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Bedazzled: A crafter demonstrates her skill to a group of onlookers at the 2008 Bead & Button Show in Milwaukee. This year's show is May 31-June 7.

By Beth Spelman, Bead & Button Show

10 great places for a hands-on craft experience

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Atlanta: The Indie Craft Experience aims for a hipper vibe than more traditional fairs. It's May 30-31 this year.

Get in touch with your creative side during National Craft Month, then celebrate the joy of making things at these events throughout the year. **Victor Domine**, spokesman for the non-profit Craft & Hobby Association (craftandhobby.org) shares his list for hands-on fun with **Kathy Baruffi** for USA TODAY.

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Indie Craft Experience

Atlanta
 "The Indie Craft Experience (May 30-31) is not your grandmother's kind of craft fair," Domine says. "The crafts at ICE have a hipper edge or an ironic playfulness not usually associate with traditional crafts." Vintage fabrics or repurposed material might be incorporated into designs for cellphone and iPod covers. Crafting workshops, vegan baked goods and live bands are all part of the mix. ice-atlanta.com

Maker Faire Bay Area

San Mateo, Calif.
 "This two-day family-friendly event in the Bay area (scheduled for May 30-31) is one of the largest DIY craft festivals in the country," Domine says. "Described as craft fair-meets-science fair-meets county fair, it attracts over 80,000 people." Creations from last year's event included robots, costumes and cupcake-shaped electric cars, complete with icing and sprinkles. makerfaire.com

Great American Scrapbooking Convention

Arlington, Texas
 "Just outside Dallas, this is one of the largest public scrapbooking events in the country," Domine says. "Thousands of scrapbooking, card making and rubber stamping enthusiasts come to try new tools and practice their craft." The three-day event, scheduled June 4-6, features more than 200 classes, cropping parties (rooms full of people who bring their supplies and do scrapping together), door prizes, shopping and free demonstrations. Two other conventions in Chantilly, Va., and Chattanooga, Tenn., are planned later in the year. greatamericanscrapbook.com

BUST Spring Fling Craftacular

Brooklyn, N.Y.
 "Indie designers and crafters enjoy taking crafting to the next level," Domine says. "This event is a celebration of their handmade goods and edgy designs." The annual BUST Spring Fling Craftacular is created by *Bust Magazine*, a hip, women's lifestyle magazine. It's an all-day party on May 17, jam-packed with the best in indie crafters, plus dancing, DJs, and drinks. Buy a raffle ticket and you could win a Singer quilting machine. bust.com/Craftacular/BUST-Spring-Fling-Craftacular-2009.html

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Creativ Festival

Toronto
 "Join the 40,000 creative enthusiasts together with top instructors at this event in the heart of Toronto's entertainment

district," Domine says. "Learn techniques from the experts, then put your own one-of-a-kind stamp on everything from clothes and curtains to greeting cards and accessories." Find out what's hot and new in the craft market at either the spring festival (April 24-26) or the fall version (Oct. 16-18) and meet people who have come from all over the world to participate. creativfestival.com

Bead & Button Show

Milwaukee

"No event in the country celebrates jewelrymaking better than this annual show (May 31-June 7)," Domine says. "Anyone with a passion for jewelry, fashion or art should experience it." This year, more than 550 classes, a reception to Meet The Teachers, lampworking demos, auctions and an international marketplace will be featured. beadandbuttonshow.com

Creating Keepsakes Scrapbooking Conventions

Louisville

"More than a dozen of these popular scrapbooking venues are held at locations around the country," Domine says. "They're very affordable, and scrapbookers can easily find one for a girlfriends' getaway or family fun." Learn techniques and find out about the newest rage, digital scrapbooking, which is building momentum as a less expensive alternative. The Kentucky convention will be March 26-28. creatingkeepsakes.com

Learning & Products Expo: Art!

Chicago

"You can take a single class or a whole weekend's worth at these art events" in Chicago July 10-12 and Pasadena, Calif., Oct. 16-18, Domine says. "The flexible class schedules let you explore your favorite medium or experiment in something new, from airbrush to pastels." Share your passion for painting with other enthusiasts, visit an exhibit hall where you can shop for art supplies at great prices and learn from watching free demonstrations. learningproductexpo.com

STITCHES East

Hartford, Conn.

"Loyal knitters fly in from all over the country to share their passion with others at these large consumer shows," Domine says. Learn from the stitching gurus, shop and get inspired at these regional events (three are scheduled this year, and the East version takes place Oct. 22-25), sponsored by *Knitter's Magazine*. Or, splurge on a knitter's retreat at Camp STITCHES (May 28-June 1) in North Carolina and perfect your craft with expert designers. knittinguniverse.com

International Quilt Festival/Chicago

Rosemont, Ill.

"Even if you can't thread a needle, you will enjoy seeing the amazing quilts, from antiques to avant garde designs, on display here" April 17-19, Domine says. "Quilt collectors, quilt artists, and quilt lovers can shop, take exciting classes and view amazing special exhibits." Other crafts are also represented at the festival, which has two other incarnations later in the year in Long Beach, Calif., and Houston. quilts.com

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