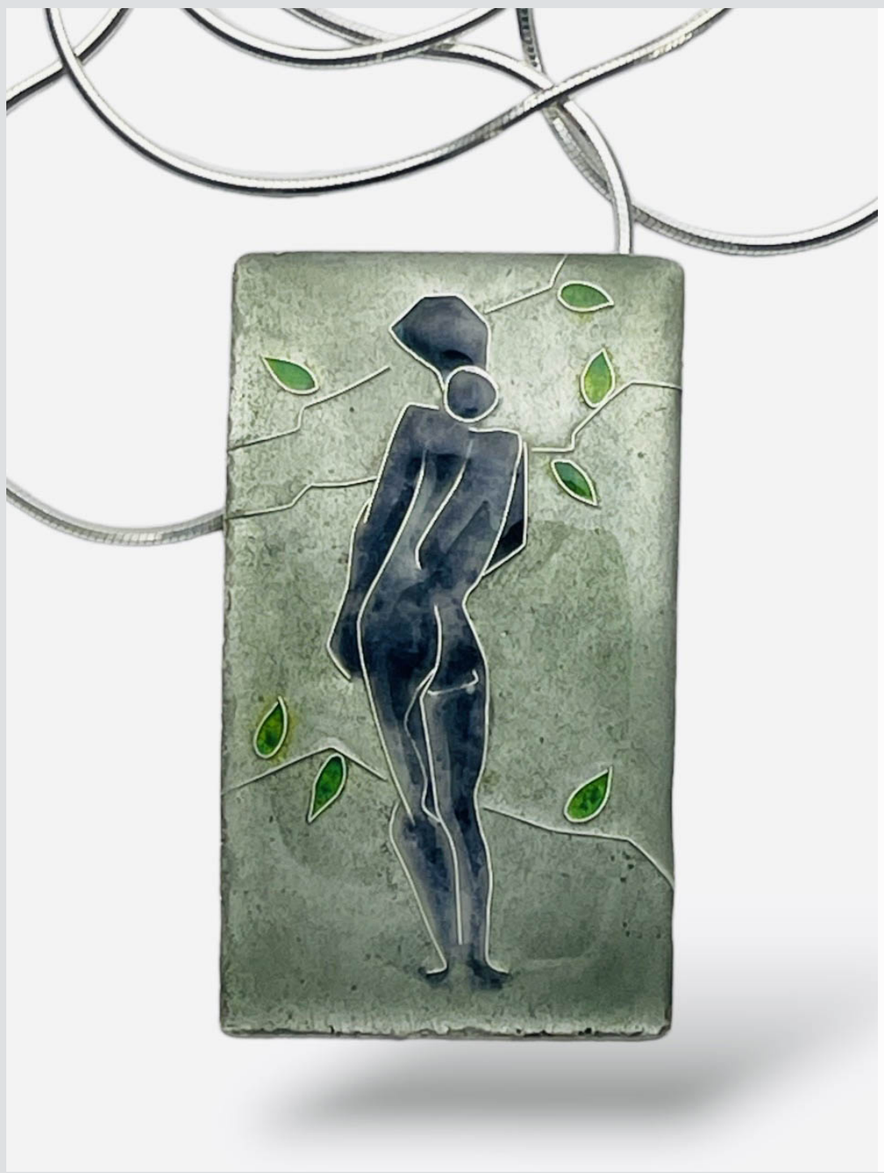
If you have any questions, please contact Nil at nilvanorder@gmail.com.



Member Spotlight

My name is **Nilanjana Van Order**.
People call me **Nil**.
You can find me at **www.artbynil.com**.

About a decade ago, I started making jewelry because it fascinated me as a wearable art. My inspiration came from my surroundings and everyday life. This ranged from anime graphics inspired by my daughter's preoccupation with it, to a pile of fall leaves, to human and animal forms. To this day, I draw inspiration from my surroundings, but it has evolved into preservation of the natural world of plants and animals. My jewelry is an entreaty for the nurturing and conservation of dwindling natural life.



I have been exceedingly fortunate to be taught by award-winning teachers, Nick Barnes and Abby Goldblatt, at The Art League in Alexandria, Virginia. There I have learned the art of enameling, stone setting, and metal smithing. My pieces reflect an intermingling of these skills. I play with alternative materials, such as steel and acrylic, as well as the traditional silver and gold. I use colors that stand out in nature and design pieces that reflect my principle of conservation of natural life. I start by designing the piece in my head, and I render the image on to paper through drawing. From that I create a play of form and colors in jewelry.

