

Folklife Apprenticeship
Artist Profile Statement
Sheep to Shawl Master Artist: Kathy Evans

Bio

Born July 8, 1962 in Morgantown WV. Raised near Bruceton Mills on my grandparents dairy farm after the death of my mother when I was 7 months old.

Currently living on a Certified Naturally Grown farm as a 4th generation farmer about 18 miles from where I grew up. My husband, Reid, and I were married in 1978 and moved immediately onto his family farm near the WV, PA, MD border. We assumed operation of the farm in 1990, but were actively helping his father with the farm until his father passed away in 1988. We now have 3 acres of CNG vegetables, raise pastured poultry for meat and eggs, beef cattle, and sheep. We sell at the Morgantown Farmers market as well as provide a CSA for local residents in Bruceton Mills and Morgantown.

We began raising sheep in 1994 when our oldest daughter joined 4-H. Around that time we also went to Pricketts Fort State Park and toured the village. That day there were spinners and weavers demonstrating in and around the cabins. I had read about this, but was fascinated to actually see the art in action and up close. The interpreters were amazingly patient and informative with all of my questions. The following Christmas Reid bought me my first spinning wheel. I was taught by other spinners in our area and also by reading books and watching videos. A few years into my new passion I took a weaving class at the Morgantown Arts Center. I didn't have a loom at the time, so my experience was limited to that class. From there my skills grew as well as the number of looms, knitting and other treasures. I now have a studio attached to my home dedicated completely to the fiber arts.

I began selling at art and craft shows in the late 1990's. They included the Stonewall Jackson Jubilee, Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival, Preston County Buckwheat Festival, Springs Folk Festival, Rhinebeck Sheep and Wool Festival, among other smaller more local craft fairs.

Description of Art Form

The description of Fiber Arts is as varied as the number of fiber artists. Learning the sheep to shawl process is fascinating. Taking the raw wool directly from the sheep and working with it until it becomes a beautiful piece of work to wrap around you or someone you love is deeply satisfying. The process has many steps, and each one has its' own version to create different effects, which will change the appearance of the finished piece. I feel that is one of the wonderful things about the fiber arts, you can take the same fiber, change one or two steps to create so many different items. The possibilities are as endless as your creative juices.

Artist statement

Sheep to shawl is a part of who I am, as far as my everyday life. I get up in the morning, I tend my sheep. On cold days, I am preparing fiber or making something with it, everyday. My family farm, Evans Knob Farm, is a fifth generation farm in Preston County producing Certified Naturally Grown vegetables, poultry, eggs, wool, and more.

My grandmother was a quilter, she did some crochet, but I wasn't brought up in fiber arts. It started thirty-three years ago for me when my husband and I took our children to Prickets Fork State Park where I saw raw wool being spun on a traditional style spinning wheel. I was mesmerized. Another lady had a huge loom and she was weaving. I admired the coverlets and asked a lot of questions. A few years later, our daughters got interested in showing meat sheep. While at the county fair, our daughter Becky fell in love with a beautiful Romney sheep and we ended up bringing the Romney home. Shortly thereafter I realized I needed to learn what to do with her wool. So I asked a neighbor for some pointers. And the rest is history, as they say.

Additional contact information

Evans Knob Farm

www.evansknobfarm.com

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