

## Rutledge adds some sparkle to Craft Expo

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This year's American Craft Expo takes an artful approach to a serious women's health issue.

The event, which takes place this weekend at the Henry Crown Sports Pavilion at Northwestern University, is sponsored by the Auxiliary of Evanston Northwestern Healthcare, with proceeds benefiting the organization's breast and ovarian cancer research program.

More than 150 juried artisans from across the country will exhibit one-of-a-kind items. The objets d'art will include baskets, ceramics, fiber decoratives, fiber wearables, furniture, glass, jewelry, leather, metal, mixed-media, paper and wood-crafted items.

Special pieces designated as "Craft for Cure" items can be identified by a pink ribbon. Artists will donate a percentage of the sale of those specific items to breast and ovarian cancer research. Local artist Jonathan Lee **Rutledge** has created one such item for the occasion. A former firefighter with the Rolling Meadows Fire Department, **Rutledge** has made a 22-karat gold brooch in the design of a ribbon, accented with a pear-shaped pink topaz (\$1,500).

"To have the opportunity to create a 'Craft for a Cure' piece for ACE is very rewarding," said **Rutledge**, whose stepmother is a breast cancer survivor.

**Rutledge** accidentally discovered his aptitude for jewelry design. As an undergraduate majoring in political science, he wasn't allowed to enroll in woodwork class. Instead, he sat in on a metalwork class, where the instructor took a liking to him. **Rutledge's** career as a jewelry designer had begun. After a short interim as a public servant, he decided to go full speed with his career as an artist.

**Rutledge**, who only works with 22-karat gold, creates his jewelry utilizing a very interesting technique called granulation, which dates back to 2500 B.C. Granulation is the art of fusing tiny, perfect spheres of gold to another surface. The fused spheres form a pattern, giving the piece more definition and dimension. The granulation technique is all hand-applied and his woven ropes are done by hand.

Once **Rutledge** developed a style that best displayed and personified his vision as an artist, he was ready to meet the public, which he did for the first time at last year's expo.

"Being a part of last year's expo provided the encouragement I needed to leave my job [as a firefighter] and pursue my dream," he said.

His complete body of one-of-a-kind jewelry includes earrings, brooches, rings and necklaces (\$350-\$9,000).

\*Hours for the American Craft Expo are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. today, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$15 for adults and \$5 for children age 10 and under. Children age 2 and under are free. One paid admission allows for re-entry throughout the weekend. The Henry Crown Sports Pavilion is at 2311 Campus Drive, Evanston. Call (847) 570-5096 or visit the Web site [www.americancraftexpo.com](http://www.americancraftexpo.com).

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