

Welcome



Welding for Women

G25100101

with Connie B. Burkhart

October 5-10, 2025

Hello and welcome to Welding for Women at Ghost Ranch! It promises to be a unique week filled with art, laughter, and a space to create from the heart. I have instructed welding at Ghost Ranch for over 28 years, and I have always wanted to combine this wonderful art form with mindful creation using stories and experiences that feed the soul. We will focus on some intentional projects and designs using gas welding, brazing, and plasma cutting. This class is for all levels but is also wonderful for first-timers working with welding torches. We will focus on smaller projects to fine-tune the amazing process of welding and brazing to join metal. In our work, we will use power tools like a metal chop saw, varied types of grinders, and drills to shape metal. Our other course is called 'Fire It Up! Art Welding' (taught in July) and it adds in electric welding options like MIG and stick for larger heavy metal designs. Both classes complement each other, and although there is some overlap, 'Welding For Women' will offer an integrative experience that includes stories of some of the women in the history of Ghost Ranch as well as the ancient cultures that called this land their home. I find that knowing more about the space and place where you 'dive into the river of creativity' sparks the fire of inspiration. As women, I believe we have a feminine fire within that is full of unique insight, strength, and understanding that adds to the depth of our artistic creations.

CLASSROOM LOCATION ~ I am excited to announce that our 2025 space for our class will be located in our new welding studio location behind the old barn on the campground side of the ranch. We are thrilled about finally having this permanent space since losing our pole barn in the flash flood of 2015. We have been working hard preparing the new 'digs' and our first classes will be held there starting in July 2025.

GHOST RANCH EDUCATION AND RETREAT CENTER
280 Private Drive 1708, Abiquiu, New Mexico 87510 | 505.685.1000 | GhostRanch.org

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SCHEDULE ~ The day after you arrive at the ranch, you will learn the basics of oxy/acetylene welding from the ground up as we walk through tank safety and welding procedures. You will be lighting your torch by lunch on the first day, so get ready for the fun to begin! Our daily schedule will have two welding sessions - 9am to noon & 1:30 to 4:30. Evenings are free for you to enjoy the ranch. Wednesday and Thursday afternoon sessions are flexible for those who would like to book a tour or horseback ride or be away for a time if desired. On our last day of class, we work from 9 a.m. to 2:30pm when you will finish up those last-minute welds and clean up your space. After the area is cleaned, we will gather in a final circle and then transport and set up our creations for your after-dinner Art Show. This show is an anticipated event for the culmination of the week's work. Please plan on taking your creations with you after the art show ends in the evening. That is unless you sell your piece to an admirer!

DRESS FOR SUCCESS ~ Now for some logistics and items that will add to your success during the week. It is very important to dress appropriately for class. Please come with your own snug-fitting deerskin weight work gloves for our detailed work with the torch. I use lightweight garden leather gloves I buy through Amazon or other stores like Lowes. Bode's here in Abiquiu also carries work gloves, but they are expensive compared to what you can find and bring with you. Often, it can be hard to find small women's work gloves, which is irritating!! The better your lightweight gloves fit, the more success you'll have to maneuver the knobs and other tools. We supply heavy, large gloves for activities that throw sparks. Long cotton pants are best (leggings are not suitable), and closed-toe (leather/like) footwear to protect your legs and feet from sparks and molten metal. T-shirts are OK, but bring a cotton long-sleeve shirt to use

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when you are creating sparks with grinders or other tools. It is fine to work in short sleeves and put your long sleeves on when needed. Another helpful item is a bandana for your head. It helps keep your goggles in place, especially when you move them up and down as you are working. I'll provide aprons to protect clothing, but be aware you most likely will get a few holes in what you choose to wear for welding. You will have your own workstation area, and you may leave things there to have for the week. Remember that mornings and evenings may be chilly in October.

OUR GUARDIANS & MATERIALS ~ As I mentioned in the course description, I will guide you as a class in creating an intentional design of a guardian figure that will lend itself to many aspects of joining and finishing metal sculpture. In making this piece, you will learn varied processes that are used in creating metal designs, as well as take some time to consider those in your life that have been 'guides or guardians' to you. These figures refer to my signature design called 'She Who Walks With Me,' that are made mainly from steel (for the base), copper pipe (for the body), and mixed media decorative items. Each figure ranges from about 9"-10" high, and they are all unique to how you are called to design them. All materials are provided, so you do not need to worry about bringing any scrap metal -that is included in the cost of the class. The figures are decorated with beads, stones, feathers, and/or other mixed media objects, which will also be provided. However, if you have special decorative items like small stones, jewelry scraps, crystals, etc., you may consider bringing them and incorporating them into your design. I use a lot of old jewelry I received from my mother, and that makes my 'She Who Walks With Me' designs even more meaningful when they come to life.

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You are welcome to bring some of your own things that you may want to use as a design element for your pieces. I use a variety of items to finish a piece after the welding is done. A supply of 'fun' things will be available for class, so don't feel you need to figure it all out before you come. Also, note that this will be only one of the projects during the week, and there will be opportunities to make other designs as inspired. Welding classes have a permanent large scrap pile that workshop participants can pull from for extra materials.

I anxiously await your arrival at Ghost Ranch and look forward to seeing you briefly at the ranch orientation at 6:45pm after dinner on the day you arrive. Our meeting that night will be quick so you can get some rest and know what to expect for the coming day when we gather at 9am in the new welding studio.

I hope this information is helpful for your planning. Please feel free to reach out with any other questions that you may have. Travel safely and get ready for a great experience surrounded by the incredible inspiring beauty surrounded by the beauty of Ghost Ranch.

Take Care,

Connie B. Burkhart

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SUPPLIES/WHAT TO BRING:

Mandatory ~ Snug fitting lightweight leather work gloves/ wrist length.

Optional ~ All other materials are provided, however our guardian figures are embellished with mixed media objects such as old jewelry scraps, feathers, stones, crystals, beads and more. We supply plenty, however you may want to bring your own small mixed media objects to add to your design, or donate to the class. Estate sales are great to pick up old jewelry items. We ALWAYS appreciate donations that keep our supplies full!