Photo credit: Nil Van Order



My journey into design began as a toddler with drawings on the walls with pastels that my mother had hidden from me so I would not ruin the walls. My leaning towards art came from seeing my mother being artistic in every mundane aspect of life. She painted small drawings beautifully, our house was artfully decorated, she would paint lovely patterns on the dresses we wore, and so on. My mother had studied art in a small school in Bengal. My father, who had no artistic talent himself, encouraged my mother to continue painting, however informally.

Photo credit: Nil Van Order



My older sister and I grew up in a middle-class family in India. My father was a civil servant, and my mother taught school children with disabilities. My sister excelled in her studies, while I tended to like having fun more than studying. Each year we took part in a city-level art competition that our father took us to — in the dead of winter, in an open-air setting, painting while sitting and freezing on a cold floor. My first year competing was when I was three years old, when I covered my own face with paint rather than the paper in front of me. Both my sister and I tended to do well in those competitions; and, one year my sister even won a prize from our then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Art was held in high esteem in my family, and it influenced who I became.

Photo credit: Nil Van Order

After I graduated from school, I went on to study architecture at my parents' behest, even though my preference was to study sculpture and arts. I took to architecture naturally and went on to have a firm of my own with two other partners. My architecture career began with much fanfare, as we won a national award for the design of a township. I also designed housing, interiors, and houses, as well as worked with NGOs (non-governmental organizations). As a logical next step, I came to study city planning in the US. Subsequently, I was employed by both USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) and the World Bank. This gave me the opportunity to work in Russia, India, and other countries. As a natural extension of city planning, I went on to study finance and economics. Years after working in various parts of the world, I finally realized that I wanted to get back to the arts.

Joyfully, I am now fully entrenched in designing and crafting jewelry. I work full-time in my studio and attend classes at The Art League.

I serve as the training coordinator with another jewelry artist for WGG (Washington Guild of Goldsmiths) and am also a member of the Enamelists Gallery at a unique art institution, the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, VA. I live in Washington DC with my husband, daughter and two very friendly dogs.

METALWORK 2026

Save the dates!

May 3rd 2026 (Sunday), 10am - 12pm
Hand in all accepted work for the show at Cyd Rowley's studios
10449 Metropolitan Avenue

May 7th 2026 (Thursday), 1pm - 6pm - METALWORK 2026
Opens to the public - Gallery opening hours are Thursday - Sunday, 1pm - 6pm each day.
Waverly Street Gallery

May 8th 2026 (Friday), **METALWORK 2026** - Opening reception, 6pm -8pm
Waverly Street Gallery

May 29th 2026 (Friday) 6pm - METALWORK 2026 closes.

