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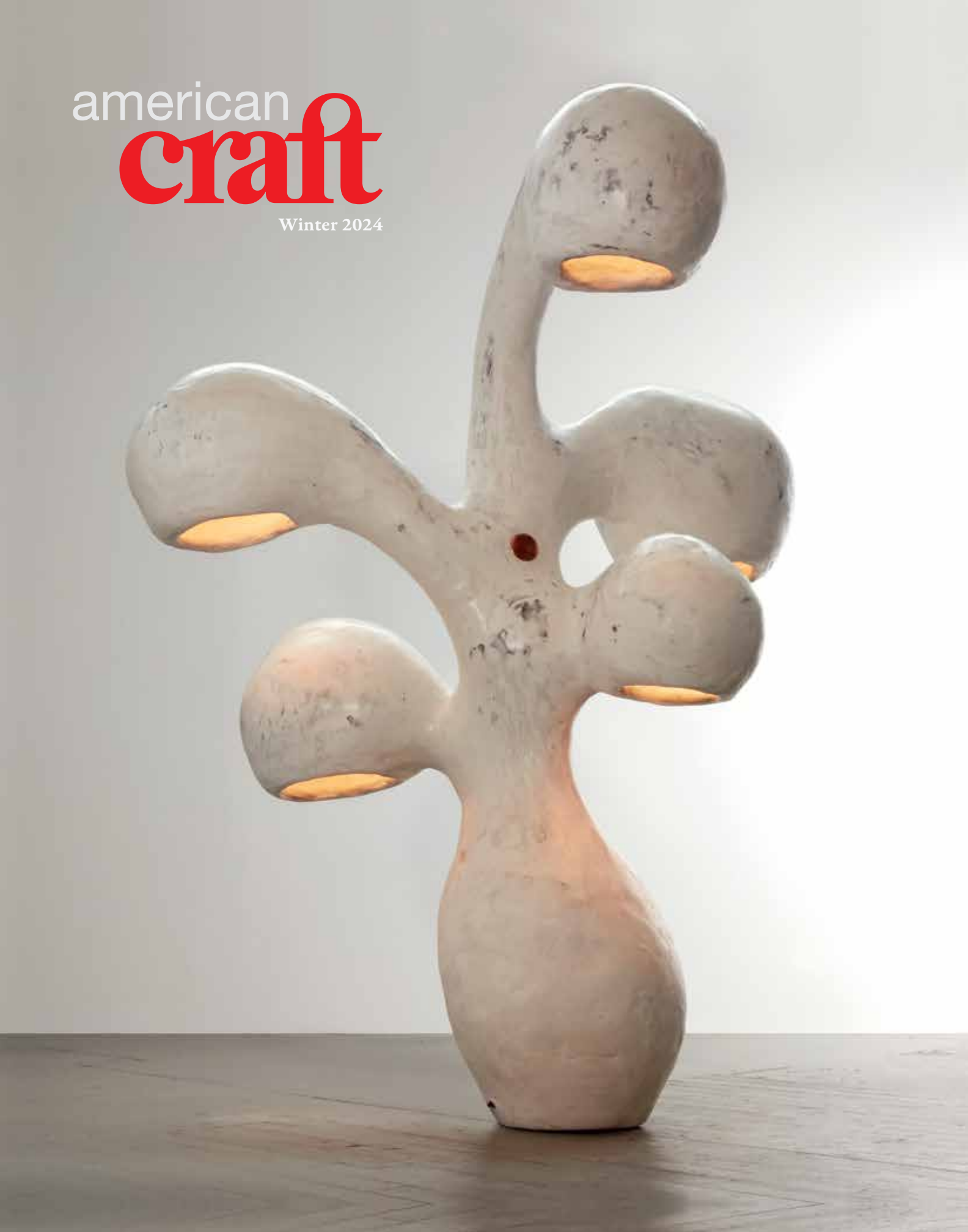

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Image: Lily Hope, *Memorial Beats*, 2021, thigh-spun merino and cedar bark with copper, headphones, and audio files, The Hope Family Trust. Photo by Sydney Akagi

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Winter 2024 / Vol. 83, No.4

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KATY RECKDAHL AND JENNIFER VOGEL
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JON SPAYDE
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ON THE COVER: An untitled lamp from Rogan Gregory's *Fertility Form* series, 2019, gypsum and copper, 77 x 47 x 60 in. See more of Gregory's work and lamps by other visionary artists and designers on **page 24**. Photo courtesy of R & Company.

THIS PAGE: Carmen D'Apollonio's *Can't Help Falling in Love*, 2021, bronze, 28 x 10 x 9 in. Learn about D'Apollonio's work on **page 26**.

Photo by Schaub Stierli Fotografie, courtesy of Friedman Benda and Carmen D'Apollonio.

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Light Unites Us. Arleene Correa Valencia's illuminated sculpture explores how we can be together and apart at the same time.
JENNIFER VOGEL

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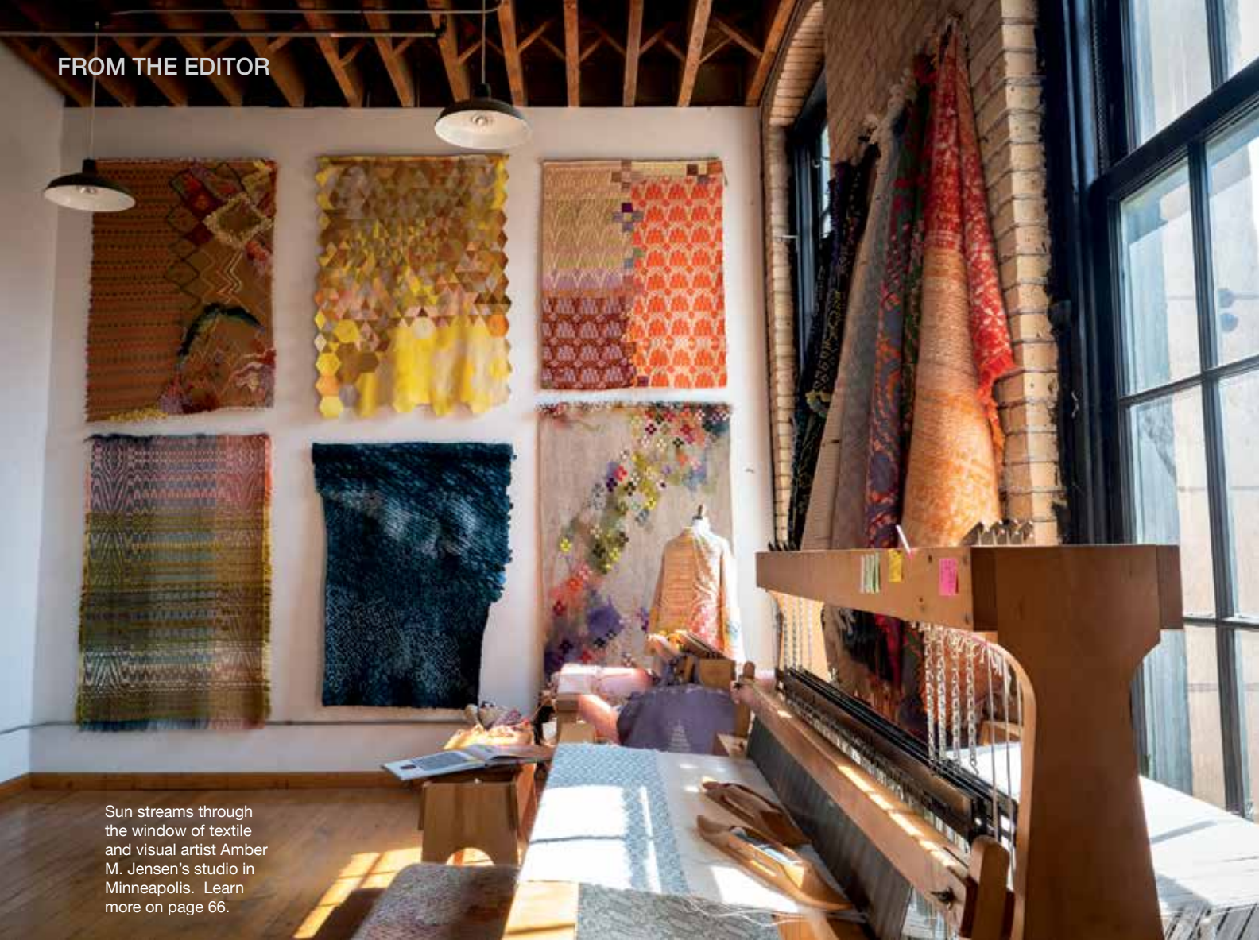
ABOVE LEFT: A vibrant porcelain teacup by Kyle Lee of Ceramic Meltdown in Brooklyn. **page 15**. ABOVE RIGHT: Ian Alistair Cochran of Chicago holds a resin piece from his *Dew Drop* series. **page 76**. LEFT: Detail of a beaded tapestry by Charles DuVernay, Black Masking Indian, New Orleans. **page 38.**

TOP LEFT: Photo by Kyle Lee. TOP RIGHT: Photo courtesy of the artist. BOTTOM: Photo by Cedric Angeles.



Sun streams through the window of textile and visual artist Amber M. Jensen's studio in Minneapolis. Learn more on page 66.

Light. When winter takes hold, I find myself grateful to be surrounded by warmth at home: the softness of simple, natural textiles, the steam of hot tea rising from a pleasing cup, the delight of seeing sunlight glistening through blown glass. We need such comforts when the snow or rains arrive. And for those of you in warmer climes, the shortened days may lead you to appreciate extending the light with a lamp or candle.

In this issue we explore light in craft from different angles. On the cover you'll see a sculptural lamp by Rogan Gregory. This Malibu, California–based artist, also known for his furniture, is one of eight artists and designers included in our story about lamps that take illumination to new heights. We also feature a collection of light houses—sculptural works made of various materials that emanate and bend light, providing a beacon or soft glow—and the translucent, candy-like resin furniture of artist Ian Alistair Cochran, who lives in Chicago.

You'll also find works in lofty wool. Textile and visual artist Amber M. Jensen writes about finding inspiration in her light-filled Minneapolis studio. And we feature an adapted excerpt from Sofi Thanhauser's book *Worn: A People's History of Clothing* that traces the story of wool from the sheep ranches of Wyoming to Rabbit Goody's small weaving mill in upstate New York.

In addition, we bring you the second installment of our feature called The Scene. This iteration focuses on New Orleans and tells the story of this vibrant city, bursting with craft, through the eyes of six artists who live and work there. Two other locals—a wonderful writer and an inspired photographer—helped bring this story to life.

There are so many more artists and makers, not to mention mediums and works, we would have liked to include in these pages. Rest assured, we at *American Craft* are hard at work planning ways to bring you more stories that shed new light on craft—from how we make it to how we live with it. Keep an eye on us in the coming year. It's going to be exciting.

Karen

KAREN OLSON / Editor in Chief

Photo © Caroline Yang.

american craft

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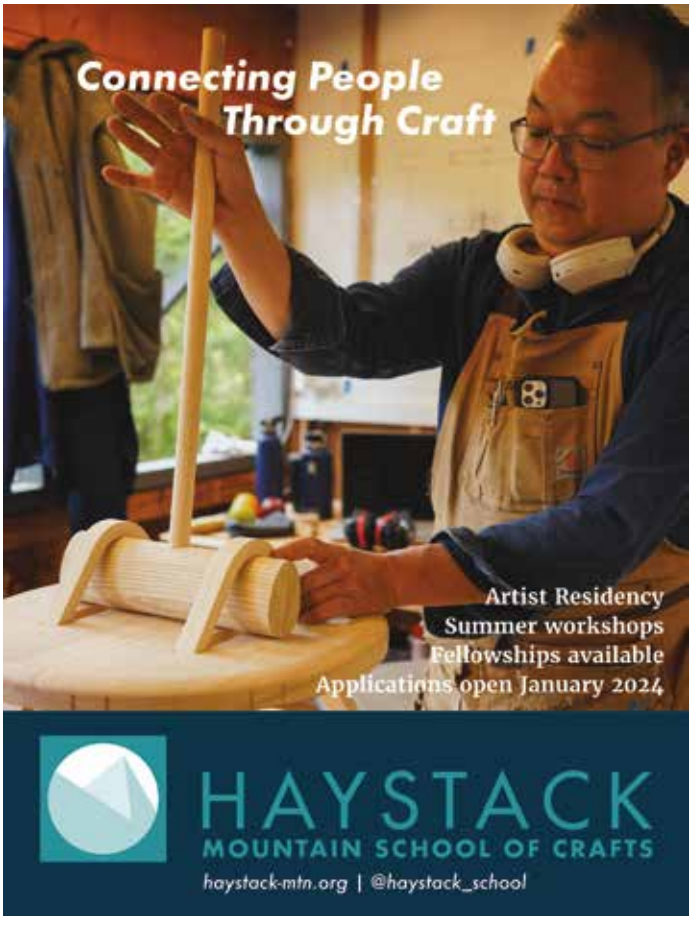

Meet some of the many writers, artists, and photographers who contributed to this issue.

