

Poet Stuart Kestenbaum to visit Alfred University, guest of Division of Ceramic Art

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ALFRED, NY – Renowned poet Stuart Kestenbaum, currently serving as poet laureate of Maine, will visit Alfred University Jan. 23 as guest of the Division of Ceramic Art, School of Art and Design, sharing his unique perspective as a master of poetic language and ceramic craft and his deep experience with visual art and craft practice.

During his visit, he will work closely with Alfred University graduate students, conducting studio visits, leading a writing workshop, and presenting a public reading and lecture on his creative practice.

Kestenbaum's presentation will be Thursday, Jan. 23 at 4:30pm in Room C (Binns-Merrill Hall 106). It is open to the public and free of charge.

Born in 1951, in Newark, NJ, Kestenbaum has lived a life immersed in the arts and humanities, completing a BA in comparative religion at Hamilton College, then studying ceramic art at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, in Maine. He maintained his own studio practice in Portland, ME, then accepted an administrative position with the Maine Arts Commission, where he directed programs focusing on art and literature. After three years, he was asked to join Haystack as executive director, a position he held for 26 years.

As a poet, Kestenbaum is the author of five poetry collections: *Pilgrimage* (Coyote Love Press), *House of Thanksgiving* (Deerbrook Editions), *Prayers and Run-on Sentences* (Deerbrook Editions) *Only Now* (Deerbrook

Editions) and *How to Start Over* (Deerbrook Editions). He has also written *The View from Here* (Brynmorgen Press), a book of brief essays on craft and community.

His poetry has been recognized as eloquent, down-to-earth, and luxuriating in the specifics of everyday life. Former U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser has described Kestenbaum's poetry as "heartfelt responses to the privilege of having been given a life. No hidden agendas here, no theories to espouse, nothing but life, pure life, set down with craft and love."

More recently, Kestenbaum has served as a spokesperson for the Craft School Experience, an on-line consortium of five major U.S. craft schools: Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Penland School of Crafts, Peters Valley School of Craft, and Pilchuck Glass School. He also is the host of *Make/Time*, a podcast featuring conversations with craft artists.