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TWO PERSPECTIVES, ONE SENSE OF PLACE

In “Effect: Texture and Patterns,” painter Cynthia Jennings Field and fiber artist Bev Thoms explore transformation and preservation amid the beauty of rural life

POOLESVILLE, Md. — In the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve, the turning of the seasons renews and nourishes the landscape, providing fresh inspiration for artists as well. In a new Riverworks Art Center exhibition, the work of fiber artist Bev Thoms and painter Cynthia Jennings Field highlight complementary approaches to seeing and making from nature: two perspectives, but one sense of place.

“Effect: Texture and Patterns” will be on display from **Wednesday, February 5, 2025, through Sunday, March 23, 2025, at Locals Farm Market, 19929 Fisher Avenue, Poolesville, Md.** This show is the seventeenth Riverworks “Artist in the House” exhibition to be featured on the second floor of the historic Veirs-Stevens House at Locals.

An opening reception will be held at Locals on **Sunday, February 23, 2025, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.** The reception is free and the public is invited to attend.

Known for her gorgeous vests, scarves, accessories, wraps, table wear, wall art, and blankets, Bev Thoms employs the ancient art of felting and uses specialized dyeing techniques, often combining repurposed silk and viscose fiber with wool sourced from her sheep into many of her pieces. Having lived on a farm in Dickerson since 1974, she has a longtime connection to the land and the resources it provides, both creative and tactile.

“My felting studio and dye kitchen reside in our big red barn, surrounded by rolling pastures and gardens, with my beloved sheep close by,” Thoms says. “I’m enchanted by the magic of transforming wool from my sheep into functional artistry.”

For Jennings Field, immersion in nature is more recent but no less profound. With a background in mural painting, graphic design, and antiques and architectural salvage, she approaches the world outside her Barnesville studio with a sensitivity to re-using and reclaiming natural elements, creating fine art, jewelry made from found objects, and signs on salvaged wood, in addition to her stunning, evocative paintings.

“My art represents my view of my surroundings through my dreamy, impressionistic lens,” she says. “Reflections, mist, light, mountains, local animals, birds, waterfowl, trees, flowers, gardens, old buildings, antiquities and figures—I paint these all with a profound appreciation of their beauty and hope for their preservation.”

For Riverworks co-founder David Therriault, pairing the work of Jennings Field and Thoms in a single show was an easy decision. Both artists are longtime members of the Countryside Artisans, a select group of artists who live and work in rural or historic areas of Montgomery, Frederick, and Howard Counties. Welcoming the public to their studios three times a year, the Countryside Artisans offer visitors a perspective that changes with the seasons, and the nature that surrounds them is central to their art.

“They use different media, but it’s striking how Bev and Cynthia capture the same textures and patterns we see in the landscape,” Therriault explains. “Their earth tones, a sort of ‘fuzzy’ abstraction, the blending of colors—for me, they share a sense of calm, rural peacefulness, which is what so many people seek in the Ag Reserve in the first place.”

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Cynthia Jennings Field was born and raised in Bethesda, Maryland, and holds a BFA from Moore College of Art and Design, in Philadelphia, where her interest in drawing and painting took forefront. She is a Signature Member of The Maryland Pastel Society and Associate member of both The Baltimore Watercolor Society and The Washington Watercolor Association. As well, she is a juried member of the Countryside Artisans Group who host studio and gallery tours three times a year. Cynthia paints in a variety of mediums and subjects, featuring local landscape and lake scenes from the Adirondacks. She enjoys painting *en plein air* as much as possible. See more of her work at www.windsongstudioart.com.

In 1974, **Bev Thoms** and her husband moved to their farm in the Agricultural Reserve of Montgomery County where they raised their four children. Here she embarked on a remarkable journey from nursing to farmer to accomplished fiber artist. Work on their farm began with a large peach and apple orchard, and later included foaling brood mares and later breaking the foals for a harness racing syndicate. The operation eventually transitioned to raising a large flock of meat sheep (attacked and killed by a neighbor dog), and finally, a flock of fiber sheep. The exquisitely beautiful fiber harvested from this flock led her into spinning yarn, weaving clothing and blankets, and ultimately, with the guidance of many talented mentors, to her

passion—creating unique felted art for body and home. Learn more at her website: www.bevthoms.com.

Both artists are members of the **Countryside Artisans**, a select group of accomplished visual, sculptural, and textile artists living and working in both historic and rural areas of Montgomery, Howard, and Frederick Counties of Maryland. Each studio is located within a 30-mile radius of Sugarloaf Mountain, a highlight of Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve. Each April, October, and December, the **Countryside Artisans** jointly open their galleries and studios to the public for special art tours. Plan your next visit by consulting the map and artisan directory at their website, www.countrysideartisans.com.

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Established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2022, [Riverworks Art Center](http://www.riverworksart.org) offers a wealth of arts and culture programs in a restorative rural setting, including art classes, introductory workshops, community roundtables, Storytellers presentations, theater and music classes for children, fine arts exhibitions, outdoor concerts, community festivals, weekly jam sessions, and more.

Riverworks is rooted in the small town of Poolesville, only 40 minutes outside the D.C. Beltway and just half an hour south of Frederick, with Sugarloaf Mountain rising eight miles to the north. The surrounding 93,000-acre Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve offers hiking trails, riverside views, farm-fresh produce, independent restaurants, African American historic sites, Civil War trails, local beer and wine, and more.

Riverworks holds events at three locations in and around Poolesville:

- **Alden Farms** (19215 Beallsville Rd., Beallsville)
classrooms, studios, art library, event pavilion, and sculpture garden
- **Locals Farm Market** (19929 Fisher Ave., Poolesville)
art gallery, jam sessions, local artisans market
- **Historic Methodist Church** (17617 W. Willard Rd., Poolesville)
outdoor stage and future home of the Riverworks Performing Arts Center

In its first two years, Riverworks has hosted more than 150 art classes, programs, and public events, many of them low-cost or free, with the goal of cultivating creativity and connection in the rural corner of Montgomery County and with visitors from across the D.C. region.

To learn more, visit the Riverworks website: www.riverworksart.org.



Established in 2020 at the height of the Covid pandemic, [Locals Farm Market](#) at **19929 Fisher Ave., Poolesville, Md.** is a vital restaurant in the historic heart of Poolesville that serves as a welcoming first stop for visitors exploring the Ag Reserve, a community gathering place, an art gallery, and a marketplace for the work of local artists, writers, artisans, and farmers.

Locals is open Wednesday 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Thursday, Friday, and Saturday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Locals hosts Riverworks jam sessions open to musicians of all ages and experience levels on Friday nights from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Music-loving audience members are welcome and encouraged to attend. The Locals menu emphasizes fresh ingredients from area farms. Guests can eat, meet, and relax in a shade-covered outdoor setting or indoors on two floors of the historic 1840s Veirs–Stevens House.

The second floor at Locals hosts rotating Riverworks “Artists in the House” exhibitions featuring the work of respected local and regional artists.

To learn more, visit the Locals website: www.localsfarmmarket.com.

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