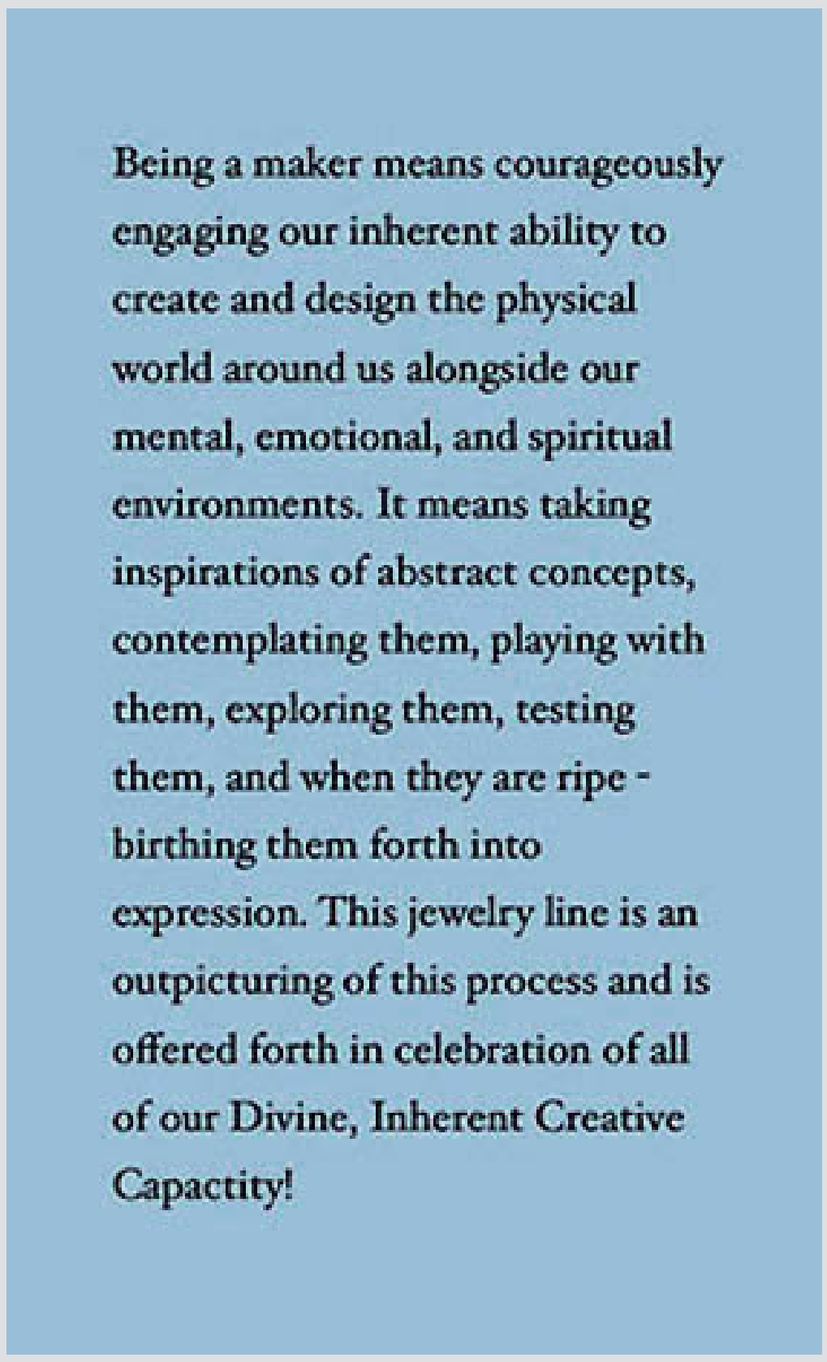
May 30th 2026 (Saturday) 10am - 1pm
Pack up METALWORK 2026 & return work to WGG members.
Waverly Street Gallery

Meet our guests

METALWORK 2026 is fortunate to have three very important guests working for our members.

Juror - Jen Pepe
Juror - Douglas Wunder
Photographer - Greg Staley

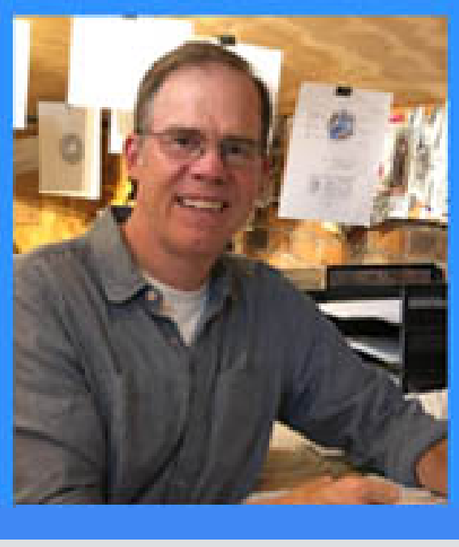




WGG METALWORK 2026

Juror

E. Douglas Wunder



I live in Kutztown Pennsylvania with my wife Amy and daughter Annabel.
I work from home in our restored carriage house as a solo artist and travel the country exhibiting my jewelry and and conducting workshops.The seeds for jewelry design began at an early age and took form in college. When I was five I began making plastic models. I focused on science fiction related themes and subjects of World War Two. With continued years of interest, I developed unique skills for making miniature objects. In college at The University of Iowa I became interested in studio art gravitating to metalsmithing and jewelry design. By the time I graduated in 1989 the years of making models and the education in metalworking provided opportunities for professional success. The primary material I use is titanium (Ti). This gray-toned metal is ideal for jewelry design. It is light in weight, strong, hypoallergenic and non-corrosive. With many designs, I also combine gold and/or silver metals to highlight and add contrast to the finished piece.

WGG METALWORK 2026

Photographer

Greg Staley



Greg Staley has traveled to over 30 countries, but for the past 25 years has lived and worked as a photographer in the Washington area. His clients include museums and architectural firms in the mid Atlantic and Northeast US. He has taught photography in the Washington area as well as in New York and China.
He is a graduate of Pratt Institute.
He lives in Silver Spring, Md. with his wife Virginia and his son Steven.
An abbreviated list of his clients include:
The National Gallery of Art
The Phillips Collection
The Society of the Cincinatti
The David C Driskell Center. U of Maryland
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
The Albright_Knox Museum
The Katzen Museum. American University
In addition to the above, he has worked with hundreds of individual artists, collectors and galleries throughout the Washington area, and throughout the mid Atlantic and Northeast.

