

Traditional Arts Indiana



Apprenticeship Program 2017~2018



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Creativity, Continuity, & Community

Apprenticeship Program

TRADITIONAL ARTS INDIANA, based at Indiana University's Mathers Museum of World Cultures, works to celebrate folk and traditional arts throughout the state, creating a context of appreciation for these artists and their communities. Supporting expressive practices such as blacksmithing, hoopnet making, African drum making, Miami beadwork embroidery, and ballet folklórico, TAI coordinates an Apprenticeship Program to facilitate the transmission of these traditional art forms.

A time-tested model for learning, face-to-face apprenticeships allow artists and their apprentices the time and space to dive deeply into their work together. Knowledge flows in both directions, enriching the creative practice of all participants.

“People were generous to me when I was learning the blacksmithing trade. I’d like to keep the tradition alive in the next generation.” ~ Jason Nickel



Above: Paolo Ansaldo, blacksmith apprentice. Front cover: Jason Nickel with Paolo Ansaldo and Iris Nickel; Tony Artis and Andre Rosa-Artis; and Debra Bolaños with Alejandra Bolaños and Alyssa Calderon. Inside cover: Larry and Samuel Haycraft; Ruby Norris; and Katrina Mitten with Saiyah Miller.



Tony Artis

Apprentice: Andre Rosa-Artis

Drum Making

FATHER AND SON Tony Artis and Andre Rosa-Artis practice “one of the oldest traditions in the world”: African drum making. After watching craftsmen make djembe drums on a trip to Ghana, Tony was inspired to learn to do the same. He received multiple fellowships to study drum making with artists in Ohio and Cuba. Tony also studied under master drum maker Prince Julius Adeniyi until he could pursue drum making full time. Andre, a DJ and hand percussionist, is building entire drums from start to finish for the first time in his life thanks to this apprenticeship, utilizing skills in mathematics, carpentry, macramé, and welding all at once.

According to Tony and Andre, the objective of the drum is to speak things into existence. Tony notes the Yoruba word for this phenomenon is *ofo àṣẹ* (the power of the word). As Andre explains: “When you build a drum from scratch, your energy—your blood, your sweat, your tears—are in the drum, so when you play the drum, you speak with that energy.” “The drum is known as the ear of God,” says Tony. “When you make your own drum, that drum is your voice.”





Debra Bolaños

Apprentices: Alejandra Bolaños, Alyssa Calderon, & Diana Gutierrez

Ballet Folklórico

FOUR NIGHTS A WEEK in East Chicago, Indiana, Debra Bolaños and her apprentices Alejandra Bolaños, Alyssa Calderon, and Diana Gutierrez can be found practicing Ballet Folklórico (traditional Mexican folk dances) at Xel-Ha Dance School. Through this apprenticeship Debra teaches Danza Azteca, a form of indigenous dance that exudes strength and power. Her apprentices perform wearing ankle rattles, accompanied by huēhuētl drums. “It brings out where it all began. We came from indigenous blood,” Debra explains. “It touches on the spiritual part of each of us and brings tranquility to your soul.”

Debra teaches many students throughout their adolescence. “I live through their life events—communion, confirmation, quinceañeras...They know that they can come to me if there’s a problem.” Debra’s students often start dancing as early as age five, and stay active into their teens and twenties. “It’s something that’s in my heart,” Alejandra says. “I can’t see myself stopping.” Alyssa agrees: “This is what I want to do. This is what I love.”





Danny Cain

Apprentices: Ruby Norris & David Guffy

Hoopnet Making

HOOPNET MAKER AND POSEY COUNTY NATIVE Danny Cain explains, “People who grew up in this area grew up eating fish. A lot of us won’t eat store bought fish.” He first learned to make nets as an apprentice to master net maker Jim Cooper (1942-2005), who taught others “because he didn’t want the tradition to die with him.” This labor intensive craft involves bending metal hoops, tying the nets, and making your own tools. Danny’s first lesson was to carve a needle. “I was like a lost pup,” he recalls. Now, Danny is able to tie 350 knots per hour.

Today, Danny is teaching two apprentices, his sister Ruby Norris and his son-in-law David Guffey. “I met Danny and went fishing [with hoop nets] with him a few times,” David recalls, “and I was hooked right from the beginning. No pun intended.” They are starting the same way Danny did: carving their own needles. While David is relatively new to both the tradition and the family, Ruby is proud to continue her family’s craft.





PIKE CENTRAL
CHAMP

Larry Haycraft

Apprentice: Samuel Haycraft

Hoopnet Making

WHEN FOURTH GENERATION HOOPNET MAKER Larry Haycraft was a boy, his father, Roy Haycraft, would only let him watch cartoons if he was also being productive. So, Larry started making nets on the couch at age ten. “When I tie a knot,” Larry says, “not only do I feel the history, but I feel my dad.” Once grown, Larry revived his net making skills. Local fishermen began to realize that “Roy’s boy” was doing justice to their family heritage, making the family’s unique oval nets. These distinctive nets have only been tied in the Haycraft family. Made to fish in shallow and swift running water, these nets are incredibly complicated to create.

Larry’s son Samuel marks the fifth generation of net makers in this family. “He learned from his dad, I learned from mine,” Samuel says. “He was ten when he started, I was ten.” While he already knew how to make a traditional hoopnet, this apprenticeship has expanded his craft to include the family’s oval net.





Katrina Mitten

Apprentice: Saiyah Miller

Beadworking

A **BEADWORKER** and member of the Miami (Myaamia) tribe of Oklahoma, Katrina Mitten comes from one of five families allowed to remain after the era of Indian Removal. She began learning traditional beadwork styles at age twelve by studying pieces in her home and at museums. Her granddaughter and apprentice, seven-year-old Saiyah Miller, wants to “learn to do what Grandma does,” so after school she heads to Katrina’s house to learn the traditional arts of their culture.

Katrina draws inspiration from the patterning of Great Lakes and Miami beadwork embroidery and “nature itself—whether it’s a painting, two-dimensional, or three-dimensional” artwork. “Everything art-wise is inspired by what The Creator gave us,” Katrina says. “I always repeat to Saiyah ‘we don’t try to recreate something The Creator did’, but we can put our best expression forward.” This time together encourages Saiyah to connect with the stories of her family while expressing her own creativity. As a result of this apprenticeship, Saiyah will participate in her first art show at the Miami Nation Powwow in Miami, Oklahoma.





Jason Nickel

Apprentices: Paolo Ansaldo & Iris Nickel

Blacksmithing

IN 1989, JASON NICKEL began working in master blacksmith Jack Brubaker's shop. Over the years, he built a deep understanding of and ability in the art of blacksmithing and in 2007 became the lead blacksmith in Jack's shop. Now, Jason helps his apprentice, 13-year-old Paolo Ansaldo, learn the basics of the craft and develop his style. "Everybody has got their own something that sets them apart...People were generous to me when I was learning the blacksmithing trade. I'd like to keep the tradition alive in the next generation," says Jason.

Paolo's favorite part of blacksmithing is transformation: "I change this lifeless lump of metal into a beautiful work of art or a useful tool." Paolo and Jason work together at Brubaker's forge. Jason's daughter, Iris, also decided to apprentice with her father after "always being around it [her] whole life." The apprenticeship will culminate in a "durable and beautiful gate for the Bloomington community orchard."



Traditional Arts Indiana *Apprenticeship Program 2017~2018*



Through support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Indiana Arts Commission, TAI funds up to six apprenticeship teams to work together each year.

For applications & more information visit: traditionalartsindiana.org



MATHERS MUSEUM OF WORLD CULTURES

