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AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL ANNOUNCES AWARD WINNERS

2019 Recipients of the American Craft Council's Emerging Voices Awards



Clockwise from top left: Diedrick Brackens, Sarah Darro, Luci Jockel, Aram Han Sifuentes, Marisa Finos, Raven Halfmoon, and Bukola Koiki

Minneapolis, MN – March 21, 2019 – The American Craft Council is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2019 Emerging Voices Awards, which recognize an emerging artist, an emerging scholar, and five shortlisted artists.

This year's Emerging Artist is Diedrick Brackens, and the Emerging Scholar is Sarah Darro. Shortlisted artists are: Marisa Finos, Raven Halfmoon, Aram Han Sifuentes, Luci Jockel, and Bukola Koiki.

“ACC is committed to supporting new, diverse voices and material practices shaping the field of contemporary craft,” says executive director Sarah Schultz. “We’re excited to see how this cohort of artists will continue to break new ground.”

ACC’s Emerging Voices Awards are given biennially in recognition and support of the next generation of makers and thinkers in the field. The awards build on the legacy of the “Young Americans” exhibition program initiated by ACC in 1950. Reflecting the multiple paths for emerging talent in the current craft climate, the awards recognize the talent of artists within five years of their major training (including apprenticeships and residencies) in addition to formal academic training.

Jurors for the 2019 awards were: Beth McLaughlin, the chief curator of exhibitions and collections at Fuller Craft Museum in Brockton, Massachusetts; Jennifer Ling Datchuk, a San Antonio-based ceramist and the 2017 ACC Emerging Voices Artist; and Michael Radyk, a textile artist and former director of education for the American Craft Council.

“Those selected for the awards demonstrate a keen understanding of the agency of material and the potency of objects,” says McLaughlin. “Diedrick Brackens’ allegorical scenes merge diverse textile traditions with multiple materials to dismantle repressive social constructs. Scholar Sarah Darro is a brilliant storyteller, and her fearless curatorial work will undoubtedly propel the contemporary craft field forward.”

“I was touched to read personal reflections on how craft has been passed down through artists’ families and how their practices have served as a way to honor their stories,” Datchuk says. “I felt the pain of the work that remains to bring historically underrepresented voices into institutions. I learned so much about the origins of process, the labor that goes unrecognized, and how complicated it can be to define craft in contemporary culture.”

Of the winners, Datchuk says, “the narrative textiles of Deidrick Brackens struck me with their material and historical power combined with investigations into masculinity and the African American body and identity. Sarah Darro’s approach to the diverse communities she has served and shown in her curatorial practice was exciting to read about.”

In addition to prize remunerations, all awardees will be featured in an upcoming issue of *American Craft* magazine as well as at “[Present Tense: 2019](#)” ACC’s conference in Philadelphia on October 10 – 12, 2019.

About the honorees

[Diedrick Brackens](#) was born in Mexia, Texas, and lives and works in Los Angeles. He uses woven algorithms stemming from the cultural histories of African, American, and European textiles to generate thoughtful, intricate, abstract, and figurative tapestries. Using his own silhouette as a template for characters in his work and employing a hand-weaving technique to create recto/verso images, Brackens constructs layered narratives that philosophically and physically explore the complexities of American identity and sociopolitical tensions.

[Sarah Darro](#) is a curator of contemporary craft, material culture, and design. She holds an MA in visual, material and museum anthropology from the University of Oxford and a BA in art history from Barnard College of Columbia University. A former Windgate curatorial fellow at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft and recipient of the 2018 Houston Arts Alliance Creativity Express Grant, Darro is a contributor to catalogues on contemporary craft and decorative arts and has been selected to jury international exhibitions. Her intersectional curatorial vision is invested in reinvigorating museum spaces as forums for discourse, innovation, and action.

[Marisa Finos](#) is a sculptor and multimedia artist based in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Her sculptures and performances seek to explore thresholds of consciousness, body, and space. Her work draws inspiration from her reflections on the experience of death and dying in contemporary culture and serves as a platform to engage in conversations that challenge current attitudes about mortality. Finos received her MFA in craft/material studies from Virginia Commonwealth University and her BFA in ceramics from the University of

Massachusetts Dartmouth. She has participated in residencies at Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Vermont Studio Center, and Arteles Creative Center in Finland.

[Raven Halfmoon](#) (Caddo Nation) is from Norman, Oklahoma. She attended the University of Arkansas, where she earned a double bachelor's degree in ceramics/painting and cultural anthropology. Her work has been featured in multiple exhibitions throughout the US as well as internationally. Raven is currently based in Norman, Oklahoma, where she is working to establish her own studio and continues to produce work at the University of Oklahoma. She is represented by Gallery FRITZ in Santa Fe.

[Aram Han Sifuentes](#) is a fiber, social practice, and performance artist who works to claim spaces for immigrant and disenfranchised communities. Her work often involves skill-sharing (specifically sewing techniques) to create multiethnic and intergenerational sewing circles, which become a place for empowerment, subversion, and protest. Her work has been exhibited at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, Hyde Park Art Center, Asian Arts Initiative, Chung Young Yang Embroidery Museum, and the Design Museum. Aram is a 2016 Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow, a 2016 3Arts Awardee, and a 2017 Sustainable Arts Foundation awardee.

[Luci Jockel](#) is an artist located in Philadelphia. Her work explores the memorialization of nonhuman animals through the intimate format of jewelry. Luci is the jewelry/metals shop supervisor at the University of the Arts. She studied at Rhode Island School of Design (MFA 2016) and Indiana University of Pennsylvania (BFA 2014). Her work has been shown at venues such as Munich Jewelry Week, NYC Jewelry Week, and Galerie Marzee's Marzee International Graduate Show 2016, where she received the Marzee International Graduate Prize. Luci maintains a studio practice as part of the JV Collective, a national group of female jewelry artists.

[Bukola Koiki](#) is a Nigerian-American interdisciplinary artist whose work strives to collapse the single story of the immigrant experience by exploring the challenging liminal space they inhabit. Her multidimensional fiber works reflect her material and technical curiosity, featuring prints rendered with embroidered collagraph plates, giant paper beads employing Nigerian hair-threading techniques, and more. She has exhibited nationally and has also been featured in *Surface Design* magazine and online on *Art21 Magazine*. Koiki received an MFA in applied craft + design from OCAC and PNCA in 2015. She is currently an AICAD teaching fellow at Maine College of Art.

About the American Craft Council

The American Craft Council is a national, nonprofit educational organization that has been shaping the craft movement for decades, serving as a chronicler, convener, and catalyst through its bimonthly magazine, *American Craft*, annual juried craft shows, thought leadership conferences, awards of excellence, and a research library and archives preserving the rich heritage of American craft. For more information, visit craftcouncil.org.

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