Photographer **Cedric Angeles** brought our second installment of The Scene, focused on craft in New Orleans, to life with his joyful, insightful portraits. NOLA-based Angeles has shot for the *New York Times*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Dwell*, and other publications and is currently working on a film about female boxers in Mexico. **p. 38.**

We were thrilled to commission New York City–based **John Jay Cabuay** to illustrate our excerpt from Sofi Thanhauser's book on wool. His work, featuring bright colors and wild patterns, has appeared in many publications including the *New Yorker*, the *Washington Post*, and *Billboard* magazine. **p. 72.**

When we asked Baltimore-based furniture maker, editor, and founder of A Workshop of Our Own **Sarah Marriage** to write about Lost Art Press, she told us she was already familiar with the principals. "Their work is always meticulously researched," she said. "Plus, they are good people." **p. 20.**

Massachusetts-based **Sarah Jane Nelson** pitched and wrote our feature about the hand-turned storytelling scrolls known as crankies. Nelson, author of *Ballad Hunting with Max Hunter: Stories of an Ozark Folksong Collector*, surprised us with a bit of serendipity. Her dad, Norbert Nelson, once wrote for this magazine. "I love keeping this going." **p. 32.**

Intrepid reporter **Katy Reckdahl** has written about New Orleans for the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Atlantic*, and more. She worked on the podcast *Floodlines*, which won a Peabody Award, and appeared in the TV series *Treme*. We were thrilled when she agreed to contribute to The Scene in this issue. **p. 38.**

FROM TOP DOWN: Photo by Cedric Angeles. Photo courtesy of John Jay Cabuay. Photo courtesy of Sarah Marriage. Photo by Samuel Breslow. Photo by Kevin Kline.

Letters from Readers

I loved the article about 4KINSHIP in Santa Fe ("For the Future"). I lived for 12 years during the 1970s and '80s in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and that's where I took up weaving. I'm so glad [Amy Denet Deal] is giving back and honoring the Navajo (Diné) community.

–Toni Seymour, Novato, California

The magazine is a super publication. I wish it were weekly! Keep up the good work.

–Roger Knudson, Finlayson, Minnesota

I really enjoyed the piece by Jiha Moon ("The Night Owl Downstairs"). I felt a connection with her story, in the way she makes her art life work with her "regular" life and in her collecting. I too have always been involved with art or creating as life would allow me and have collected things that interest me or give me inspiration through their color, shape, or function. Like Jiha, I make do with what is available for my art space, which is in one of the spare bedrooms of our house. It has quickly overflowed to the second spare bedroom. I love being able to have my dogs lying on the floor while I'm working or have my husband come in and tell me about his day.

Thank you, *American Craft*, for being such an inspirational and educational magazine that I have enjoyed for years.

–Kara Huesman, Florence, Kentucky

CORRECTIONS to the Fall 2023 issue of *American Craft*

In "The Consummate Collector," about Dorothy Saxe, we mistakenly referred to Joey Kirkpatrick as male. Kirkpatrick, a glass artist and sculptor, is a woman.

Our story about the Claire Oliver Gallery, "Come On In," implied that the gallery represents textile artist Bisa Butler. This is not the case. Butler is represented by Jeffrey Deitch.

The detail cover image of Jiha Moon's piece *Yellow Hare* also appeared at full size in the story "The Night Owl Downstairs." While we credited photographer Russell Kilgore for the image in the story, we neglected to do the same for the cover.

Talk to Us

We welcome your letters and comments at letters@craftcouncil.org.

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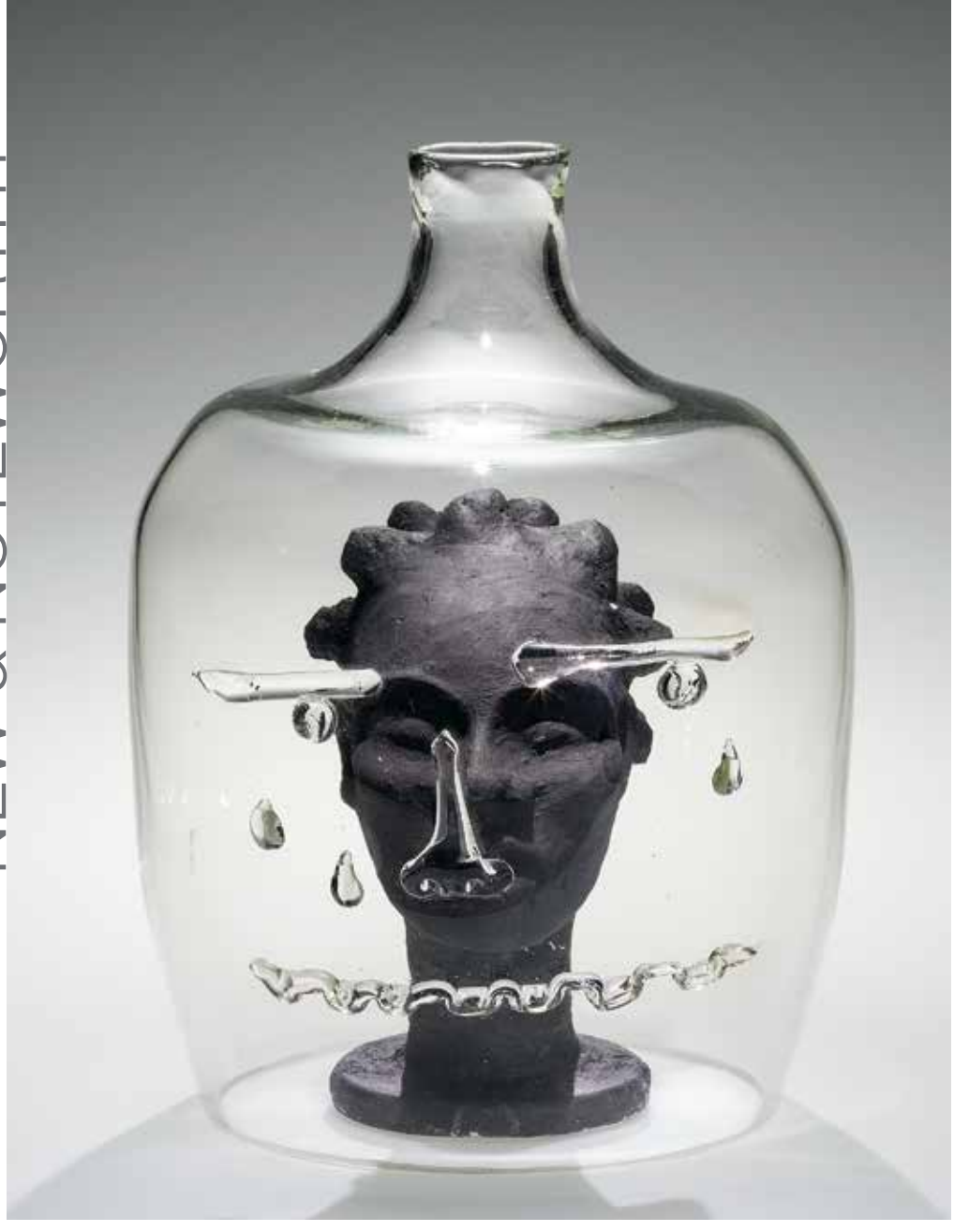

LEFT: *Detail 1: Surviving as the anomaly created by white supremacy*—made by vanessa german, Ché Rhodes, and the collective Related Tactics—is part of the exhibition *Disclosure: The Whiteness of Glass* at the Corning Museum of Glass. BELOW: This wood and twine chair, 32.25 x 20.25 x 19 in., is one of many woven objects in *Over/Under* at the Mingei International Museum.

Craft Happenings

NOVEMBER

Disclosure: The Whiteness of Glass
Corning Museum of Glass
Corning, New York
November 2023–March 2024

"Whiteness" here is very much a racial reference. The show assembles the results of a project that used various methods to document the dominance of white makers and teachers in the glass world, then invited BIPOC artists to turn the data into text and the text into glassworks ranging from the representational to the abstract.

Over/Under: Woven Craft at Mingei
Mingei International Museum
San Diego, California
November 4, 2023–March 10, 2024

The Mingei casts a wide (woven) net for beautiful objects created by the "over-under" process of weaving, including basketry, garments, hats, toys, and jewelry. Filipino fish traps, Japanese rain boots, and Egyptian textiles will also appear, along with work by local makers and a mural by San Diego artist Yomar Augusto evoking woven forms.

TOP: Photo courtesy of Related Tactics. BOTTOM: Photo courtesy of Mingei International Museum.

Eyewinkers, Tumbleturds, and Candlebugs: The Art of Elizabeth Talford Scott
Baltimore Museum of Art
Baltimore, Maryland
November 12, 2023–April 28, 2024

The 20 fiber works on display here incorporate stones, shells, bones, and other surprises to tell stories full of stars, flowers, monsters, and good luck charms. Scott's work represents an inheritance from craftspeople in her family who, the organizers write, "persisted in their artistry through . . . slavery and its aftermath in sharecropping, migration, and segregated city life."

Natalie Ball: bilwi naats Ga'niipci
Whitney Museum of American Art
New York, New York
November 17, 2023–February 2024

The sculptural assemblages in Ball's first New York solo exhibition are intended, in the organizers' words, to "deepen and destabilize understandings of Indigenous life." To that end, the Black/Modoc/Klamath artist uses animal hides and bones, beads, quilt tops, T-shirts, synthetic hair, newspapers, and other materials to skewer stereotypes of what makes art "Native."

Cloth as Land: HMong Indigeneity
John Michael Kohler Arts Center
Sheboygan, Wisconsin
November 18, 2023–June 16, 2024

The Kohler presents 30 textile works from its collection, including commissioned pieces by three contemporary HMong artists. (The double capitalization points to differences between the community's two dialects.) The emphasis here is on how the artists commemorate homelands lost to colonialism and war—a painful part of the Indigenous experience.

Raúl de Nieves: And imagine you are here
Baltimore Museum of Art
Baltimore, Maryland
November 19, 2023–May 1, 2025

De Nieves has practiced traditional Latin American sewing and beadwork since childhood; today his human and animal figures combine Catholic imagery, Mexican folklore, and the glitz of queer club culture. He'll fill the BMA's East Lobby with his fantastical creatures and create faux stained-glass windows and a massive chandelier with a cocoon dangling from it.

LEFT: Natalie Ball's *Deer Woman's new Certificate-of-Indian-Blood-skin*, 2021, 83 x 59 x 44.5 in., incorporates many materials, including deer and porcupine hair, sagebrush, river willow, and lodgepole pine. BELOW: Beaded figures like these will be part of Raúl de Nieves's upcoming installation.

DECEMBER

Protection: Adaptation and Resistance
Museum of International Folk Art
Santa Fe, New Mexico
December 3, 2023–April 7, 2024

This showcase of design, tattoo, graphic arts, and ceremonial dress created by Indigenous Alaskan artists is organized around three themes: Land and Culture Protectors, Activists for Justice and Well-being, and Sovereignty and Resilient Futures. The goal, according to organizers, is to "elevate collaboration, allyship, and community as tools of resistance, adaptation, and cultural affirmation."

Craft Across Continents | Contemporary Japanese and Western Objects: The Lassiter/Ferraro Collection
Mint Museum Uptown
Charlotte, North Carolina
December 9, 2023–May 5, 2024

Lorne Lassiter, former executive director of the Mint (and former vice president of ACC), and her partner, anthropologist Gary Ferraro, will display their distinguished collection of craft from East and West, including an installation by Denmark's Tobias Møhl, a large vessel by British ceramist Gareth Mason, and wood-fired ceramics and bamboo works from Japan.

LEFT: Photo by Robert Glowacki / Sadie Coles HQ, London, courtesy of the artist. BOTTOM: Photo courtesy of the artist and Company Gallery, New York.

Risa Hricovsky: Then Is Now
Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts
Little Rock, Arkansas
December 19, 2023–April 28, 2024

Hricovsky's shag rugs are thick and cheerfully colored, recalling the idealism, and the rec rooms, of the 1960s. They're also entirely ceramic, obsessively crafted to mimic deep-pile carpeting. The porcelain, organizers write, "is a nod to how fossilized . . . many of those 1960s cultural issues turned out to be." The "rugs" share space with paintings by the artist.

JANUARY

Tetsuya Yamada
Walker Art Center
Minneapolis, Minnesota
January 18–July 7, 2024

Revealing influences ranging from the tea ceremony to Marcel Duchamp, Tokyo-born, Twin Cities–based Yamada will show paintings, drawings, photographs, video works—and painstakingly crafted ceramic pieces that stand on their own or take their place in conceptual assemblages. Works in metal and wood round out this portrait of a wide-ranging artist.

Fahrenheit 2024
American Museum of Ceramic Art
Pomona, California
January 20–September 8, 2024

AMOCA is back with its juried exhibition of top-tier contemporary ceramic art. The 2018 premiere of the biennial, juried by Patti Warashina, included more than 80 artists—and then COVID happened. Artists shown in this revived 2024 outing have been selected by Kathy King, director of the ceramics program at Harvard University.

FEBRUARY

Oneness: Brie Ruais
Contemporary Craft
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
February 2–May 4, 2024

When Ruais engages with her medium, she really engages with it. She rolls and wrestles with a mass of clay equal to her body weight until it is worked into meaningful forms—forms embodying a profound sense of time, place, memory, and inner experience. This show gathers eight years of her work.

Arctic Highways: Unbounded Indigenous People
American Swedish Institute
Minneapolis, Minnesota
February 4–May 26, 2024

Twelve artists from Sápmi (the Sámi homelands of northern Scandinavia) and North America join hands to create a showcase of transatlantic Indigenous artistry that expresses the kinship between these peoples—and, the organizers add, "[explores] what it means to be unbounded." The traveling exhibition includes both artwork and handcrafts.

LEFT: Risa Hricovsky's porcelain shag rug *Duality (Detail 3.5)*, 2023, will appear in her solo show at the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts. RIGHT: *Where Two Become One*, 2019, a gown by Laila Susanna Kuhmunen, will be included in *Arctic Highways* at the American Swedish Institute.

Andy Cooperman's *Walleye* brooch, 2021, will be a part of the Yuma Art Symposium.

