

# The arts, the crafts and the holidays

John W. Barry, Poughkeepsie Journal 12:15 a.m. EST November 20, 2014

*The DCC Foundation Craft Fair draws more than 3,000 people. Unison's craft fair attracts 1,200-1,500.*



(Photo: Courtesy photo)

Art and inspiration, the holidays and shopping, creative expression and the economy, and events that offer insight into the fabric of the community, literally and figuratively, are all at hand.

Thanksgiving is next week and that signals the arrival of the holidays and, even before the holidays, craft shows. These gatherings are anchors of the regional cultural community and provide Hudson Valley artists with a means of reaching an audience. Consumers get the opportunity to purchase locally crafted items in an atmosphere that some say stokes pride in the neighborhood.

These annual events are the last stop on the line for a creative process that, while allowing artists and art lovers to indulge a passion, also plays a pivotal role in shaping the economy.

The artists who display their wares at Unison Arts Center's 24th annual Craft Fair in New Paltz, the Dutchess Community College Foundation's 43rd annual Craft Fair in Poughkeepsie and the 25th annual Tivoli Artists Gallery Holiday Show in Tivoli, among other events, contribute to the impact they have on the regional economy.

Consider that the DCC fair alone draws more than 3,000 people. Unison attracts 1,200-1,500.

Brent Atkins of Hopewell Junction operates Just Bead It, a company that makes handmade jewelry. He'll sell items at the DCC fair for the eighth year when it runs Nov. 29-30.

"It's a special show," Atkins said. "It's one of the last shows of our season and it's one of the biggest shows that we do for a season."

According to a recent study by the Center for Research, Regional Education and Outreach at the State University of New York at New Paltz, the arts across Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester counties generate nearly a half-billion dollars in economic activity and are linked to 4,970 jobs. According to the study, Dutchess County's cultural sector has an economic impact of \$28.5 million and has created 1,015 jobs. These holiday exhibitions also remain a testament to the enduring nature of the regional arts community and the manner in which it is supported by the public.

Deb Goldman of New Paltz, a potter who works in porcelain, will be selling her work at the Unison craft show, which is set for Dec. 6-7. She said events such as these craft shows play critical roles in helping artists tap into an audience.

"It makes us visible," Goldman said. "A lot of people don't know who is in their midst in this area. There is a lot of amazing people."

Goldman described the Unison craft fair as, "a really lovely show. It's very intimate and most of the crafts people know each other. We're all pretty local. We know our customers, too."

Adding a new perspective on the whole craft fair scenario is the Dutchess Handmade Shop operated by Arts Mid-Hudson in their Town of Poughkeepsie office. The pop-up shop features work from local artists and will be open Monday-Friday through Dec. 24.

The Dutchess Handmade Shop underscores the economic impact that the arts can have on the local economy. Arts Mid-Hudson is a regional organization that oversees public funding for the arts and provides resources for artists and arts organizations in Dutchess, Ulster and Orange counties.

Yvonne Laube from the Town of Poughkeepsie, who crafts wooden mobiles for children's nurseries, greeting cards and ornaments, said Arts Mid-Hudson's Dutchess Handmade Shop suits her type of art well. She added that the shop is aligned with her desire to expand beyond the artistic presence she maintains online.

"It's a great outlet, a great opportunity," Laube said. "From my perspective, I do have some more fine-art pieces, but my focus isn't fine arts, per se. I have these crafts that I like to sell and share with people. I don't fit the standard gallery set up."

And, Laube continued, "Being that my business up until this point was primarily Internet driven ... it's a step for me to get out there in the public and share

my wares live, so people can see them and touch them, and decide if they like them or not. Pictures can only go so far.”

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## IF YOU GO

**What:** Tivoli Artists Gallery Holiday Show

**When:** Nov. 21-23; Nov. 28-30; Dec. 5-7; Dec. 12-14; Dec. 19-21. Gallery Hours: 5-9 p.m. Friday; 1-9 p.m. Saturday; 1-5 p.m. Sunday

**Where:** Tivoli Artists Gallery, 60 Broadway, Tivoli

**Admission:** Free

**Information:** Call 845-757-2667 or visit [www.tivoliartistsgallery.com](http://www.tivoliartistsgallery.com) (<http://www.tivoliartistsgallery.com/>)

**What:** Dutchess Community College Foundation Craft Fair

**When:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 29-30

**Where:** Falcon and Drumlin halls, DCC, 53 Pendell Road, Poughkeepsie

**Admission:** \$6; \$4, senior citizens, DCC students, employees, alumni; free, children under 12

**Information:** Call 845-431-8400; visit [www.sunydutchess.edu/craftfair](http://www.sunydutchess.edu/craftfair)

**Also:** Visitors are encouraged to park in Lot D on Cottage Road. There will be shuttle service to Falcon and Drumlin halls

**What:** Unison Arts Center's 24th annual Craft Fair

**When:** 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Dec. 6-7

**Where:** New Paltz Middle School, 196 Main St., New Paltz

**Admission:** \$4; \$3, members; free, those 12 and younger

**Information:** Call 845-255-1559; visit [www.unisonarts.org](http://www.unisonarts.org)

**What:** Dutchess Handmade Shop

**Where:** Arts Mid-Hudson, 696 Dutchess Turnpike (Route 44), Poughkeepsie

**When:** Through Dec. 24; 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Monday-Friday; noon-5 p.m, Saturday

**Information:** Call 845-454-3222 or visit [artsmidhudson.org](http://artsmidhudson.org)

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