Happy to answer questions and provide more information!

Nick Grant Barnes
WGG METALWORK 2026 Coordinator
nickgbarnes@verizon.net

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

International Feature

Eunseok Han

Portrait photo credit: Eunseok Han



Eunseok Han is a contemporary jewelry artist who is making an effort to sustain the environment and protect our planet. Based in Seoul, Korea, she works with discarded aluminum cans, creating exquisite and exquisitely colorful jewelry that honors nature. Eunseok’s Instagram page is well-worth following, as is reading her thoughtful and inspiring interview below.

WGG: Who is Eunseok Han? Tell us a bit about yourself!

Eunseok: I'm a jewelry artist based in Seoul, South Korea. I received my master's degree in metalcraft from Dongduk Women's University in Korea, and I currently create jewelry from recycled aluminum cans. As a Korean metalcraft artist working with recycled cans, I see tradition and innovation not as opposing forces, but as intertwined elements that enrich each other. Traditional Korean metalcraft emphasizes precision, symbolism, and deep respect for materials—values I strive to uphold even when using unconventional materials like discarded aluminum cans. By giving new life to something often overlooked, I reinterpret traditional techniques through a contemporary lens, reflecting both environmental concerns and modern aesthetics.

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

Eunseok: I majored in applied arts in college and received a master's degree in metalcraft. Among crafts, jewelry is a wearable sculpture that reflects not only the wearer's beliefs and values, but also the culture of the society they belong to. This is why I have continued to create jewelry to this day.



Rings: Stay Alive Photo credit: KC Studio

WGG: You choose working with disposable products. Do the materials inspire your designs, or do your designs determine the materials you choose?

Eunseok: I understand that materials and design are not separate entities, but inextricably linked. I believe design is a vessel that contains various materials. Sometimes the vessel (design) becomes the protagonist; and, other times, the material is.

Before working with aluminum cans, I primarily created jewelry using various materials like gold, silver, gemstones, wood, and acrylic. Back then, I designed first and then found the right material. Since 2020, when I began working with recycled aluminum cans, I've been incorporating design into this specific material.

WGG: Tell us why you chose to study drawing in Chicago?

Eunseok: I had the opportunity to live near Chicago for a year with my family. Having studied crafts in college, I wanted to learn about painting. I wanted to break free from the limitations of crafts, which require creating physical objects. I wanted to express myself more freely. That experience gave me a sense of freedom and has greatly influenced my current work.

WGG: Which is more challenging, the design phase or the execution? Would you give us an idea about the process?

Eunseok: Design and execution are inseparable. Sometimes, execution is modified for design, and sometimes design is modified for execution. For jewelry intended to be worn, I believe the execution stage, considering function, is more important, but I always struggle between execution and design.

I make jewelry through the following process: cut recycled cans, separate them by colors and letters, and paste them in a suitable shape and color combination to express the design in mind, for example, a coral. In this process, the letters, trademarks, and colors on the recycled cans reflect our current culture and taste. Interestingly, our current culture and taste are captured in my work. Moreover, I use renewable plastic, called PLA, to connect the pieces of the can, which is my small effort to protect the environment.



Brooch: Becoming
Photo credit: KC Studio

WGG: You've participated in many exhibitions in many countries around the world. It’s always interesting to hear what customers think about the work. Any particularly special conversation you remember to share with the WGG membership?

Eunseok: I've been working with recycled aluminum cans for about six years, since 2020. Finding cans of the right color and pattern for my work is never easy. Sometimes, it takes family members to find them; and, digging through trash cans is common. One day, just before an exhibition in New York, I received an email from New York. It was a warm message from one person, offering to collect cans for

my work and give them to me. Finally, I met her in New York, and I received a beautiful New York can and turned it into a brooch, which I exhibited a few months later. The process of forming new relationships through cans and leading to my work was like a dream. It was my dream to share the importance of the environment through the discarded cans. It was like a dream come true. I hope to share this dream with more people.



Necklace: Secret Garden Photo credit: KC Studio

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

Eunseok: My work began with our daily life full of disposable items. The disposables we meet every day are considered as nonprecious materials and are used only once and then discarded. Generally, gold, and silver are great materials for jewelry. On the other hand, disposable cans have been considered inadequate materials for art. However, I thought we can make beautiful jewelry with nonprecious materials, even with the discarded materials. This is why I started working with recycled aluminum cans.

