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**For Immediate Release**

**December 1, 2018**

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**What**: Reception to honor artist Michael Sherrill, with film screening

**When**: 1 p.m.., January 19

**Where**: The Gallery at Flat Rock, 2702-A Greenville Highway, Flat Rock

**How** **much**: Free and open to the public; RSVP required

**Reception and film screening to honor Michael Sherrill**

***Nationally-recognized Bat Cave artist featured in traveling retrospective exhibit;***

***Short film illuminates the path of his career***

The Gallery at Flat Rock is pleased to host a special reception in honor of artist Michael Sherrill at the gallery at 1 p.m. on January 19. The event will include a screening of a mini-documentary film detailing the career path of one of the most respected artists living in North Carolina. A retrospective exhibit of Sherrill’s work in ceramic, metal and glass is currently on display at the Mint Museum in Charlotte until April 7. The exhibit will then travel to the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., the ASU Art Museum in Tempe, Ariz. and to a third museum venue yet to be disclosed.

The afternoon reception will feature a mini-documentary that follows the trajectory of Sherrill’s work from his early functional pottery pieces to his meticulous mixed media sculptures. Sherrill’s early work revealed his innate talent for innovative thinking about shape and color as a clay artist. His later works, largely inspired by the natural forms of plants that surround his studio, located deep in a mountain cove in the Bat Cave area of Henderson County, reveal Sherrill’s continued focus on form and color while pushing structural limits using his innovative techniques in manipulating materials to create forms that reveal his careful observations of the outer world.

 “I am compelled by the sensation of seeing things fresh; as if for the first time,” says Sherrill in his artist statement. “It is as if I have been asleep, and when I wake up, I am surprised by the things that surround me. In my case, it is the flora and fauna

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surrounding my studio that continue to surprise me. For me, these discoveries are epiphanies. My desire is to create something that might bring its observer to the same

place of discovery. It's one thing too for me to respond to a stimulant and then to make

work. It is another thing for that work to go the next step and bring a likewise response from the viewer.”

In 1974, Sherrill moved from Charlotte to the mountains of Western North Carolina, determined to make a living from making pottery. Mostly self-taught, he was influenced by the North Carolina folk pottery tradition and the community of artists at Penland School of Crafts and the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild. A shift occurred in Sherrill’s work in the 1990s, when his functional pieces morphed into vessels that expressed more of his growing interest and focus on form, rather than function. His later work, exploding with the color and grace inherent in natural botanical forms, are the outcome of what Sherrill describes as his shift “from potter to artist.”

“(Sherrill) explores the beauty in natural growth and decay with bright colors, often through painstaking technical processes. Sherrill’s exceptional skill is based in his innovative approach to using tools, technology, and his keen sense of materials together to achieve what he calls his ‘natural narratives,’” according to the Mint Museum literature on the retrospective. “Working with clay, glass, and metal, his exquisite floral forms have the allure of Martin Johnson Heade’s passion flower and orchid paintings and the botanical engravings of John James Audubon, at the same time they are remarkably new.”

This event is free and open to the public, but participants are required to submit an RSVP in order to attend. Those interested can call the gallery at 828-698-7000 or visit the website at [galleryflatrock.com](http://www.galleryflatrock.com).

The Gallery at Flat Rock represents finely curated art and craft, and is located in Flat Rock Square at 2702-A Greenville Highway in Flat Rock, North Carolina. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sundays Noon to 3 p.m.; or by appointment. To learn more, please visit the gallery website at [galleryflatrock.com](http://www.galleryflatrock.com) or call the gallery at 828-698-7000.

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