The Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University presents

“The Art of Gilding”
Presentation and Gilding Demonstration
with Francis Lestingi

Sunday, June 8, 2014
2:00—4:00 p.m.
Castellani Art Museum

Master Makers and Players Series
Events held in conjunction with the Folk Arts exhibition
Extraordinary Ordinary People: American Masters of Traditional Arts
(February 2—June 20, 2014)

As a teenager, Francis Lestingi, a master sign carver and gilder, began studying calligraphy informally with a family friend who gilded and lettered glass windows for local businesses. A former physics professor at Buffalo State, Francis decided to pursue his passion full time, training with several sign carving masters working in the Northeast. In 1994, he founded Signs of Gold with his son Stephen in Williamsville with the intent of creating “the finest, most elegant, unrivaled, entirely hand crafted, gold leafed, wood signage that are works of art, not just signs.”

Over the years, Francis has designed, hand carved, and gilded many of the traditional signs seen widely throughout Erie and Niagara County, including those for Nardin Academy and the village of Williamsville. Many of these signs have won awards through professional organizations, like the United States Sign Council and the International Sign Association. Francis serves on the Board of Trustees of the Society of Gilders, and with the Society, continues to provide pro bono restoration gilding in Katrina-damaged churches in New Orleans. One of his signs created for The Wine Thief, a business formerly located on Elmwood Avenue in Buffalo, is now part of the CAM’s permanent collection. Join us for a presentation and gilding demonstration with Francis, as well as the unveiling of this new acquisition.

This event is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.