For IMMEDIATE Release

JANUARY 23, 2013

Janice Hall is one of the potters whose works will be on display at The Gallery at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture in the new "Women's Faces" exhibit, which opens with a 5:30 p.m. reception on Jan. 30. The Twentieth Century Library Club will also have a huge part in the exhibit with photo collages and information celebrating women in Tift County.

‘Women’s Faces’ Exhibit Opens at Museum Gallery January 30 at ABAC

TIFTON—Women’s faces portrayed in clay and on canvas are about to take over The Gallery at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.
Polly Huff, assistant director and curator at the museum, said a 5:30 p.m. reception on Jan. 30 hosted by Tifton’s Twentieth Century Library Club, will open “Women’s Faces,” the 17th exhibit at The Gallery.

“For the ‘Women’s Faces’ exhibit, Danielsville potters Pat Shields and Janice Hall will feature a collection of their face jugs, each one representing a woman,” Huff said. “Each pot is made from native clay processed by a mule-driven mill, wheel thrown, and individually decorated by hand.”

Huff said the exhibit will also feature a unique collection of mixed media canvases and scrapbooks honoring Tift County women from all walks of life. The Tifton Twentieth Century Library Club is participating in “Faces Make Places,” a GFWC Arts Partnership Project in which the club has produced several large photo collages and scrapbooks celebrating women from all social and economic backgrounds and their contributions to the Tifton community.

“Art students from Tift County High School and Eighth Street Middle School will also provide various pieces of art for the project,” Huff said. “The collages will include women from the early 1900s through the present day.”

Shields and Hall are a husband and wife team that began studying southern pottery traditions as an innocent part-time hobby two decades ago. Visits with potters in north Georgia led to apprenticeship opportunities with some well-known traditional potters, and the hobby turned into a full-time business.

“Over the years Pat and Janice have adopted many traditional methods used in the southern cottage pottery industry, while also incorporating modern techniques in their production,” Huff said. “They mix their own glazes from raw ingredients using traditional or original recipes, and they wood-fire each of the pieces in their shop.”
The accumulated experience and creative expression displayed by Shields and Hall is evident in the functional stoneware and decorative folk art wares produced by their shop, Georgia Mudcats Pottery. It has been featured in “Southern Living Magazine,” “Northeast Georgia Living Magazine,” and the book, “From Mud to Jug” by John A. Burrison.

Huff said the family mule named “Blue” walks in circles for about five hours in order to process one mill of clay. Once the clay is tempered, the two potters dig it out of the mill and press 25 pounds at a time through a pug mill to remove any rocks and debris. Each face jug requires about seven pounds of clay, which is weighted and wedged, to remove air pockets.

Shields then turns each jug and allows it to dry. A handle is added, and Hall personalizes each one with special facial features. After drying the jug for a couple of weeks, it is fired in a bisque kiln for about 12 hours at 1800 degrees, cooled for 15 hours, washed, and then wax is applied to the bottom.

“Even then, the jug is not finished,” Huff said “The glazing takes place in between applications of wax, which keeps the different color glazes from bleeding through. The kiln is fired again and stoked for about nine hours, to obtain the desired temperature of 2300 degrees, then slowly cooled for two days before Pat and Janice can take the first peek at their finished creations.”

As an extra added attraction, the two potters will also have on display their personal collections of pottery made by female potters, including pieces created by a blind potter.

The reception for “Women’s Faces” will feature local music and refreshments, as well as gallery talks and tours with Shields, Hall, and Brenda Rose, the lead artist of the “Faces Make Places” project. Many of the featured face jugs will be available for sale, along with smaller items made by the potters especially for the exhibit.
For questions about this exhibit, interested persons can contact Huff at phuff@abac.edu.