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Shaker Museum

SHAKER MUSEUM PRESENTS “INSCRIBED” AT THE KINDERHOOK KNITTING MILL

**With More than 25 Historical Objects on Display, the New Exhibition Explores How
Inscription and the Written Word were Integrated into Shaker Design**

*Exhibition Will Run from Friday, March 17th to Sunday, May 28th
in Kinderhook, NY*

CHATHAM, NEW YORK, MARCH 14, 2023 – Shaker Museum, which stewards the most comprehensive collection of Shaker material culture and archives, announced today that its latest exhibition – *Inscribed* – will debut Friday, March 17th from 5:00pm to 7:00pm at the Kinderhook Knitting Mill in Kinderhook, NY. With more than 25 historical objects on display, the new exhibition explores how inscription and the written word were integrated into Shaker design.

With *Inscribed*, Shaker Museum presents objects made of wood that have been marked in some way – with stenciled or hand-painted notations or incised by stamping or carving names or initials into wood – all of which provide information about how the objects were used, who used them, or where they were used. Although Shakers held all things in common and were expected to treat community property as such, it was common for members to mark tools with their names or initials to notify others that they were the primary user. After all, cabinetmakers did not expect others to use, or even more concerning, to sharpen their tools. A second set of initials occasionally appear on a tool that was passed on to another Shaker. It was also important that everyone understood the proper use of things. For example, sieves made to be used in sorting or cleaning garden seeds should not be used to sift wood ash – marking it clearly as belonging in the “Seed Loft” avoided such confusion. Living along major roadways, Shakers experienced frequent visitors and used signs to inform and direct them to places they were encouraged or forbidden to visit. Shakers were dependent on commerce with the world, often using painted signs to let the public know where Shaker goods could be purchased.

Among other objects of interest, *Inscribed* showcases an array of historic buckets denoting each one's use with labels like "fire," "oatmeal," "beans," and "rice." There is a collection of sieves from the 1800s. The size of the sieve rim and how tightly the mesh was woven determined how the sieve was intended to be used and the markings on each kept the inventory in order. Bowls, baskets, building signs, wheelbarrows, tailor's rulers, bonnet patterns, die stamps, and stencils are also on display. The range of material on display in this exhibition underscores how prevalent inscriptions and markings were in Shaker culture.

Shaker Museum Executive Director Lacy Schutz commented, "Nearly everyone labels things. We label belongings – what they are, where they are kept, and sometimes, who they belong to. Shakers were no different, in fact, living in large communal families made them more likely to do so. It was important that members all knew where things were kept so anyone could easily find them, as well as who could use what. *Inscribed* explores how the written word and labeling became part of the Shaker design vernacular and offers a glimpse into the practicalities of their communal lifestyle. We are grateful for the collaboration with the Kinderhook Knitting Mill which provides Shaker Museum with a community-based exhibition space that enables the museum to deliver more programming and access to the collection to wider audiences, even while its new permanent home is in development."

The exhibition will run from Friday, March 17th through Sunday, May 28th. Exhibition hours are Fridays and Saturdays 10:00am-6:00pm, and Sundays 11:00am-4:00pm. No tickets or advanced reservations are required. For more information on the exhibition visit: <http://shakermuseum.us>. For more information on the Kinderhook Knitting Mill (located at 8 Hudson Street in Kinderhook, NY) visit: www.kinderhookknittingmill.com.

In addition to *Inscribed*, Shaker Museum's programming for 2023 includes additional exhibitions. More information on that programming is forthcoming. Shaker Museum's programs are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

Shaker Museum purchased a 19th-century industrial building in Chatham, NY and is in the process of renovating and building an expansive addition to the facility designed by Selldorf Architects. The physical building will embody Shaker values of inclusion, innovation, and equality to create a museum that both tells the Shaker story and is responsive to the needs of the community in Chatham, Columbia County, and the surrounding Hudson Valley. The museum will also retain and maintain the historic Shaker site in Mount Lebanon. The new campus located at 5 Austerlitz Street will provide ample space for exhibitions and respond to the need for inclusive community gathering spaces through its exhibitions and robust programming.

About Shaker Museum

With more than 18,000 objects, Shaker Museum stewards the most comprehensive collection of Shaker material culture and archives. It is the leader nationwide among organizations devoted to Shaker history. Its permanent new facility in Chatham, NY, which is in development, was designed by Selldorf Architects. The museum also stewards the historic site in New Lebanon, NY and has a campus in Old Chatham, NY, which is open year-round by appointment, where the administrative offices, collections, library, and archives are housed. The museum's collection can be viewed online at <http://shakermuseum.us>.

About The Kinderhook Knitting Mill

The Kinderhook Knitting Mill is a community-minded space in the heart of Kinderhook that brings together food, art, and design in an 1870s textile mill. The businesses housed in the Knitting Mill, almost entirely owned and operated by women and people of color, run the gamut from an Indonesian-inspired restaurant to an art gallery to a curated general store. The ethos of the Knitting Mill is one of cooperation and collaboration that is evident in the connective thread that ties everyone together in the shared goal of cultivating a thriving village center to nourish the community. The Knitting Mill has three eateries, retail offerings, and other art on display that visitors to *Inscribed* can enjoy.

Photos Link: [Here](#).

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Shaker Museum

Contact: Vicki Elkins, Ainsworth Associates
917-854-7539, vicki@ainsworthassociates.net