

# PRESS RELEASE



**CONTACT:** Susan Osborne, Communications Manager  
828-337-2910 or susan@mountainbizworks.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Founder of Portland’s Mudshark Studios to Headline Craft Your Commerce Workshop Series**

*Spring entrepreneurial program will focus on operations and finances to help WNC makers and creatives take their enterprises to the next level*

**ASHEVILLE, N.C. (Feb. 26, 2020)** — Mountain BizWorks is partnering with Center for Craft and UNC Asheville to present the spring Craft Your Commerce workshop series, which focuses on financials and operations for makers. Developed with input from local creative entrepreneurs, the series includes three workshops and a special Alpine cohort course – each led by acclaimed industry experts and thought leaders.

Among these is Brett Binford, co-founder and CEO of Mudshark Studios, a ceramic design and production company in Portland, Ore., that has received accolades from the likes of Martha Stewart and former President Barack Obama.

“I am so honored and excited to take part in Craft Your Commerce in Asheville because there is such a rich history of craft in this region. And, a resurgence of locally made craft is happening NOW!” says Binford, who started 10 successful craft-based businesses in the last decade – the journey that he’ll share as he leads the **Scaling Your Craft Business** workshop on March 20.

In addition to insights into how to grow and scale craft enterprises, Binford will meet one-on-one with five lucky workshop participants for customized consultation sessions. “It is so important for budding creative entrepreneurs to seek out and find resources and training to help them along their journey,” notes Binford. “By asking for help, you invite in collaboration and innovation. By seeking resources, you build a firmer foundation for your business.”

The Craft Your Commerce series will also feature Hannah Cole of Sunlight Tax at the **Taxes for Makers and Creative Entrepreneurs** workshop on March 12. Cole isn’t just a tax expert – she’s also a long-time working artist herself. She understands the

financial challenges of freelancers and small creative companies, and she specializes in helping them navigate the financial side of their businesses.

The **Crafting the Built Environment** workshop on April 2 will round out the three-part series with a panel discussion addressing how local makers can position themselves to collaborate with designers, architects and real estate developers. The panel will feature perspectives from buyers like Shelter Collective and Samsel Architects, who will discuss how they work with makers to include locally produced crafts in their commercial and development projects.

A special Alpine cohort course – facilitated by Lisa Zahiya of Zahiya Studios – will follow the three workshops to help established makers integrate what they learn into their business practices.

“While each session will be informative and engaging on its own,” says Kareen Boncales, Mountain BizWorks Entrepreneurship Program Manager, “journeying through the entirety of this integrative learning experience will leave participants most prepared to improve the financial and operational management of their creative businesses.”

All three workshops will be held at the Center for Craft in downtown Asheville (67 Broadway Street). Full details and ticketing information can be found at [craftyourcommerce.com](http://craftyourcommerce.com).

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### **Spring 2020 Craft Your Commerce Workshop Series Summary**

**March 12, 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.**

Taxes for Makers and Creative Entrepreneurs with Hannah Cole of Sunlight Tax

**March 20, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.**

Scaling Your Craft Business with Brett Binford of Mudshark Studios

**April 2, 4 p.m. – 6 p.m.**

Crafting the Built Environment: How to Work with Developers and Designers featuring Shelter Collective and Samsel Architects

**April 23, 9 a.m. – Noon**

Alpine Course for Established Makers facilitated by Lisa Zahiya

**About Craft Your Commerce**

Craft Your Commerce is a Mountain BizWorks entrepreneurial program designed to connect, elevate and advance creative and craft-centered companies through a series of business training workshops and classes designed by makers for makers. The program is offered in partnership with Center for Craft, UNC Asheville, and area creative entrepreneurs. For more information, visit [craftyourcommerce.com](http://craftyourcommerce.com).

**About Mountain BizWorks**

Mountain BizWorks is a U.S. Treasury certified non-profit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that provides tailored small business lending and peer-learning programs to help grow great businesses and expand economic opportunities in Western North Carolina. For more information, visit [mountainbizworks.org](http://mountainbizworks.org).