Yuma Art Symposium
Lute's Casino
Yuma, Arizona
February 22–24, 2024

Created in the 1970s by a pair of Arizona Western College professors of metals and clay, the symposium now incorporates fine art and other crafts in its discussions and exhibitions. Metals continue to be important, though; a highlight is the Saw, File, & Solder Sprints event, in which the making of a ring becomes a competitive sport.

LEFT: Photo courtesy of the artist. TOP RIGHT: Photo by Andy Cooperman. BOTTOM RIGHT: Photo by Elisabeth Ohlson. OPPOSITE: Photo courtesy of the artist and Traver Gallery, Seattle.

Indie Folk: New Art and Sounds from the Pacific Northwest
Museum of Craft and Design
San Francisco, California
February 24–June 30, 2024

A playlist of indie folk music will accompany this exhibition of what organizers call "handmade works that are unpretentious, and often blur the line between functionality and aesthetics." Baskets, patchwork quilts, and hand-tooled wooden objects mingle with artworks whose spirit is informal, improvisational, and reflective of the rural and working-class character of the region.

More Craft Happenings!

Discover additional exhibitions, shows, and other events in the online version of this article at craftcouncil.org/CraftHappenings.

Marita Dingus's *Fabric Basket*, 2003, fabric, metal, 18 x 20 x 20 in., will be part of *Indie Folk*, a celebration of Pacific Northwest artists.

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Tea Time. After water, tea is the most frequently consumed drink on earth—no Indian or Egyptian or British day would be complete without it. The Japanese turned the drinking of it—from beautiful ceramic bowls—into an art form. These four contemporary ceramists make vessels worthy of any tea ceremony you'd care to invent.

Ceramic Meltdown's Colorblast Cups come in a variety of lively patterns, including ovals, dots, leaves, and this leopard print offering, 4 x 4 x 4 in. A prolific ceramist, proprietor Kyle Lee cofounded BKLYN CLAY and teaches wheel and surface classes at Gasworks NYC, also in Brooklyn. / $80

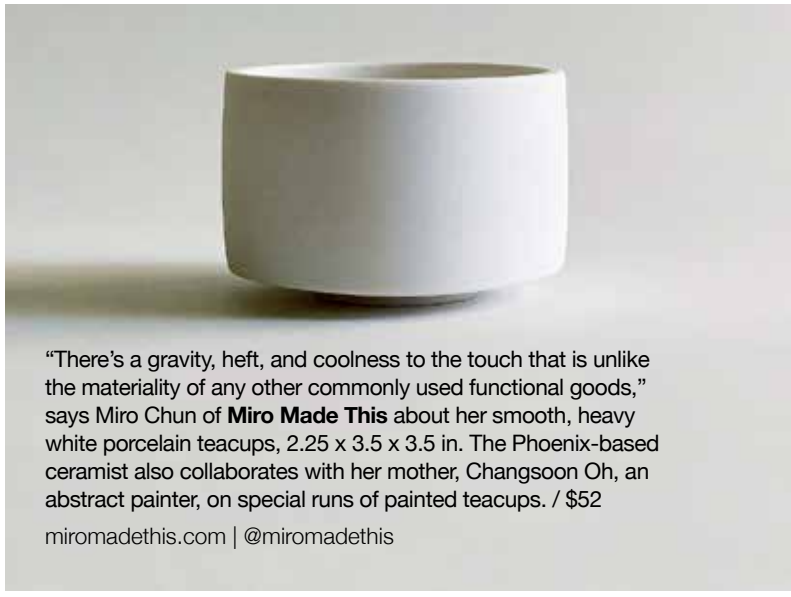
ceramicmeltdown.com | @ceramicmeltdown

There's an elegantly simple teapot and mug-and-saucer combo in *Collection 4.5* from Estero, Florida–based Jordan Blankenship of **JordanBCeramics**. The set, which also includes jars, a coffee pour over, and a juicer, is made from white stoneware glazed in black matte; each component has a beguiling white rim. The setup is modular, and each component can be stacked in any order atop the mug and saucer for storage. Mug measures 4 x 4.5 x 4.5 in. / $55

jordanbceramics.com | @jordanbceramics

Dan Ohm, the Kansas City, Missouri–based potter and DJ behind **Dan Ohm's Dirt**, makes three-piece stoneware tea infusers, 5 x 5 x 4 in., perfect for brewing and sipping a hot cuppa. A basket that can hold loose leaves or bagged tea rests under the lid of a handled mug. The peaceful decorative pattern on the cup evokes the meditative joys of tea drinking. / $60

danohmsdirt.com | @danohmsdirt

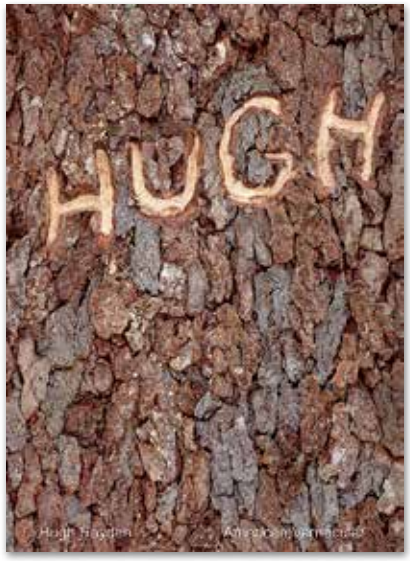


"There's a gravity, heft, and coolness to the touch that is unlike the materiality of any other commonly used functional goods," says Miro Chun of **Miro Made This** about her smooth, heavy white porcelain teacups, 2.25 x 3.5 x 3.5 in. The Phoenix-based ceramist also collaborates with her mother, Changsoon Oh, an abstract painter, on special runs of painted teacups. / $52

miromadethis.com | @miromadethis

Researched and written by Shivaun Watchorn, assistant editor of *American Craft*.

TOP LEFT: Photo by Kyle Lee. BOTTOM LEFT: Photo by Dan Ohm. TOP RIGHT: Photo by Reba Jensen. BOTTOM RIGHT: Photo by Miro Chun.



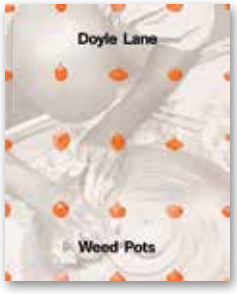
Hayden's wood sculptures reflect a love for natural materials while presenting bizarre variations on familiar functional forms—tables and chairs studded with sharp-pointed swellings; two student desks fused together at an alarming angle; a baby stroller choked with tree branches—all offered here in large, elegant photographs. The context is surrealism, but the discomfort this African American artist's pieces provoke is meant to awaken viewers to the anxieties and frustrations of Black life.

HUGH HAYDEN:
AMERICAN VERNACULAR
Edited by Sarah Montross
MIT Press, 2023
$44.95

Photo by Sarah Sampedro.

AN INDIGENOUS PRESENT
Edited with an introduction by Jeffrey Gibson
DelMonico Books/Big NDN Press, 2023
$75

This grand gathering of the work of contemporary Indigenous artists, photographers, musicians, writers, performance artists, and others includes craft-based and craft-employing work by Rose B. Simpson, Natalie Ball, Raven Halfmoon, and Cannupa Hanska Luger. These makers, according to Gibson, are "contributing to—and authoring—new conversations that [challenge] outdated perceptions of who we are and what we make." Essays illuminate the works, which are boldly of the moment and energized by tradition.



DOYLE LANE: WEED POTS
Edited by Ricky Swallow
David Kordansky Gallery, 2022
$60

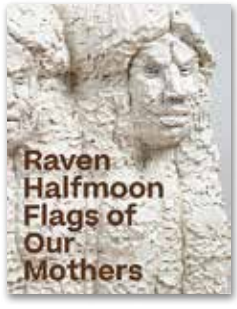
This catalog of an exhibition of more than 60 roundish pots with tiny, lipped openings for a few plant stems reveals a whole world of beauty, driven by subtle shape variations and thick, often dripping or cracked glazes in a wide range of hot and cool colors. The pots, beautifully shot, are the entry point into a detailed survey of the career of this masterful, successful, but too-little-known midcentury African American ceramist.

THE COLLARS OF RBG: A PORTRAIT OF JUSTICE
By Elinor Carucci and Sara Bader
Clarkson Potter, 2023
$30

Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Supreme Court robe was designed to be worn with a necktie. Ginsburg responded with beautiful, intricate, often hand-crafted collars that became iconic. Sumptuous photos of the collars accompany an exploration of her life, along with pithy quotes from the jurist. The dark collar she wore when delivering dissents is here, and so are lesser known neckpieces that reflect her relationships with friends, with family, and with artists who admired her.

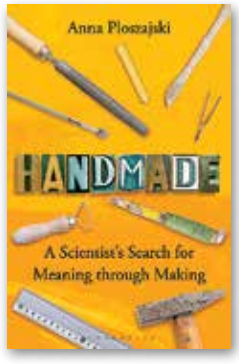
FUSION NOTES
By Preston Singletary with primary photography by Russell Johnson
Minor Matters, 2023
$50

In this visual memoir, Singletary, who is of Tlingit descent and employs traditional Northwest Coast formline design elements in glass, writes about his life as an artist. Along with photos of stunning artwork, his stories are primarily about relationships—with the people who helped him in his early career and others who inspired him, his mentors and guides, and his many artistic collaborators, including fellow musicians.



RAVEN HALFMOON: FLAGS OF OUR MOTHERS
By Raven Halfmoon, Amy Smith-Stewart, Kinsale Drake, and Rachel Adams
Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2023
$45

The punched, pulled, and rubbed surfaces of Halfmoon's massive ceramic figures convey the strength and suffering of her Caddo people, and the power and passion of the artist. This book, the catalog of a show debuting at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, offers eloquent images of the works and their dripping black and red glazes, which evoke the clay of Halfmoon's Oklahoma home and the blood of murdered Indigenous women.



HANDMADE: A SCIENTIST'S SEARCH FOR MEANING THROUGH MAKING
By Anna Ploszajski
Bloomsbury Sigma, 2023
$18 paperback

Fascinated watching a glassblower create a test tube for her, materials scientist Ploszajski had a realization: she knew nothing of how glass, iron, clay, or wood behave, and what they mean, in the hands of artists. Learning from masters of craft—and trying her hand, too—taught her to, in her words, "make personal connections between the handmade material world and my own lived experiences."

CRAFT ACROSS CONTINENTS

CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE AND WESTERN OBJECTS

THE LASSITER/ FERRARO COLLECTION

DECEMBER 9, 2023–MAY 5, 2024

THE MINT MUSEUM

MINT MUSEUM AUXILIARY

Moore&VanAllen

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Craft Across Continents — Contemporary Japanese and Western Objects: The Lassiter/Ferraro Collection is generously presented by the Mint Museum Auxiliary, with additional corporate sponsorship from Moore & Van Allen. Individual sponsorship is kindly provided by Rocky and Curtis Trenkelbach. The Mint Museum is supported, in part, by the Infusion Fund and its generous donors. IMAGE: Honda Shōryū 本田聖流 (Japanese, 1951–). *Shadow,* 2005, bamboo and rattan. Promised Gift of Lorne Lassiter and Gary Ferraro. PG2022.57.5

Mint Museum Uptown *at Levine Center for the Arts* | 500 South Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC 28202 | 704.337.2000 | *mintmuseum.org* | @themintmuseum

A Gathering

Works from *Contemporary Black American Ceramic Artists*

On view through March 24, 2024

The first traveling museum exhibition of its kind, this survey of functional and sculptural ceramics shines a light on **36 innovative makers** who broaden the conversation about contemporary studio ceramics and assert the **presence and excellence** of Black ceramicists.

Co-curated by donald a clark and Chotsani Elaine Dean.
Organized by the Northern Clay Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Entangle #2, 2019, terracotta, engobe, slip and glaze by Adero Willard. 24 x 18 x 18 in.

SPRINGFIELD MUSEUMS
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The Lightness of Paper

BY ACC LIBRARIAN BETH GOODRICH

Materially, paper embodies this issue's theme in many ways. It can be light in weight; it can be translucent, allowing light to pass through; and it can be swept aloft on air. These properties and paper's versatility were explored and celebrated in the 1967 exhibition *Made With Paper* at Manhattan's Museum of Contemporary Crafts (founded in 1956 by Aileen Osborn Webb, today it's known as the Museum of Arts and Design). Organized in cooperation with Container Corporation of America, the exhibition encompassed the broad spectrum of paper's applications, from crafts and ceremonial objects to industrial products. Many objects were suspended from the ceiling of the gallery, giving them the appearance of floating. Light and shadow were employed to fascinating effect on modular shapes of folded paperboard.

Conceptual artist James Lee Byars conducted two performative events in conjunction with the exhibition. The temporary sculpture *The Giant Soluble Man* consisted of 400 feet of Dissolvo water-soluble paper glued together to form a large silhouette of a man, which was laid out on West 53rd Street in front of the museum and then washed away by New York City Department of Sanitation flusher trucks. The second event, titled *UP?,* was held on New Year's Day 1968 at the plaza of the CBS Building. Byars attached one end of a mile-long spool of Japanese gold paper thread to a 10-foot helium-filled weather balloon, donated by the Helium Centennial Committee to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the discovery of helium. The balloon, trailing the gold thread, was released into the sky as a "gift to the universe."

Explore more of the archives of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts at craftcouncil.org/Library-Archives/Archives.

ABOVE: Onlookers peer through a window at the 1967 *Made With Paper* exhibition, which featured everything from egg cartons to funerary garments. RIGHT: James Lee Byars's *The Giant Soluble Man*, made of Dissolvo paper. BELOW: The exhibition used light to dramatic effect.

All images courtesy of the American Craft Council Library & Archives.

