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Goodyear Artist Demonstrates Photomicrography at Expo

Goodyear's Lee Hendrickson is anything but a typical artist. A research scientist for 35 years, Hendrickson begins his day not with paintbrushes or clay, but with crystalline solutions and microscope slides.

Hendrickson grows and then photographs microscopic crystals on glass research slides. As light shines through the slides from the bottom of the microscope, the crystals act like prisms to refract the light and create beautiful patterns of color.

"From my career as a biochemist I knew how beautiful crystals could appear under the microscope," Hendrickson said. "When I left my last job at a pharmaceutical company, I wanted to find a way to share that beauty with others." People interested in Hendrickson's work can see the entire process during the Arizona Fine Art Expo through Sunday, March 25. Hendrickson is one of nearly 100 fine artists who have set up their studios at the 44,000 square foot Expo, located in the festive white tents at 26540 N. Scottsdale Rd, on the southwest corner of Scottsdale and Jomax roads next to McDonald's Ranch. This gives guests the rare chance to meet the artist see them in action and learn about their passion, inspiration and techniques.

This is Hendrickson's third year participating in Arizona Fine Art Expo. He especially enjoys the opportunity to teach patrons about the science behind his artwork.

With college degrees in biology and biomedical photography, Hendrickson is uniquely qualified and one of the world's only artists focused on crystal photomicrography. Growing crystals can take anywhere from a couple of hours to several days. Typically the most beautiful configurations of the crystals last only minutes to a couple hours before they start to degrade. During that time Hendrickson uses a top-of-the-line camera attached to a high-powered microscope to capture images of the crystals.

After moving the slide to find the precise composition, Hendrickson begin snapping away with his camera. The crystals he creates are never colored and are reproduced exactly as seen under the microscope. He has worked on commission pieces for coffee, wineries and pharmaceutical companies isolating crystals from common ingredients found in each. However the majority of his patrons fall in love with the beautiful images and vibrant colors randomly created by the crystals as they form. Judy Coombs founding partner in Arizona Fine Art Expo said Hendrickson is always a big draw for the event "Lee's work is fascinating and the Expo offers a rare chance to see how he works," Coombs said. This year's event also offers a new schedule of culinary tasting, glass blowing, glass fusing and chainsaw sculpture demonstrations that will be educational and exhilarating to watch.