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NEWS RELEASE

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STUDENT WORKS ARE SELECTED FOR JURIED JEWELRY DESIGN SHOW

The bi-annual event at Fort Mason Center will feature about 200 of the west's finest artists

KENTFIELD, Calif., May 4, 2006—For a group of College of Marin jewelry students and their instructor, next month marks an exciting opportunity to showcase the fruits of their labor in a very public forum. COM Instructor Michael Chaille and four of his advanced students will be exhibiting collections of hand crafted wearable art at the Serendipity Fine Arts and Crafts Show at the Fort Mason Center in San Francisco, May 27 and 28.

"These are fabulous students," said Chaille, who teaches two sections of Jewelry Design, where four different levels of jewelers learn together in one class. "We're kind of a little success story at the college, a little hidden secret," he said. "These are advanced students who are looking for a stepping stone to go on and sell their work, and so this is a great opportunity to do that."

The bi-annual event, still in its first year, will feature about 200 of the west's finest artists. As well as jewelry, booths will display everything from ceramics to baskets to photography to pieces made of glass, wood, and metal. Exhibitors are selected by a jury on the basis of the originality, artistic conception and quality of skill involved in the production of their work.

The show's promoter is Takashi Honda, an acclaimed artist originally from Japan, who sells his unique pins and earrings internationally and has been exhibiting at shows for more than a decade.

"It's hard to make a living selling jewelry," lamented Gary Klehr, one of the student exhibitors from the college. In the 1960s, Klehr was a street artist, selling his handmade wares in Berkeley and San Francisco. He came back to jewelry a couple of years ago, after a long hiatus as a graphic designer, and enrolled in Chaille's class at the College of Marin.

He's still a graphic designer but says he would love to one-day transition into making jewelry fulltime. For now, it's a side job: he sells his geometric silver and gold sculptured pieces, set with pearls and amethysts, through home sales and his Web site. He also has pieces in various art museums.

"We're looking forward to this show as an experience and not thinking we're going to make a ton of money," he said. "People are generally into (making jewelry) because they love it and not because there is a pot of gold or silver at the end of the rainbow," he added. For COM student Diane Barnes, a physician on medical leave after suffering a stroke last year, making jewelry has been a key to her recovery.

"As a radiologist, I interpret X-rays. My world is a visual world and so the jewelry is one more translation of that visual world," she said. "It's sort of the healer healing herself," she added.

Barnes is heavily inspired by her Native and African American heritage. She makes unusual pieces that combine traditional silversmithing techniques like Hopi and Navajo overlay.

She wouldn't have had the courage to participate in the upcoming show without the camaraderie and support of her friends and fellow exhibitors from Chaille's class, she said, explaining that it's a nice way to get "her foot in the door" to the world of shows.

"Part of the beauty of the College of Marin classes is…there's this wonderful interplay of students teaching students, teachers teaching students and everyone inspiring everyone," she said.

Barnes will be displaying several dozen pieces of jewelry ranging in price from $30 to $250. Show sponsor Honda says there will be artwork selling for upwards of $10,000 in some booths.

For more information contact Instructor Michael Chaill, 415-898-3125, Students: Gary Klehr, 415-381-2481, www.garyklehr.com, Diane Barnes, 415-456-6788, Keren Peled, 415- 421-9163 , www.kerenpeled.com, Laura Marx, Show promoter, Takashi Honda, 415-585-6657.

Photographers are invited to take photos of the jewelry in advance of the show by contacting Michael Chaille at 415-898-3125.

About College of Marin
The College of Marin is fully accredited College of Marin is fully accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges College of Marin has been providing exceptional educational opportunities for students of all ages since 1926. The College administration is located in Kentfield, CA. The College also operates the Indian Valley campus in Novato, CA.

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