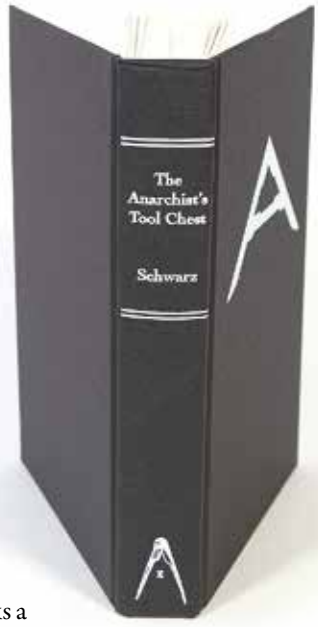
About the ACC Library

The American Craft Council Library & Archives in Minneapolis contains the country's most comprehensive archive of contemporary American craft history, with more than 20,000 print publications, files on nearly 4,000 craft artists, four major archival collections, and a robust digital collection. To explore the ACC Digital Archives, visit digital.craftcouncil.org. Sign up for librarian Beth Goodrich's quarterly newsletter at craftcouncil.org/CraftyLibrarian. For more information about joining the Friends of the ACC Library & Archives, contact Andrea Specht, ACC's executive director, at aspecht@craftcouncil.org or 612-206-3101.

A Hardworking Press

Founded by two craftspeople, Kentucky-based Lost Art Press preserves and presents deep knowledge of hand tool woodworking.

BY SARAH MARRIAGE



Sitting among shipping boxes and woodworking benches in their Covington, Kentucky, headquarters, Lost Art Press co-owner Christopher Schwarz and editor Megan Fitzpatrick relay the history of this small but influential press. "At first the idea was, what books do people need?" says Schwarz, who cofounded Lost Art in 2007 with fellow woodworker John Hoffman.

Early on, Schwarz and Hoffman were told by established publishers that there was no money in printing high-quality woodworking books. "John and I sat down and we were talking about why there were no good books like [Scott] Landis and [Jim] Tolpin and Tage Frid and all these people used to do," Schwarz recalls. "And we said, well, what if we could start a publishing company where we gave them enough money that made it worth their while?

"At no point were we smart enough to say, this is a stupid idea," adds Schwarz, who luckily came to the endeavor with magazine publishing experience.

Lost Art has published 65 titles, 56 of which are still active, and boasts a stable of 33 authors. They ship more than 60,000 books a year to destinations all over the world, while operating out of a storefront in Covington's historic district, which also happens to be the first floor of Schwarz's home.

With titles like *The Anarchist's Tool Chest*, *Make a Chair from a Tree: Third Edition*, *Henry Boyd's Freedom Bed*, and Nancy Hiller's *Making Things Work*, the press offers something for just about everyone. Lost Art is the keeper of an impressive body of quirky, esoteric, and endlessly fascinating woodworking knowledge. It also sells tools and provides how-to videos online. Catalog offerings range from the fanciful to the practical, including books such as *Sharpen This* and *Workshop Wound Care*, which one might purchase as a set.

The press's lone editorial employee, editor Fitzpatrick, joined the team full-time in 2022. With just a handful of fulfillment staff, the press runs a lean business dedicated to a few key principles: publish smart and beautifully presented woodworking instruction by exceptional authors; use high-quality paper, printing, and binding; and pay authors well by giving them three times the industry standard in royalties.

"This wouldn't work without the passion for woodworking," says Fitzpatrick, a former English literature major who is also a woodworker and teacher. "You need to have that passion in order to be this crazy." To her, publishing books is about helping others learn to make things. "It's absolutely doable. And to not hoard your knowledge. Share it. Otherwise, nobody else is going to know how to do this a hundred years from now. They'll have to rediscover it, and we'd rather they not have to do that."

Lost Art prints only in the US to maintain speed and control of the process. After decades in the periodicals business, it's important to Schwarz that their books are built to last. "We only use the sewn bindings," he says. "We only use the fiber tape. All the good things that came with very traditional publishing fifty to seventy years ago, but now are unheard of." This dedication to the craft of bookmaking gives their volumes a timeless quality that might cause some to wonder whether they're buying a newly printed book or a vintage volume that has been carefully preserved for decades. And while much of what they publish is written by contemporary authors, they are also dedicated to reprinting historic texts and making them accessible to new audiences.

The team is currently renovating a nearby historic warehouse to become Lost Art's new headquarters, with fulfillment operations brought in-house—until recently, they used a third-party company. They also plan to launch an apprenticeship program to support the next generation of passionate woodworking book publishers and emphasize underrepresented voices.

As the company name suggests, Lost Art Press exists to preserve and share knowledge. "Our motto—which we steal from [furniture maker W.] Patrick Edwards—is 'To die with a secret is a sin,'" Schwarz explains.

ABOVE: Lost Art Press Editor Megan Fitzpatrick demonstrates a smooth plane to Whitney Miller, a student and author of *Henry Boyd's Freedom Bed*, in a Dutch tool chest class. OPPOSITE BOTTOM LEFT: The press's storefront and workshop in Covington, Kentucky, with its minitruck out front. OPPOSITE BOTTOM RIGHT: Cofounder Christopher Schwarz shows students how to make wedges with a band saw.

"I think there's room for a publishing company like this in every sort of craft," he adds. "Whether it's blacksmithing, metalwork, instrument making . . . I hope there are people out there who might have the desire to try to make books or make content in the field that makes them insane."

◆

lostartpress.com | @lostartpress

Sarah Marriage is an associate editor at *Woodcraft Magazine*. She is also a furniture maker, educator, and the founder-director of A Workshop of Our Own, an educational woodshop for women and nonbinary people in Baltimore, Maryland.

Photos courtesy of Lost Art Press.

What's It Worth?

Jason Preston on becoming an appraiser, the Antiques Roadshow *scene, and how to put a price on inherited jewelry.*

INTERVIEW BY PAOLA SINGER

The *Antiques Roadshow* veteran, whose encyclopedic knowledge spans everything from rare French wines to Japanese silverware, shares the ins and outs of appraising handmade jewelry—and whether it makes sense to do it at all.

First of all, how did you become an appraiser? My first job out of college was working at the front desk of Sotheby's in Chicago, answering the phone. After about a year, I was transferred to a specialist department. Three years later they moved me to New York. Then Christie's hired me, and then I went to work for an independent art advisory and appraisal firm in Los Angeles. I've had my own company, Jason Preston Art Advisory and Appraisals, for 11 years now. I did not study art history or decorative arts, but I've had some really wonderful colleagues who were more than happy to share their knowledge—people who are now at the pinnacle of the auction world. I learned by osmosis.

Tell us about your experience with *Antiques Roadshow*. You just finished filming your tenth season, right? Indeed. I had been asked if I was interested a couple of times, and when I started my own company in 2012, I decided I was ready to give it a try. A lot of colleagues from my Sotheby's and Christie's days had done it, so I saw it as an opportunity to see friends in the industry who are still back East. It's like summer camp for appraisers; a huge part of the reason we do the show is to see each other. Also, the production staff are fantastic.

How would someone go about appraising handmade jewelry? Say, a unique piece inherited from a family member. After someone passes away, most people are trying to establish a piece's value for equitable distribution of assets, or because they don't want to keep it and would like to donate it. Federal estate tax exemptions are high, so only an incredibly small percentage of people are subject to estate tax. [In 2023, if someone's estate is worth $12.92 million or less, they don't have to worry about federal estate taxes.] When making a donation, only pieces that could be worth more than $5,000 would require an appraiser; people can self-appraise up to that amount. I and many of my colleagues spend a lot of time explaining to people why they don't need to hire us. It only takes two days of my time to make my services cost more than $5,000, so you have to know it's really worth it.

Jason Preston at an *Antiques Roadshow* event in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Noted! But what if we want to sell a piece of jewelry, on eBay or a similar vendor, and want to set a fair price? Unless there is an established secondary market for this piece, it'll sell at scrap value. If a maker isn't seen at brick-and-mortar houses or doesn't have a regular presence on eBay, most appraisers will look at jewelry and say "I have no idea who made this," so the market value is whatever the gold or the stone would be worth. You have to be able to support your value opinion with comparable sales data.

What's one example of antique or vintage handcrafted jewelry that could sell well? The Kalo Shop from Chicago in the 1920s is a well-known maker with a very established secondary market.

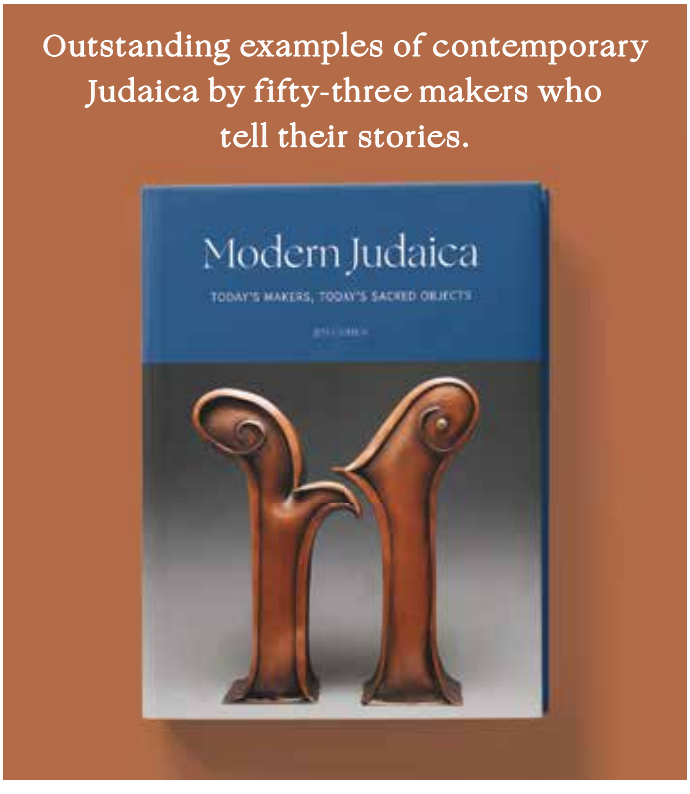
What's the most interesting craft appraisal you've ever done? One of the coolest craft objects I handled was a Guatemalan silver box with a set of six worry dolls. They were tiny little things, about one inch long, and you put them under your pillow at night to eliminate your worries. [Traditionally, Guatemalan worry dolls were given to children so they could tell the dolls about their fears.] One of my subspecialties is celebrity-owned property, meaning I appraise celebrity estates or collections, names like Katharine Hepburn, John and June Cash, and the Kennedys. And this silver box was in Nancy Sinatra's estate, and it most likely had belonged to Frank Sr.

◆

pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/appraisers | @jprestoninc

Paola Singer is a New York City-based journalist who writes about culture, design, and architecture for the *New York Times*, *Architectural Digest*, and *Condé Nast Traveler*, among other publications.

Photo by Meredith Nierman for GBH, © 2023 WGBH Educational Foundation.



Modern Judaica: Today's Makers, Today's Sacred Objects
by Jim Cohen

SCHIFFERBOOKS.COM

the illuminators

Blending sculptural elegance and everyday practicality, craft artists and designers transform earthy materials into imaginative and luscious lamps.

BY DEBORAH BISHOP

Although much has been written about both the beauty and tribulations of winter, Sinclair Lewis's observation may be the most succinct: "Winter is not a season, it's an occupation."

Once winter settles in—whatever your geographic latitude—there is no hastening its withdrawal. And while the season often overstays its welcome, there are myriad delights to be enjoyed during the shortened days—such as the guilt-free comfort of staying home and reading a book, cooking, crocheting, or binge-watching some delicious, if nutritionally bereft, streaming series.

That said, the increased darkness can take its toll, especially after holiday decorations are stashed and the novelty of snow or rain has settled into the endless dull grays and browns of winter. Light is a powerful antidote to maladies associated with midwinter darkness. With that in mind, we've gathered together lamps that not only provide illumination but also proffer pleasure through their handcrafted approaches to upping the wattage. For all of these artists and makers, lighting is one aspect of a design practice that seeks to transform our interior landscapes. Whether wrought from glass, meerschaum, ceramic, metal, gypsum—or yes, dung—each of these singular fixtures stares down the darkness with poetic verve, while presaging brighter days.

Photo by Graham Tolbert.

Prospect Refuge + Hennepin Made

"Lighting is the jewelry of the home," says Victoria Sass, whose Minneapolis-based interior design firm, Prospect Refuge, recently collaborated on the *Ontologia* collection with local lighting studio Hennepin Made.

Sass bonded with Hennepin founder Jackson Schwartz over the vicissitudes of the Midwestern climate, where winter days are long on darkness and short on natural light. To create the table lamp (floor and hanging iterations are available), artisans blow Swedish glass so that it appears to melt over—and partially encase—a wooden orb, which offers structural stability. Rather than something to be hidden, the cord is extra long by design—it can be looped, knotted, or left to trail. "*Ontologia* bridges that delicate place between function and form," says Sass. "Is it art? Is it design? Is it craft?" All of the above.

◆

hennepinmade.com | @hennepinmade
prospectrefugestudio.com | @prospectrefuge

This 2023 table lamp is from the *Ontologia* collection and is made of aluminum, brass, and mahogany-stained birch, 9.5 x 10 x 10.25 in.

Carmen D'Apollonio

You would not be surprised to see one of Carmen D'Apollonio's ceramic or bronze lamps stand up, stretch, shimmy, or slither away. Hovering somewhere between sculpture and lighting, figurative and abstract, funny and poignant, the anthropomorphic figures thrum with life and humor (as do their titles). "Each lamp has its own character and personality, just like a little person," affirms D'Apollonio, a Swiss-born, self-described studio potter based in Los Angeles.

D'Apollonio employs the coil method and mixes her own glazes for the one-of-a-kind ceramic bases, which are fired in her walk-in kiln. Bronze lamps are available in editions of eight, and shades are custom made to suit each piece.

