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Gardner-Webb University Hosts Exhibit of Wearable Biblical Sculpture

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Office of University
Communications

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Written by: Claire Coile, Intern with the Office of Communications

Display Opens Feb. 3 with Runway Show Featuring GWU Students as Models

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—An artist who finds her inspiration in old library books and tattered Bibles will present a program and exhibit at Gardner-Webb University in February. Stephanie Lael Barrick of Delaware brings her wearable biblical sculpture to display in the Pouryousefi Gallery in Tucker Student Center from Feb. 4 through March 26.

Sponsored by the Gardner-Webb Distinguished Artist Series, the “Bible App” exhibit kicks off on Feb. 3 at 7 p.m. with a runway show featuring GWU students as models. All events are free and open to the public.

Barrick’s daughter, Allie, is a 2018 graduate of Gardner-Webb. When Allie toured campus for the first time, they saw the gallery. Barrick has always made a point to stop by gallery when she visits. Now, she has the opportunity to share her unique artwork with the GWU community.

A former art teacher, Barrick began creating her scripture-inspired garments when the library at her school needed to get rid of some books. “I chose certain types of books to take



“Sheep’s Clothing” was inspired by the warning in Matthew 7:15 of The Holy Bible to “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”

home for future, personal projects,” Barrick recalled. “While surveying my collection of book materials, I came across a box of old Bibles. I feel like God put it in my mind to use those Bibles in art projects.”

Her pieces are intricate, one-of-a-kind creations based on her studies of the Bible or lessons she hears. “I am always working both sides to the middle,” Barrick described. “On one side, I am in the word of God. There are always points made in Bible studies, sermons, Sunday school class, Christian radio and internet sermons and lectures that inspire important concepts that would be worthy of the time and effort it takes to develop in physical materials.”

However, the Bible is not her only launching point. She also uses the physical materials around her to begin. When the materials and artistic passion meet, art is formed. “Picture a dance,” she explained.

“Guys and girls are coming and going and sometimes they get together. It’s like they are all my friends, I like them all. But eventually it comes to light that these two belong together. They complete one another. That is the beginning of a piece.”



Barrick has formed her preferences for certain materials and personal style through years of practice, but they are always changing. Right now, she enjoys layering intense patterns so the viewer can see a piece from all angles. Walking through home improvement stores is a favorite pastime to devise new methods of working with materials.

Upon first glance, the initial biblical references of Barrick’s creations might not be obvious, but she believes the scripture will have an impact. “The Bible has the power to change lives,” Barrick expressed. “If someone reads a bit of scripture in the form of looking at my sculpture, God can use that powerfully in the life of one who would not otherwise read the Bible. You should not have to read the text in order to appreciate and understand the art.”

Learn more about Barrick’s art at stephanielaelbarrick.com.

Auxiliary aids will be made available to persons with disabilities upon request 48 hours prior to the event. Please call 704-406-2155 or email disabilityservices@gardner-webb.edu with your request.

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.



This dress, called “Steeped in Scripture,” is made of tea bags to illustrate how Christians should be soaking up scripture continually.