Feb. 26, the Crafts Center hosted a panel discussion called, "Exploring the Spirit and Value of Craft: A Gathering of Makers," inspired by Schwalbe's exhibit. The panel included: metalsmith Mary Ann Scherr, potter Julie Olson, woodturner Bill Wallace, N.C. State student crafter Anne McLean and Schwalbe as the moderator. Furthermore, all the panelists (besides Schwalbe) are instructors at the Crafts Center and Scherr, Olson and Wallace are also featured in Schwalbe’s exhibit.

"I'm not actually part of the exhibit, which is kind of nice, so I can look at it from a third party view," McLean, a senior in polymer and color chemistry, said. "I like that it is engaging for multiple senses. You're looking at it, you're seeing the artist, and the way that Schwalbe takes the picture is much like you're standing there watching the person actually make it. I've seen Bill Wallace turn it looks just like that. The fact that Schwalbe could capture that really says a lot. And then you get to read next to it and connect even more with the piece, and then that whole new other level of bringing in a piece is awesome. It's boom, boom, boom, got it!"

Schwalbe said he also likes having the three levels, including the photo, text panel and artwork, of each of the artists’ work in the exhibit.

“What I like most about the exhibit is that visitors can see not only my photographs and learn about craft from the interview excerpts, they can also see objects made by the artists,” Schwalbe said. “I think this will give visitors to the exhibit a more complete and satisfying experience.”

Besides the three levels of the exhibit, there are more things to like about it. According to Thomas, he likes that Schwalbe’s exhibit features artists he knows.

“What I like number one, is that I know some of the people,” Thomas said. “It’s nice to see somebody that you worked with and appreciated for many years to get recognized and to be a part of something bigger than what they normally do. I mean it’s one thing to be a craftsman, but then to be written about, you get to feel good – so it makes me feel good.”

Wallace is a woodturning instructor at the Crafts Center, was one of the panelists and verifies Thomas’ guess about being featured in the exhibit.

"I think I was the first person whose studio Michael came to visit,” Wallace said. “He came several times and I enjoyed our discussions. He has a very deep respect for craftwork and is very supportive of craftspeople. His show shows a broad range of craft being done across the state and it is nice being represented.”

Both Thomas and Schwalbe said they believe the exhibit could be a source of inspiration. Thomas said the exhibit is a chance for people to stop a minute to appreciate craftwork and that it will excite the senses and make viewers think. Thomas also said he hopes viewers will see themselves in somebody else’s journey.

"The Crafts Center is a wonderful venue," Schwalbe said. "Being on campus and in the Crafts Center makes the exhibit accessible to a lot of younger people who are at early stages in their careers as designers and makers. Perhaps the exhibit will inspire them to dedicate a part of their life to craft.”

At the panel discussion on Feb. 26, it seemed many people from the audience felt inspired by Schwalbe’s exhibit about craftwork and craft artists. According to Wallace, the panel event went well and there was a lot of interest from the people who attended.

The audience from the panel spoke mostly about the influence of technology on craft in the future. McLean said the panel discussion had a main train of thought of technology, which is something everyone in the art world is thinking about right now.

"The turnout was great,” the panelists said interesting things and the audience participated enthusiastically,” Schwalbe said. “I’d call that a success.”

Schwalbe’s exhibit will be at the Crafts Center until March 28.