◆

carmendapollonio.com
@carmendapollonio

Carmen D'Apollonio's *I will come back if you let me*, 2022, ceramic, linen shade, 44 x 41 x 20 in.

Photo by Joe Kramm, courtesy of R & Company. OPPOSITE: Photo by Stephen Busken, courtesy of Friedman Benda and Carmen D'Apollonio.

Rogan Gregory's gypsum lamps including (left to right) *Loe Depositor*, 2022, 66 x 31 in.; *Ovorepository*, 2022, 91 x 24 in.; and *Tiny Dancer (Ballerina)*, 2022, 68 x 18 x 22 in.

Rogan Gregory

Malibu, California–based furniture designer Rogan Gregory seeks to soften the tyranny of slick, rectilinear interiors with biomorphic forms rendered in such tactile materials as gypsum, terrazzo, ceramic, bronze, sheepskin, and cowhide. The illuminated sculptures from his *Fertility Form* series reflect Gregory's interest in organic shapes and ecological systems. Like a mash-up of Dr. Seuss and Isamu Noguchi, his lamps might variously suggest an exotic plant life sprouting from the ground or dangling from the ceiling, or—as with these gypsum floor lamps—fantastical creatures come to life in the living room. The opposite of static, they shed light in multiple directions with an expressive abandon that invites interaction. Gregory has stated that by introducing such objects into our environments, he hopes to spur visceral emotions, such as joy and awe, and to help foster a deeper connection to the natural world.

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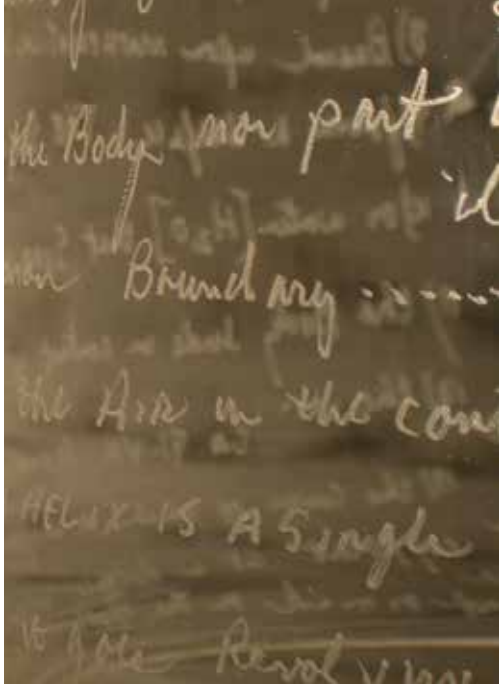
r-and-company.com | @rogangregory



A handblown *Word Pendant* (right) by Alison Berger, 12 x 11 x 11 in., with bronze hardware and hand-etched text (detail above).

Katie Stout

A bumper crop of produce makes up *Fruit Lady (Gold),* one of Katie Stout's collection of ceramic *Lady Lamps*, which shed light on prevailing standards of beauty, luxury, and femininity. With cartoonish bravado, this towering lamp alludes to the decorative arts, female-centric craft traditions (such as pottery), and art history—Giuseppe Arcimboldo's 16th-century portraits and the scale and exuberance of Niki de Saint Phalle's sculptures, for example—not to mention Carmen Miranda's tropical fruit–filled hats.

Stout has observed that her work treads the line "between beauty and vulgarity," which is expressed through her unabashed embrace of kitsch. Candy-colored fruits and vegetables are beaded onto the welded limbs of the *Lady*, whose arms hoist a gilded bushel-basket shade. Viewers are invited to touch as well as look: the on-off switch is embedded in a piece of fruit that serves as a breast, forming a sort of nipple.

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katiestout.com | @ummmsmile

Katie Stout's *Fruit Lady (Gold)*, 2020, ceramic, paint, glaze, and gold luster, 71 x 32 x 17 in.

LEFT: Photo courtesy of Nina Johnson, Miami. TOP and OPPOSITE TOP: Photo by Joshua White Photography. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Photo by Adhi Nugraha.

Alison Berger

As a child in Texas, Alison Berger delighted in collecting fireflies in glass jars—early prototypes for her future métier. Today, Berger's handblown lamps are made in her Los Angeles–based shop, where she favors personal expression over mass production.

The *Word Pendant* was inspired by a 16th-century ceremonial glass chalice upon which members of a secret Austrian society scratched their names in script. In Berger's modern interpretation, the shade is etched with translated excerpts from Leonardo da Vinci's sketchbooks. When shone on a wall, shadows reveal the text backwards—an allusion to the artist's practice of writing from right to left. Not intended as primary illumination, Berger's lamps glow with low-watt Edison bulbs, "like electric candlelight," she says. Or like a firefly in a mason jar on a balmy summer night.

◆

alisonbergerglassworks.com | @alisonbergerglassworks

Adhi Nugraha

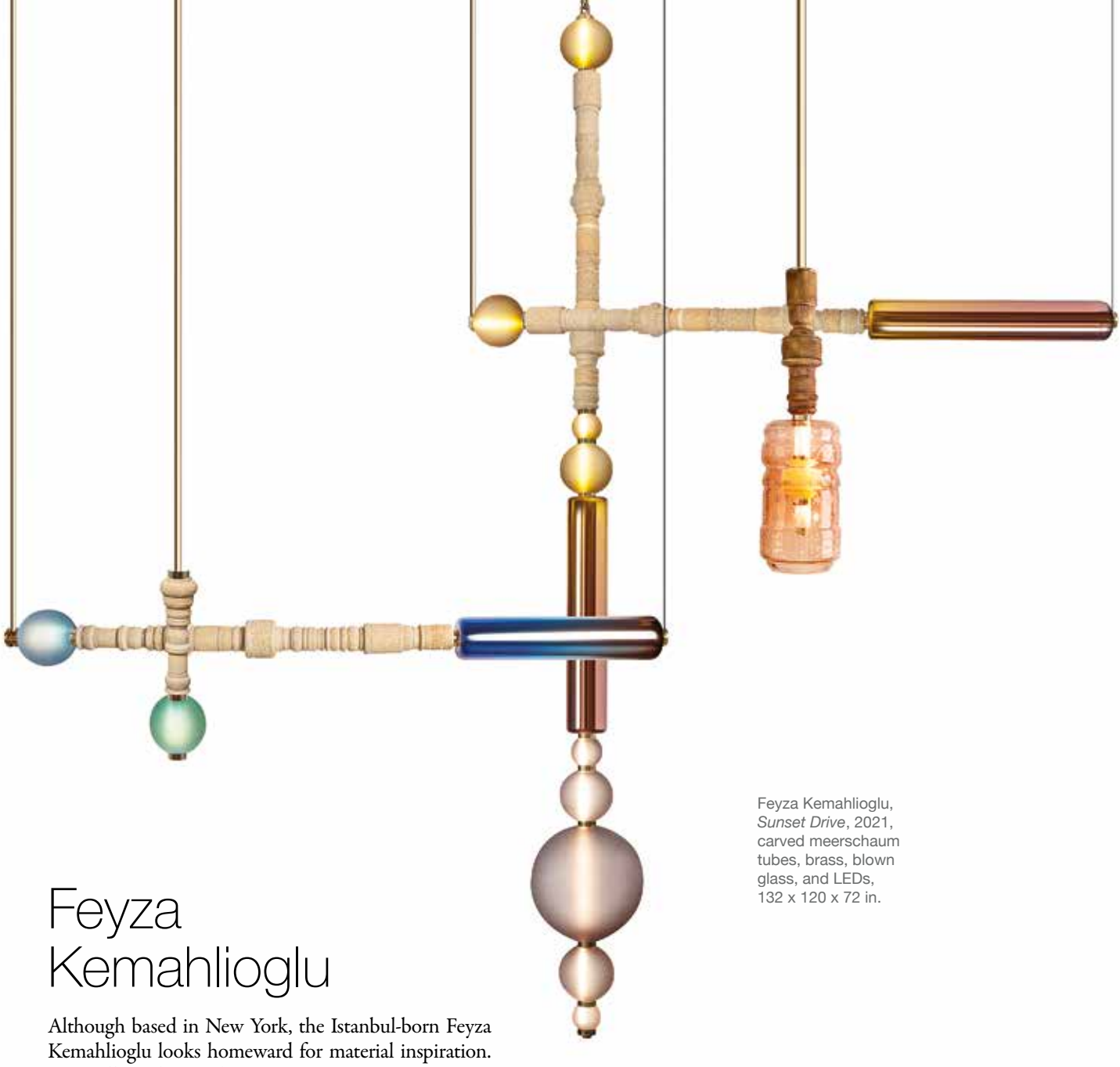
Indonesian product designer, teacher, and researcher Adhi Nugraha is serenaded in his West Java town by the mooing of cows and surrounded by the pungent odor of dung—a major polluter of local waterways. His search for a sustainable solution led Nugraha to devise a method for turning bovine excrement into a viable building material, while providing farmers with additional income.

When the cleaned, dried, and powdered dung is mixed with an adhesive, it can be molded into any number of useful items; these accent lamps honor their origins by suggesting stylized steer horns. The texture is similar to papier maché, and the aroma is neutralized by the inclusion of such waste materials as coffee grounds, cigarette butts, and clove leaves.

◆

adhinugrahadesign.com
@adhinugrahadesign

Adhi Nugraha's *Cow Dung Lamp 1* (right), 2021, 16.75 x 14.5 x 5.25 in. and *Cow Dung Lamp 2* (left), 2021, 18.5 x 14.5 x 5.25 in., are both made of processed cow dung, PVA glue, and electronics.



Feyza Kemahlioglu, *Sunset Drive*, 2021, carved meerschaum tubes, brass, blown glass, and LEDs, 132 x 120 x 72 in.

Feyza Kemahlioglu

Although based in New York, the Istanbul-born Feyza Kemahlioglu looks homeward for material inspiration. Her *Pillars of Meerschaum* lighting collection incorporates meerschaum, a heat-resistant soft white clay mineral found mainly in central Turkey's Eskişehir province, which artisans have carved since the 18th century. When the lamp is switched on, light animates the intricate floral and graphic patterns etched into the meerschaum tubes.

In conceiving her *Sunset Drive* pendants, Kemahlioglu sought to create an interplay of light and shadow. "I had an image of driving along at sunset, enjoying the cloud formations and the flashing of car headlights passing by," recalls Kemahlioglu. The clay tubes are interspersed with handblown mirrored glass cylinders and sandblasted glass globes, which emit a soft glow "like the haze that sets in right before nightfall."

◆

feyzstudio.com | @feyzdesignstudio

Photo by Galina Kurlat. OPPOSITE: Photo courtesy of Carpenters Workshop Gallery.

Nacho Carbonell

"I like to see objects as living organisms capable of coming alive and surprising you," says Nacho Carbonell of his sculptures, which include an array of *Light Mesh* lamps from his *Cocoon* series.

Glowing from within, the semitransparent clouds appear to billow up and around supportive metal trunks and branches like a tree canopy, creating a spectral dreamscape that helps evoke the Valencian topography of Carbonell's youth (he now resides in Eindhoven, Netherlands). The artist hand-works the steel mesh around a frame, then treats each cocoon with a plasterlike material of his own composition (which includes paper pulp, sand, Paverpol, and pigments). At once futuristic and nostalgic, the work has been described by Carbonell as growing out of—and giving shape to—his personal memories, which he poetically compares to excavated fossils.

◆

nachocarbonell.com

Deborah Bishop, a writer in San Francisco, is a longtime contributor to *American Craft*.

Nacho Carbonell's *Floor Lamp Concrete Base 5 (36/2016)*, has a concrete base, welded metal branches, and a shade made of metal mesh with textile hardener and pigments, 87 x 65 x 55 in.

Katherine Fahey (left), Caleb Stine (right, on guitar), and Dan Van Allen (hidden behind the crankie) perform a ghost story called “I Know Moonrise” at Manor Mill art space in Monkton, Maryland.

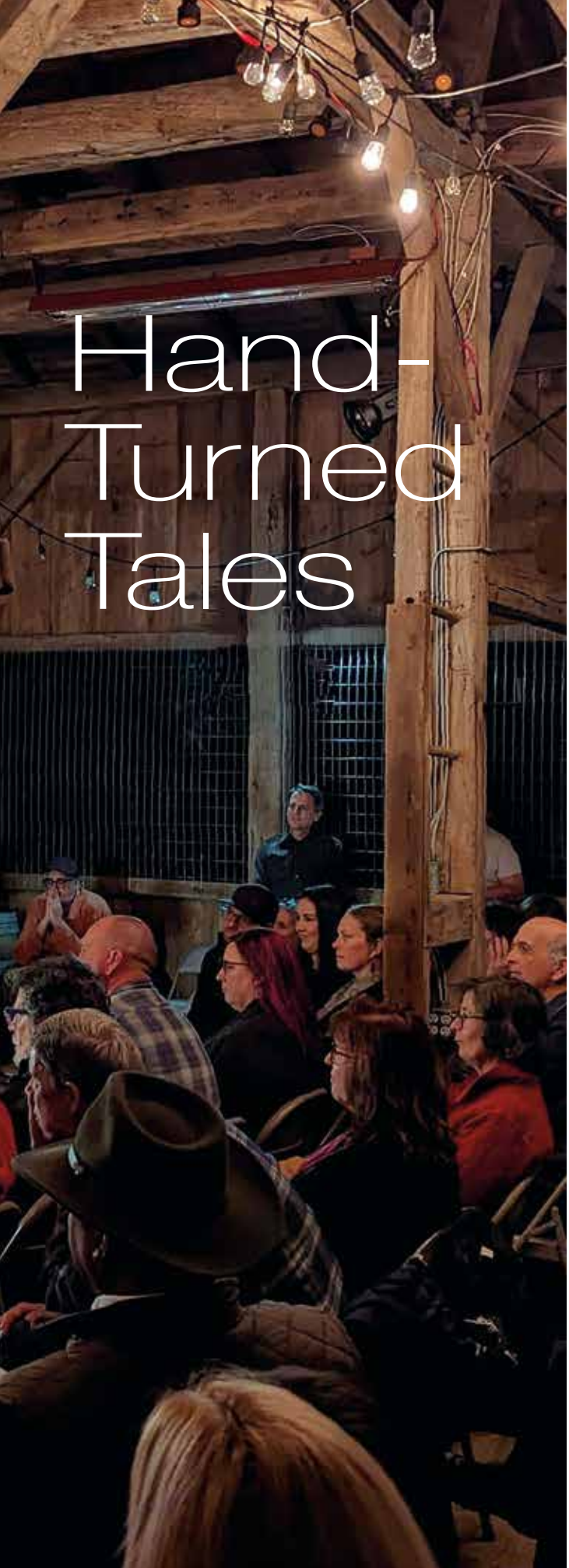


Photo by Bo Willse.

