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# Gardner-Webb University Art Gallery to Feature North Carolina Potter's Work in October

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Office of University  
Communications

September 13, 2016

## *Ben Owen III's "Tradition and Transition" Exhibit to Spotlight Craft's Past, Present*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—North Carolina potter Ben Owen III will display several dozen pieces of his artwork at Gardner-Webb University during the month of October. The exhibit, "Tradition and Transition," will offer a range of examples of the pottery craft that has been a major part of Owen's entire life and his family's history for centuries.

Owen's forefathers settled in North Carolina in the late 1700s, and they learned pottery techniques as a means of producing wares that met utilitarian needs in their homes. The skills were passed down and eventually became the trade for Owen's grandfather, Ben Sr., a respected master potter who admired the artful beauty of Asian pottery he saw in museums and collections.

As a young boy, Owen began studying the art of making pottery with his grandfather. "At 8 or 9 years old, he showed me how to prep clay and work with it on the wheel," Owen recounts. "It became a wonderful activity after school, being able to spend time with my granddad. He was such a great teacher and his patience stands out from anything he conveyed, taking time to teach me about the craft."

After those early years as an apprentice with his grandfather, Owen studied pottery in college. He has since participated in workshops and conferences across the U.S., as well as in Japan, Australia, New Zealand, China and Europe.

Today, Owen operates his pottery studio in Seagrove, N.C., at the same location where his grandfather opened his own shop nearly 60 years ago. His creations can be found in museums nationwide, such as the Smithsonian Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, as well as in the collections of noted individuals including singer-songwriter James Taylor and golfer Arnold Palmer.

His exhibit at Gardner-Webb will be on display from Oct. 3-28 in the Tucker Gallery inside the Tucker Student Center on the GWU campus. "There will be vibrant colors and there will be subtle colors with earth to neutral tones to help the forms show up well," Owen

previews. “I’ll have a good variety of pieces in the exhibit. I tend to approach it like an ice cream shop. Sometimes I like vanilla, but sometimes I like butter pecan. I like to look at my work and try it in different lights and designs. I’m not doing the same thing every day.”

On Oct. 6, GWU will host a reception from 4-5 p.m. to celebrate the display, which is part of the Gardner-Webb School of Performing and Visual Arts’ Distinguished Artist Series. The event will also include an artist lecture by Owen from 5-6 p.m. in Hope Hall in the Tucker Student Center. “I will talk more in depth about the technical process of getting the clay and refining it,” Owen shares, “but I also encourage people to come out and learn about the pottery’s history.”

Visit [benowenpottery.com](http://benowenpottery.com) to learn more about the artist. For more information about the exhibit and the GWU Department of Visual Arts, visit [gardner-webb.edu/ben-owen](http://gardner-webb.edu/ben-owen) or call 704-406-4656.

*Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University’s purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).*