Disposables are also considered one of the main contributors of pollution. Because of them, the environment is polluted, the earth is warming, and the water temperature is rising. As a result, the lives of many living things are threatened. Corals, for example, bleach due to pollution and lose their beautiful colors. I used discarded cans to express the beautiful colors of coral that are gradually disappearing due to the pollution. I hope many people realize the preciousness of nature and make an effort to sustain it.

WGG: What's next for you?

Eunseok: I will continue to make my small effort to protect the planet we live on by crafting with discarded material. And, I will speak about the importance of sustaining environment.

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

Video credit: Eunseok Han



WGG received permission to include an interview with the artist! It is in Korean and shows the different steps of the process. To watch the video, click here.

Video credit: Eunseok Han



Special Picks for Our Readers!

“Repurposing and Upcycling Found Objects in Art - #EarthDay50”
By Lori Gipson and Brooke Garcia
Metal Museum, Apr 14, 2020
https://www.metalmuseum.org/post/repurposing-and-upcycling-found-objects-in-art

In this wonderful article, the Metal Museum features brilliant metalsmiths who don’t operate under the assumption that the “…value of jewelry… [is] intrinsically tied to the cost of the materials, the metal itself.” Instead, their creations are grounded in “repurposed and upcycled found objects.”

"All artists repurposing and upcycling materials challenge preconceived notions. When the eye recognizes a found object, it changes the meaning and the value of that object in the work. Whereas it may have been thrown away by someone else, it is now living a new life, no longer destined for the landfill but now in a place of preservation created by the artist."

“Upcycling or how to produce 100% eco-responsible jewelry”
AGLAIA magazine
https://www.aglaiaco.com/en-us/blogs/magazine/upcycling-an-alternative-for-recycled-jewelry?srsltid=AfmBOoq97UBsZrnHX1YPKuYSWxDmrkgeWgrMx4FEaXMl49nltbHY1eLb

This article by AGLAIA magazine tackles the idea of upcycled jewelry. An undiscovered world for most artists, especially the ones who strongly believe that using precious metals is the only legitimate way!

"The challenge and talent lie in the ability to see the potential in discarded objects, to visualize a second life for them that will capture both the imagination and the hearts of those who wear them. Each piece

of upcycled jewelry is a testament to the unsuspected potential that resides in objects every day, waiting to be discovered and cherished anew."

“Metalsmith Society Guide to Refining Scrap Metal”
By **Corkie Bolton**
Metalsmith Society, February 6, 2021
https://metalsmithsociety.com/a/blog/metalsmith-societys-guide-to-refining-scrap-metal

In this compact and rich article, Corkie Bolton has put together a list of precious-metal refining companies in the US, Canada, and many other countries. We hope this is useful to you!



Harriete Estel Berman is an American artist and sculptor whose work has been shown throughout the United States, Europe, and Africa. Since 1988, she has been using post-consumer, recycled materials to create jewelry, Judaica, and sculpture. She says, “I use the humblest of materials taken from the waste stream of our society to examine the values of our society.”

An article by **Craft In America, it highlights the beautiful work of Harriete Estel Berman, one of the most inspiring artists whose commitment to sustainability rivals her craft and creativity.**
https://www.craftinamerica.org/artist/harriete-estel-berman/
https://harrieteestelberman.com/



“A Deep Dive Into Melting & Reusing Precious Metals (In the Small Studio)”
Youtube, April 5, 2023
Metalwerx School for Jewelry and Community Studio
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MxgVMVK6Uc

We couldn't recommend this video more! This is a fun and detailed explanation of the process for melting and reusing the silver scrap you have in your studio. The video offers clear steps on sorting the scrap pieces into clean and dirty, what tools and ingredients to use, how to use them, and so forth until a new jewelry piece actually comes to life! If you do give it a try after watching the video, please send us your feedback to wggnewsletter@washingtonguildofgoldsmiths.com

In this video, Metalwerx notes, " we teach you the best practices for melting and processing the precious metal scraps you inevitably accumulate while creating jewelry in a studio setting."
This video was made by William Vanaria of Metalwerx.

Tips and Tricks!

T&T 1

Love this tip from @shimell_madden - “We use a charcoal block as crucible when melting up metal and creating a ingot. The surface of the block can be easily removed/scraped making sure there is no metal contamination. You can carve the shape you want depending on what you are melting. It’s also a less expensive alternative to a crucible.”