Hand-Turned Tales

For centuries, craftspeople have created backlit moving scrolls to tell stories. Intimate and expressive, the "crankie" tradition is thriving thanks to a growing troupe of enthusiasts.

BY SARAH JANE NELSON

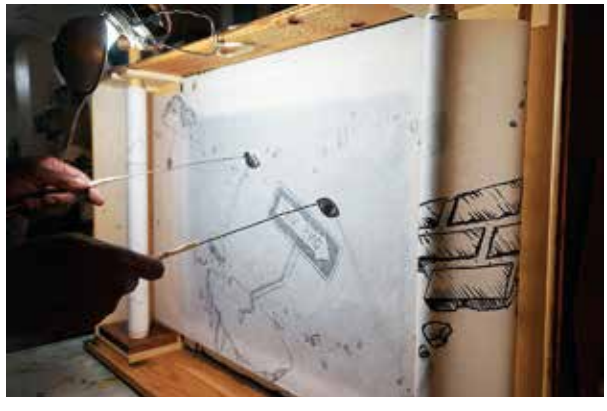
Nearly every February, artists from Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and beyond gather for a weekend of art, music, and storytelling in the sparsely populated hill town of Confluence, Pennsylvania. Hosted by the Best family, this event, called the Festival of Scrolling Panoramic Art, takes place in a small, red brick building that once housed a church. Having established the nonprofit Confluence Creative Arts Center, educators Jay and Jody Best like to say, "We are small, but we are mighty." At the Confluence celebration—just one of several North American festivals each year that celebrate handmade storytelling scrolls known as "crankies"—makers gather from around the region to share their latest creations.

The so-called crankie revival has been gaining momentum ever since German émigré Peter Schumann founded the Bread and Puppet Theater on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1963. Hardly the first individual to create hand-cranked moving pictures, Schumann is credited with coming up with the term *cranky* (or *crankie*). And although he would soon become known for his larger-than-life puppets, Schumann's early tabletop productions planted a creative seed.

Visitors to Sue Truman's highly informative website, The Crankie Factory, will come across her succinct description of this art form: "Start with a long illustrated scroll that is wound onto two spools. The spools are loaded into a box which has a viewing window. The scroll is then hand-cranked while the story is told, a song is sung or a tune is played." Truman's website provides examples of the many materials from which scrolls can be made and the various methods used for their illustration. It also instructs visitors on how to build an 18-by-36-inch wooden crankie frame.

Truman started TheCrankieFactory.com more than a decade ago in response to the dearth of information on this craft: its history appeared to begin with Schumann in the beatnik days of the 1960s, but it is actually centuries old. Her goal was to make crankie historians and artisans aware of one another. Nowadays, she is gratified to see that grade school teachers use her pages, as do university professors, who often cite her website on folklore class syllabi.

Alternately referred to as "moving panoramas," "scrolls," or "moving pictures," these early entertainments were popular in Europe, as well as in Asia and North America. Civil War crankies—of which a fragile handful survive—were a largely journalistic art form used to broadcast news of the latest battles. As summarized by Truman, "In the 19th century, moving panoramas ranged in size from very small to enormous!" Some were fashioned out of canvas, others out of muslin. A rope was attached across the top to keep the scroll from drooping—a perpetual technical challenge. The largest crankies were feats of engineering, as described in curator and



TOP: String Theory Theater founder Dirk Joseph performs with a crankie. BOTTOM: Behind the scroll, a puppeteer moves eyes along a landscape using shadows for effect.

professor Erkki Huhtamo's book *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles*. Writer Mark Twain also made reference to them in his story "The Entertaining History of the Scriptural Panoramist."

Launched in 2010, the Crankie Factory website has been a catalyst for what Truman characterizes as the *second* crankie revival. Early on, she showcased the work of multidisciplinary artists Anna Roberts-Gevalt and Elizabeth LaPrelle. Consisting of 18-inch-high illustrated easel paper or muslin, these crankies feature folktales or ballads, and their performance is enlivened by the accompaniment of Appalachian tunes played on banjo or fiddle. This combination of visual and auditory artistry typically holds audiences spellbound: "I cried the first time I saw Anna and Elizabeth perform," Truman says.

Indeed, crankies are particularly popular in traditional folk music circles, where they are appreciated for their otherworldly and expressive qualities. Some individuals, such as Sam Bartlett in Indiana and Brendan Taaffe in Vermont, have found that crankie making allows them to bring together what would otherwise be dueling career paths—their lives as visual artists and as musicians.

A New Development

Back in 2010, Baltimore artist Katherine Fahey had already made a song-based crankie or two for musician friends when her singer-songwriter friend Caleb Stine insisted she attend a concert at his house. She arrived in time to see "The Lost Gander," a production by Roberts-Gevalt and LaPrelle. She was struck by the beauty of their work and the hazards it presented: a paper crankie, complete with papercut figures and a stick-puppet goose suspended over the scrolled landscape, all of which was illuminated by candlelight. Fahey, who envied the immediacy of connection between musicians and their listeners, describes herself as shy. But she suddenly realized she didn't have to make crankies for other people; she could make them for herself. Nor would she have to worry about selling her art; she "could share it over and over again" through her own performances.

Trained as a sculptor at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), Fahey downplays the role her formal schooling has had in her success as a crankie artist. Her father, a cartographer who made maps by hand and who mentored decades' worth of students at Catholic University in Washington, DC, was likely a greater influence. "I was in the post office one day and they had those Tyvek envelopes," Fahey recalls. While standing in line, she examined the material at hand and found that it was both indestructible and had a graininess on one side that would absorb pigment. Better yet, it could be purchased in rolls.

Crankies are particularly popular in traditional folk music circles, where they are appreciated for their otherworldly and expressive qualities.

TOP: "Littlefoot Crankie," 2023, created and performed by Sue Truman's band Podorythmie. BOTTOM: Brendan Taaffe performs a crankie he made for "Say Darlin' Say," an Appalachian lullaby, at the Vermont Farm and Forest School in Roxbury, Vermont.

TOP: Photo by Sue Truman. BOTTOM: Photo by Misse Doc Axelrod. OPPOSITE TOP: Photo courtesy of Creative Alliance. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Photo by Dirk Joseph/String Theory Theater.

Scenes from Katherine Fahey's crankie "Francis Whitmore's Wife," 2019, based on a song by Carole Moody Crompton about enduring a hard winter in southern Vermont in the 18th century. Fahey uses handcut Tyvek images on a Tyvek background along with moving shadow puppets.

So began her use of Tyvek for scrolls. Thanks to her father, Fahey grew up with an X-Acto blade in her hand. Rather than using Sharpies or paint for the illustrations, she cuts black Tyvek to create silhouettes of scenes and characters, then glues them to the white Tyvek background. She also makes use of patterned tissue paper and origami to add color to her work. Early on, Fahey joined creative forces with her new "crankie sisters," Roberts-Gevalt and LaPrelle. "We went on a tour of the Northeast. . . . It was magical and unexpected. People were putting us up and supporting us."

Other crankie enthusiasts choose to work with textiles. Ursula Populoh, an 81-year-old German émigré, uses canvas for her scrolls and decorates them with hand-embroidered lettering and applique. "I was seventy-one when I started at art school—a very old student," she proudly declares. Her fiber artist daughter Valeska, who is on the faculty at MICA, built her mother's frame. Unlike Fahey and the many individuals who backlight crankies using candles or electric bulbs, Populoh does not illuminate her crankies. Says Populoh, who created a quilt that tells her embroidered emigration story, "My mantra is do everything by hand."

Family Traditions

Crankie making and performance is often a family affair. In Baltimore, generational ties between puppeteers and crankie artists are well established. Black puppeteer and originator of the String Theory Theater, Dirk Joseph, and his two daughters were introduced to this art form by Valeska Populoh. In addition, Joseph's teenage daughter Azaria has been mentored by Fahey. A grant recipient of the Jim Henson Foundation, Joseph has spent much of his creative time in what he characterizes as "depressed" or "disinvested communities" where authority figures can be scarce: "Many people comment, both before and after the show, on how powerful it is to see me working with my daughters," he observes. Many of the young men he works with "have troubled histories with law enforcement and trauma," and they are surprised to learn that artistic endeavors have plenty of "rules to be followed."

Joseph honed his skills at Baltimore's Black Cherry Puppet Theater, an epicenter of crankie activity. The oldest of three children, he has always been a storyteller: "Our parents would come home from work and we would line chairs up from all over the house to make it look like an auditorium," he says. Joseph uses

Image by Katherine Fahey.

vellum or heavy tracing paper to make his scrolls, and his crankie frame is built from a reclaimed dresser drawer. He enjoys being part of an artist network that shares and recycles materials. In regard to crankie themes, Joseph's passion for both social justice and the natural world is strikingly portrayed in his "Black Matter Lives" miniature crankie, among other works.

Growing Popularity

Arts producer Josh Kohn of the Center for Cultural Vibrancy has curated almost a decade's worth of Baltimore Crankie Festivals. While he admits that "it often includes a little more hand-holding," Kohn regularly invites participants who are "outside the tradition and new to that art form," such as folk artists from Ethiopia. Kohn wrote the script for the one-of-a-kind "Naftule Brandwein" crankie that is based on the life of the klezmer clarinet virtuoso. Six months in the making, this crankie became an elaborate collaboration between musicians, illustrators, and audio artists, and featured a live performance by clarinetist Michael Winograd, who was—like Brandwein—bedecked in lights. Kohn sees unique connections between Jewish culture and crankies: "It's a form of the Torah scroll and the Megillah. Move forward [in the narrative] without turning a page. Every Jewish holiday is about telling another story."

Nowadays, folk musicians and artisans from nearly every community seem to be embracing crankies, including organizations such as KlezKanada, the Massachusetts-based Country Dance & Song Society, WUMB Radio Acoustic Music Weeks in New Hampshire, and North Carolina's John C. Campbell Folk School, among others. Crankie luminaries aside, the greatest appeal of this craft seems to lie in its inclusive, approachable character—everyone has a story to tell, and you don't have to be an established artist to share it.

◆

breadandpuppet.org | @breadandpuppet
thecrankiefactory.com | @suetruman1015
@elizabethlaprelle
sambartlett.com | @realsambartlett
brendantaaffe.com | @turtledovesings
@katherine_fahey
ursulapopuloh.net | @ursulapopuloh
@dirkjart
stringtheorytheater.weebly.com | @stringtheorytheater
blackcherrypuppettheater.weebly.com
@blackcherrypuppettheater

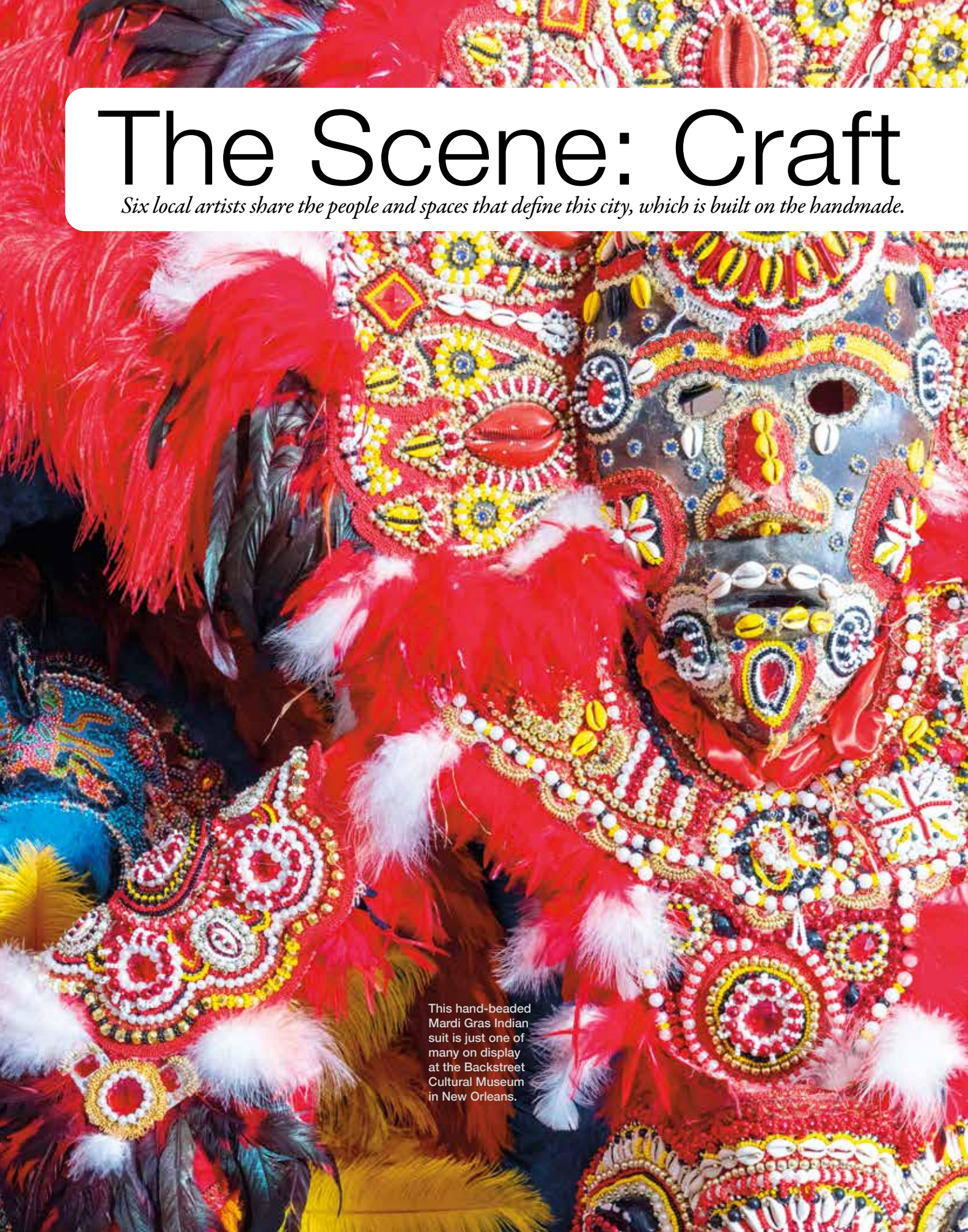
Sarah Jane Nelson is a writer and musical performer based in Massachusetts. Her writing has appeared in publications such as the *Old-Time Herald*, *OzarksWatch* magazine, and *Fiddler Magazine*. She authored the recent book *Ballad Hunting with Max Hunter: Stories of an Ozark Folksong Collector*.