For more details, click on the photo.

Post credit: Metalsmith Society
Instagram @Metalsmithsociety



T&T 2

Corkie Bolton, Metalsmith Society founder, shares her experiment - "I’ve been playing with a game changing tool from @potterusa their hydraulic press!!! We have never done a single tip about hydraulic presses..." .

For more details, click on the photo.

Post credit: Metalsmith Society
Instagram @Metalsmithsociety



Events in the Area!

AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL

American Craft Made Baltimore

The largest juried craft fair on the East Coast.

Now in its 49th year, American Craft Made Baltimore brings together 400 artists, 10,000 attendees, and dozens of local partner organizations from across the East Coast for shopping, demonstrations, hands-on experiences, and connection through craft.



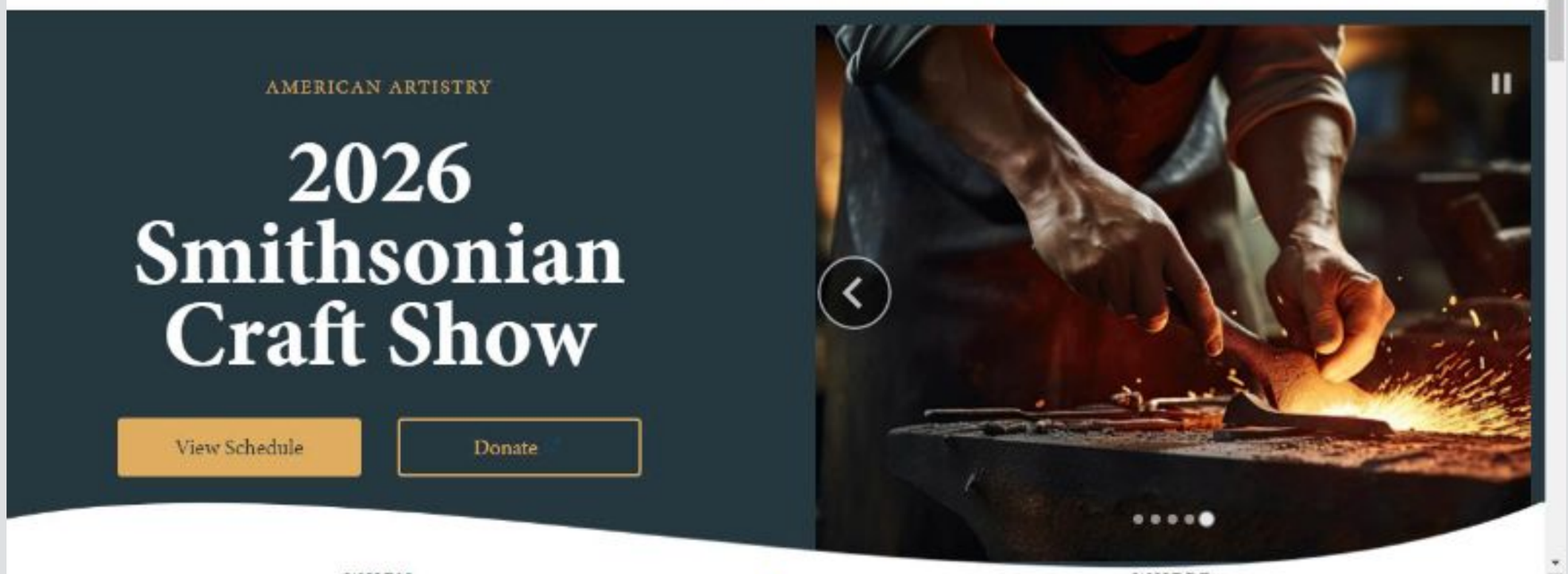


Event details.

DATES
February 20–22, 2026

HOURS
10 a.m.–6 p.m. Friday & Saturday / 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Sunday
The box office opens one hour prior to the start of the fair each day.

LOCATION
Baltimore Convention Center, Baltimore, MD





Spring Bling: A Hometown Fine Arts & Crafts Show

Saturday, March 7, 2026

Click Here to Apply!

Ida Lee Park Recreation Center, 60 Ida Lee Drive NW, Leesburg, VA 20176

The show will take place indoors in the basketball courts, aerobics room, and main hallway.

Saturday, March 7, 2026, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Application Deadline is December 8th, 2025. Decisions will be announced no later than January 9th, 2026.

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!