TOP: Puppeteer Dirk Joseph winds his crankie "Black Matter Lives" through a small wooden storytelling box. MIDDLE: Ursula Populoh performs "The Story of Mending" in 2023, about mending clothes rather than discarding them. She makes crankies using embroidered lettering and applique on canvas. BOTTOM: The crankie "Naftule Brandwein," created by Tine Kindermann with a script by Josh Kohn and music and sound design by Michael Winograd, describes the life of the klezmer clarinet virtuoso. It was performed at the 2022 Baltimore Crankie Festival.

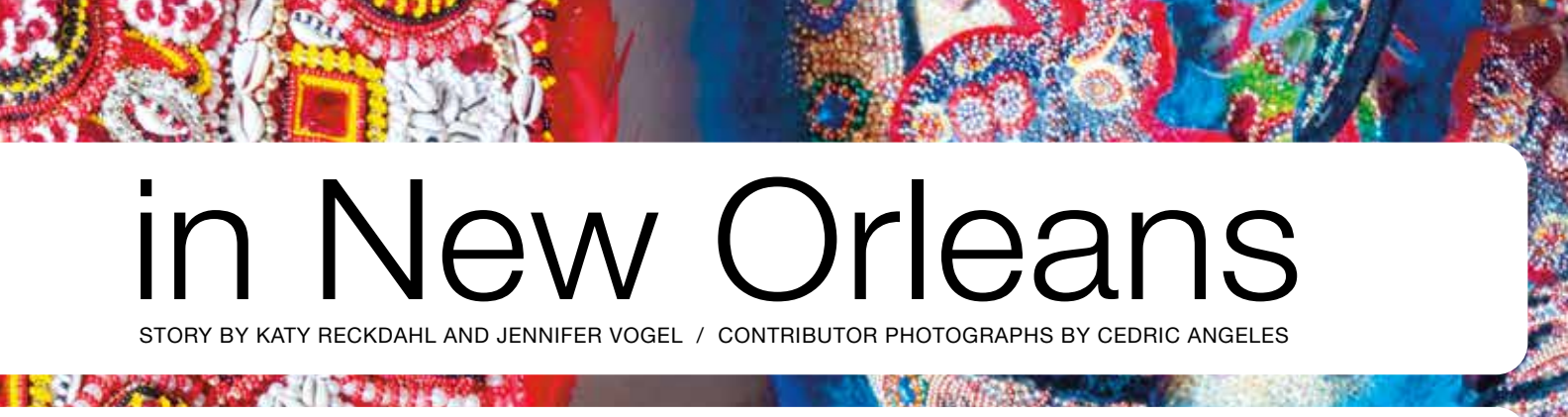
TOP: Photo by Dirk Joseph/String Theory Theater. MIDDLE: Photo by Jennifer Strunge. BOTTOM: Photo by Tine Kindermann.

The Scene: Craft

Six local artists share the people and spaces that define this city, which is built on the handmade.



This hand-beaded Mardi Gras Indian suit is just one of many on display at the Backstreet Cultural Museum in New Orleans.



in New Orleans

STORY BY KATY RECKDAHL AND JENNIFER VOGEL / CONTRIBUTOR PHOTOGRAPHS BY CEDRIC ANGELES

New Orleans craft is not static. It doesn't tend to sit on a counter or hang on a wall. "It comes to life," says Charles DuVernay, whose beaded tapestries are drawing crowds to New York City galleries these days.

Like many New Orleans artists, his craft is only one part of his life. "I don't see myself as 'artist Charles,'" says DuVernay, who sews mostly at night after a day of working on the Mississippi River, where he tests the quality of sugarcane that arrives by barge. "Because in New Orleans, everybody does art."

As sculptor and visual artist Hannah Chalew puts it, "There is a spirit of creativity endemic to this place."

Long a gathering spot for Native Americans, New Orleans was settled by the French in 1718 on a high-ground rectangle along the Mississippi River that became the French Quarter. The port drew people from all over, including the Eastern Seaboard, Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean, particularly the French colony of Saint-Domingue, now Haiti. New Orleans became known for its trade of cotton, sugar, and human cargo, sold here in the country's largest slave market.

Much of the city's well-known architecture was built either by enslaved carpenters and artisans or by French-speaking Afro-Creole free people of color, known as *gens de couleur libres*, who made up more of the population of New Orleans than anywhere else in the nation and whose story is still told everyday by the docents at Le Musée de f.p.c. on Esplanade Avenue.

As a child, DuVernay watched his grandfather, Otis DuVernay, a well-known master carpenter, create dramatic arches and intricate, decorative trim for both fancy French Quarter townhouses and the humble shotgun-style houses that make up most of the streetscape in his native 7th Ward, a short walk from the Quarter.

Many 7th Ward families were, and still are, headed by craftspeople, seamstresses, and jazz musicians. One can argue that the city itself is a work of art that constantly requires skilled tending, fixing, and restoring by blacksmiths, plasterers, and other artisans.

Born in 1922, Allison "Tootie" Montana, a lathe worker by trade, created some of the structural framework that underpins the city's ornate plasterwork. At home he was known as Big Chief Tootie of the Yellow Pocahontas tribe, one of the city's Black Masking Indian tribes. Montana, calling upon both his Native American and Creole ancestry, used his talents to shape corrugated cardboard and other materials three-dimensionally, revolutionizing the look of the beaded and feathered suits his family had worn during Mardi Gras since the mid-1800s.

Kids growing up in these traditions learned to shape cardboard for play. They watched wrestling matches on TV and folded cardboard into elaborate wrestling belts. They won class awards for mini Mardi Gras floats made from shoeboxes, an annual New Orleans school competition. Still today, although gentrification has made it less common, children host second line parades along local sidewalks, pounding on drums made from boxes and buckets, and perhaps even toting a Big Wheel over a shoulder, pretending it's a sousaphone.

The city simply has a unique approach to art, says ceramist and Xavier University of Louisiana department chair MaPó Kinnord. "In New Orleans, it's a way of life. It's so much a part of the culture."

Artists often credit these deep traditions with inspiring them to both create traditional craft and innovate with more experimental and interpretative expressions. You'll read more about that in the following pages of this, *American Craft*'s second installment of The Scene.

As Kinnord views it, New Orleans has "an art community, not an art world. In fact, we don't care what the art world thinks."

You can see that swagger on Sunday afternoons, when members of the city's social aid and pleasure clubs, dressed in one-of-a-kind suits and custom-made leather shoes and carrying feathered and beribboned fans, strut and dance through neighborhood streets, serenaded by brass bands, for hours-long second line parades.

No stranger to tragedy, New Orleans was hard-hit by the coronavirus; Mardi Gras 2020 was a super-spreader event, as tourists brought the virus to the celebration. Its poverty and per capita murder rates are among the highest in the nation. Its coastline is eroding faster than nearly anywhere else on Earth. The inequitable rebuilding of the city after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 triggered more gentrification, pushing Black families—and artists—farther out of the city.

Chalew believes the city's natural relationship with craft may be an effort to find beauty within hardship. "New Orleanians live in the moment and prioritize celebration and joy," she says, "because we know how quickly everything can change." —Katy Reckdahl

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Note: The following lists of artists and craft-related spaces are based on the recommendations of our contributors and are not comprehensive.

Photo by Cedric Angeles.

HANNAH CHALEW

Visual artist, educator, environmental activist

hannahchalew.com | @studio.hnnh.chlw

Chalew's family moved from Baltimore to New Orleans when she was 12, so "I can't claim to be a native but I definitely consider myself to be 'from' New Orleans." She describes her hometown as "an incredibly beautiful city, both architecturally and because of the lush tropical landscape that envelops the built environment. People living in New Orleans really value arts and culture, and there is a spirit of creativity endemic to this place. However, this is also a city plagued by crumbling infrastructure, poverty, and violent crime. New Orleans, like America as a whole, is still haunted by the legacies of colonization and enslavement which endure through structural racism that leaves a lot of people, mostly Black, living precariously, struggling to get by. Our city is also perched on the bleeding edge of climate change; as our coast erodes, mostly because of interventions by the oil and gas industry, this same industry continues to extract

ABOVE: Hannah Chalew in her studio. LEFT: Chalew creates pigments and inks from her surroundings. OPPOSITE: The artist's sculpture *Bottomland Chimera*, 2023, is made from materials including metal, lime, and recycled paint; paper made from sugarcane and plastic waste; ink derived from brick, goldenrod, copper, fossil fuel pollution, oak gall, and more; and soil and living plants; 90 x 115 x 85 in.

and burn fossil fuels, which raises sea levels and strengthens the hurricanes that barrel through the Gulf of Mexico each year." Still, she says, this state of vulnerability feeds the culture. "New Orleanians live in the moment and prioritize celebration and joy because we know how quickly everything can change. As such, this city is both an incredibly inspiring but also complicated and nuanced environment for creatives."

ARTISTS CHALEW ADMIRES: Ceramist and educator **MaPó Kinnord**, mixed-media artist **John W. Taylor**, master weaver **Janie Verret Luster**, bousillage restorer and artist **Dale Pierrottie**, and beader and Mardi Gras Indian suit maker **Big Chief Demond Melancon** of the Young Seminole Hunters.

mkinnordart.com | @nolamapo
joanmitchellfoundation.org/john-w-taylor
unitedhoumanation.org/janie-verrett-luster
linkedin.com/in/dale-pierrottie-99064b99
demondmelancon.com | @qadamawi

Photos by Cedric Angeles.

CHARLES DUVERNAY

Mardi Gras Indian suit maker, visual artist

monogramhunters.com | @duvernay_collectives0629

DuVernay grew up in the 7th Ward in downtown New Orleans, a cultural hub for Black Masking Indians, also known as Mardi Gras Indians. He masks with a tribe called Monogram Hunters; he serves in the Flag Boy position under his uncle, Big Chief Tyrone "Pie" Stevenson. After Carnival is over, DuVernay takes apart his elaborate hand-beaded suits and creates tapestries from them, making new artworks. When compared to other places he's lived and visited, DuVernay says the New Orleans craft scene stands out. "It comes to life. It's not stuff that's just, you know, hanging on displays or on walls or enclosed in glass. That's one of the things I totally appreciate about Mardi Gras time—you put all that time, all that effort, all that work into it, but you get to wear your art and walk it down the street. It is art that comes to life." He acknowledges that the local market is small. "There are a lot of talented artists but only so many venues you can get into. So money gets tight. Look at some of the Indians around town. They already create gorgeous work. But if you gave one of them $20,000 to spend on an Indian suit, it would be indescribably gorgeous. They have the talent—money is their only hindrance."

ARTISTS DUVERNAY ADMIRES: Beader and suit maker **Big Chief Demond Melancon** of the Young Seminole Hunters; the late chief of chiefs **Allison "Tootie" Montana**, who was an iconic beader and 3D suit maker; **Big Chief Alphonse "Dowee" Robair** of the 9th Ward Black Hatchets; his cousin, **Big Chief Tyrone "Pie" Stevenson** of the Monogram Hunters; and his late grandfather, carpenter **Otis DuVernay**.

demondmelancon.com | @qadamawi
facebook.com/alphonse.robair
monogramhunters.com/big-chief-pie

TOP RIGHT: Charles DuVernay, a Black Masking Indian, hand-stitches a tapestry, which he makes from deconstructed Mardi Gras suits. RIGHT: By creating new artworks, he gives his suits, which can take thousands of hours to create, a second life. OPPOSITE: DuVernay in his home with a spread of his beaded works.

Photos by Cedric Angeles.

ABOVE: Pippin Frisbie-Calder's work explores climate change, species extinction, and environmental stewardship. TOP: Frisbie-Calder applies watercolor to her 2017 woodcut *Contemporary Heroes*, which references Operation Migration and supports conservation groups, 69 x 39 in. OPPOSITE: Frisbie-Calder in her studio.

PIPPIN FRISBIE-CALDER

Printmaker, installation artist

pippinfrisbiecalder.com | @pippinprint

Frisbie-Calder was born on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain in Hammond, Louisiana, northwest of New Orleans, but mostly grew up in Maine. She returned to Louisiana 13 years ago to help run the New Orleans Community Printshop & Darkroom and never left. "This is an incredibly creative city," Frisbie-Calder says. "There is a history of art and crafts everywhere you look, and if you come to visit, you will see art in every corner of the city. When you are starting off, learning the business of art and flexing your own creative ideas, New Orleans is a deeply inspiring place. There is a huge range of artists working in ceramic, metal, textiles, and printmaking here to bounce ideas off of, and I have found the art community to be extremely supportive. I think the hardest thing here is the limited financial support for the arts." She notes that there are grants available through various organizations, "but considering the amount of talented creatives, it can be a hard way to make a living."

ARTISTS FRISBIE-CALDER ADMIRES: Visual artist, environmental activist, and educator **Hannah Chalew**; mixed-media artist and sculptor **Elenora Rukiya Brown**; printmaker **Katrina Andry**; and installation printmaker and educator **Teresa Cole**.

hannahchalew.com | @studio.hnnh.chlw
joanmitchellfoundation.org/elenora-rukiya-brown
katrina-andry.com | @k_andry
liberalarts.tulane.edu/departments/art/people/teresa-cole

Photos by Cedric Angeles.

OPPOSITE: Matthew Holdren builds furniture and interiors from Louisiana sinker cypress, which has been reclaimed from bayous, and from material he salvages from New Orleans homes. LEFT: Holdren uses a wood chisel. BELOW: Wood stacked in Holdren's workshop. BOTTOM: Here, he works on a plan while flanked by two handmade chairs.

MATTHEW HOLDREN

Designer, builder of furniture and interiors

matthewholdrendesign.com | @matthewholdrendesign

Holdren grew up in Vermont, where his dad built the family home and his mom owned an antique store. He's lived in New Orleans for 16 years. Asked what he finds most inspiring about the city as a craft community, Holdren says, "It's a very creative and culture-rich place. Obviously, there is a lot of history and there are deep traditions, from Mardi Gras Indians to the food to architecture and the Cajun culture outside the city. The St. Claude art galleries, like Good Children and The Front, are where I met a lot of the people who would become my friends. Going out to live shows, performances, and all of our parties and festivals around Mardi Gras is another great way to experience the craft and art scene. Everyone literally crafts one-of-a-kind costumes for multiple parties and parades—there is nothing else like it. New Orleans has some of the most loving and friendly people, but there is a lot of crime and a lack of support and proper care given to the people who make it what it is."

ARTISTS HOLDREN ADMIRES: Glassblower **Ben Dombey**, sculptor **David Borgerding**, mixed-media artist and cofounder of Good Children Gallery **Stephen Collier**, sculptor and furniture maker **Abe Geasland**, and printmaker and installation artist **Pippin Frisbie-Calder**.

glassblowerben.com | @glassblowerben
callancontemporary.com/artists/david-borgerding
@goodchildrengallery
@abegeasland
pippinfrisbiecalder.com | @pippinprint

Photos by Cedric Angeles.

MAPÓ KINNORD

Ceramist, educator

mkinnordart.com | @nolamapo

ABOVE LEFT: MaPó Kinnord shapes a new sculpture in her studio. ABOVE RIGHT: Here, she holds chunks of clay that she dug from the banks of the Mississippi River. OPPOSITE: Kinnord with her 1998 shrine sculpture *Stupa*, which was included in the 2021 exhibition *Outside In, Improvisations of Space*, stoneware and mixed media, 30 x 20 x 30 in.

Chair of the Department of Fine Arts at Xavier University of Louisiana, Kinnord has shared her love of clay as an artist and teacher for over 40 years. She grew up in Cleveland and worked as a production potter and sculptor in Massachusetts and California before moving to New Orleans in 1994. She relocated to the city because it offered everything she was looking for. "I wanted a place that was warm, a place near water, a culturally rich city with a large Black population that had a major airport. I wanted a place where I could afford to live. New Orleans checked all of those boxes and then some," Kinnord says. "Art is a little bit different in New Orleans than it is in New York. In New Orleans, it's a way of life. It's so much a part of the culture. It's because we have an art community, not an art world. In fact, we don't care what the art world thinks. New Orleans is probably the second most provincial city in the country, after New York. As far as we are concerned, we are the center of the universe. Some of the celebrities like to come to New Orleans. They don't get treated like celebrities. You almost have to prove yourself to the community."

ARTISTS KINNORD ADMIRES: Designer **Norma Hedrick**, who helped establish the Fashion & Textiles department at the Material Institute; master blacksmith **Darryl Reeves**, whose highly respected work is "really, really New Orleans"; wood sculptor **Larry Nevil**, "one of our elders"; visual artist and activist **Brandan "BMike" Odums** of Studio Be; sculptor **Jennifer Odem**; **Sheleen Jones**, an incredible artist "in terms of commemorative bronzes"; visual artist **Louise Mouton Johnson**; wood and mixed-media sculptor **John Barnes**; visual artist **Rontherin Ratliff**; and "legendary artist and educator" **John T. Scott**, who died in 2007.

materialinstitute.org
neworleansblacksmith.net
m.facebook.com/people/Larry-D-Nevil-Art/100069173199030/
bmike.co
jenniferodem.com
@queensheleen
joanmitchellfoundation.org/louise-mouton-johnson
johnbarnesart.com
rontherin.com

Photos by Cedric Angeles.

SEGUENON KONÉ

Instrument maker, educator, master balafonist

facebook.com/SeguenonK

OPPOSITE: Seguenon Koné stands with a collection of his handmade percussion instruments. He holds two rope-tuned djembe drums. ABOVE LEFT: Koné shaves animal hair from a drumhead. ABOVE RIGHT: The bells on Koné's hand coverings make sounds when he plays the drums during performances.

Koné grew up in northern Ivory Coast, in a village called Gbon. He moved to New York City and then to Orlando, Florida, where he worked at Disney World and toured with the late singer Jimmy Buffett before moving to New Orleans in 2008. New Orleans, he says, has an intimate cultural community that seems large because so many people play instruments. "It can feel big during Mardi Gras," he says. "But if anything happens here, everyone feels it because of the way we communicate between people." The hardest part of being a musical performer in New Orleans, according to Koné, is "June, July, August. Those three months—summer—are not easy for an artist. It's very, very slow. Sometimes I travel to New York and California to do workshops then. After that, the rest of the days and months are very good." At about the age of 4, Koné began learning from Ivory Coast elders how to make a wide range of percussion instruments, including djembes, dunduns, congas, balafons, bolons, shekeres, and xylophones. To obtain the right skins and parts for his instruments—such as goat or calf skin for hand drums like the djembe—he places orders with stores across the country. When he's in New Orleans, this former creative director of the music and dance ensemble Le Ballet Ivoire Spectacle teaches classes and plays in clubs with other local musicians.

Photos by Cedric Angeles.

Located in a former church, Mo's Art Supply & Framing promises, "You will be converted."

PLACES AND SPACES

Where to Buy Supplies

"Most of us get our clay from **Alligator Clay Company** in Baton Rouge," says Kinnord. The company manufactures and distributes over 30 kinds of moist clay.

southern-pottery-equipment-amp-supplies.shoplightspeed.com/moist-clay/alligator-clay

DuVernay says he gathers suit-making materials—whether canvas, feathers, sequins, or beads—at "Miss Helen's," referring to **Broadway Bound Costumes** on Canal Street, which was run for decades by the late Helen Koenig.

broadwayboundcostumes.com

"**The Green Project** is an incredible resource," says Chalew. "It's a salvage store for construction materials and a great place to shop and support."

thegreenproject.org

"That's my go-to," says DuVernay of **Jefferson Variety Stores**, located just outside New Orleans in Jefferson. The store, an institution for locals, specializes in costume fabric, sequin and rhinestone appliques, and beads.

jeffersonvariety.com

"**Mo's Art Supply & Framing** is an art supply company on Bienville Street, close to my house," says Kinnord. "They have a lot. I go there for paints and all kinds of other stuff." Chalew agrees, adding, "If I really need a specific art material, Mo's Art Supply is a superb local art store in the city." Declares Frisbie-Calder, "They are the best in NOLA!"

mosartsupply.com

The motto for the shop **NOLA Craft Culture** is, "It's not a hobby, it's a way of life." DuVernay, who calls this his "exclusive shop," couldn't agree more. "They're gonna have stuff that nobody else is gonna have."

nolacraftculture.com

"I strive to make my studio practice as fossil-free as possible, so most of my materials are found or foraged," says Chalew. "For the ink that I make, I gather oak galls below local oak trees around the city." Still, she has go-to spots for supplies that can't be gleaned. "When I need metal, I head to **Poland Scrap Metal**," a scrapyard on Poland Avenue also favored by Frisbie-Calder.

polandscrapmetal.com

"I work a lot with reclaimed sinker cypress that I source from the swamps surrounding New Orleans," says Holdren. "I buy from guys who go out and literally get in the mud and dig these ancient logs out. **Riverside Lumber** has an incredible selection of rare woods and reclaimed local products, too."

riversidelumber.com

SPOTLIGHT

Backstreet Cultural Museum

In this jewel in the Tremé neighborhood, the late Sylvester Francis curated the Backstreet, an ode to New Orleans Black culture that he called "a powerhouse of knowledge." It is now run by his daughter Dominique Francis-Dilling and her staff, who can tell stories for days about skull and bone crews; baby dolls; Black Masking Indians, also known as Mardi Gras Indians, who annually create beaded-and-feathered suits; and social aid and pleasure clubs that host yearly Sunday afternoon second line parades, when club members dance through the streets while being serenaded by brass bands.
—Katy Reckdahl

backstreetmuseum.org
@backstreetculturalmuseum

Museums

George & Leah McKenna Museum of African American Art collects, interprets, and preserves "the visual aesthetic of people of African descent in North America and beyond."
mckennamuseum.com

The Historic New Orleans Collection is a museum, research center, and publisher dedicated to preserving the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South. Spread over three campuses, the collection features restored historic buildings and the French Quarter Galleries.
hnoc.org

Founded in 1976, the **Los Isleños Heritage and Cultural Society of St. Bernard** is housed in the Los Isleños Museum Complex in St. Bernard Parish. The society's mission is to preserve the folklore, history, language, music, and traditions of Canary Islanders in New Orleans.
losislenos.org

To be steeped in the city's musical history, visit the **New Orleans Jazz Museum**, which boasts a large collection of memorabilia, sheet music, clothing, and handmade instruments, such as a one-string guitar from 1915 and an Old Peach cigar box violin from around 1894. Some highlights include Fats Domino's white Steinway piano, refurbished after Hurricane Katrina souped his home with 10 feet of water, and a Lyon & Healy cornet played by a young Louis Armstrong. The historic **French Market**, which covers five blocks and features everything from alligator heads to handcrafts to beverages and food, is located just behind the museum.
nolajazzmuseum.org
frenchmarket.org

New Orleans Museum of Art, the city's oldest fine art institution, opened in 1911 with just nine pieces. Today, its permanent collection encompasses nearly 50,000 works, including glass, textiles, and decorative arts. Don't miss the impressive **Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden**, which occupies more than 11 acres in City Park adjacent to the museum.
noma.org

Established in 1999, the **Ogden Museum of Southern Art** holds an expansive collection of Southern art and is lauded for its exhibitions, public events, and educational programs that examine not only visual art, but music, literature, and culinary traditions in order "to provide a comprehensive story of the South."
ogdenmuseum.org

Artists' Spaces

For a quarter century, **Ashé Cultural Arts Center** has provided programming and support to foster "human, community, and economic development" among the African diaspora in New Orleans. With 10,000 square feet of gallery space and 20,000 square feet of performance space, the arts center produces more than 350 music, theater, dance, spoken word, and multidisciplinary events per year.
ashenola.org

The **Creative Alliance of New Orleans** supports artists, cultural changemakers, and the overall revitalization of the city through training, education, and informational programming.
cano-la.org

Photos by Cedric Angeles.

Sheleen Jones's 2010 life-size sculpture of Allison Big Chief "Tootie" Montana in Louis Armstrong Park.

Artists' Spaces (continued)

Launched in 2015 by the Joan Mitchell Foundation, which supports visual artists, the **Joan Mitchell Center** hosts residencies on its two-acre New Orleans campus.
joanmitchellfoundation.org/joan-mitchell-center

The 31-acre **Louis Armstrong Park**, located in the Tremé neighborhood, is full of stunning public art, including the bronze sculpture of Allison Big Chief "Tootie" Montana by local sculptor **Sheleen Jones**. The park is home to historic **Congo Square**, where enslaved Africans and free people of color gathered to dance, sing, and play music—practices that influenced the development of jazz.
nola.gov/parks-and-parkways/parks-squares/congo-square-louis-armstrong-park/
@queensheleen

Visual artist **Willie Birch** created the **Old Prieur Community Memory Garden**, a small garden in the heart of the 7th Ward—on the corner of O'Reilly and Old Prieur Streets—that provides greens and flowers for neighbors, alongside sculpture and other artwork.
williebirch.com

A Studio in the Woods aims to foster creative responses to thorny challenges like climate change by providing retreats to artists, scholars, and the public in a forest on the Mississippi River.
astudiointhewoods.org

Schools and Workshops

The Black School is a Black-centered experimental art school teaching students how to "transform social realities through Black love, healing, and self-determination." Besides running a firm that provides graphic design services, the school hosts Black Love Fest, a one-day celebration with student exhibits, art installations, and musical performances.
theblack.school

Located in the Gert Town neighborhood, **the Clay Center of New Orleans** offers classes and workshops for clay artists of all skill levels.
nolaclay.org

Offering hands-on classes, **Community Workshop NOLA** is a cooperative, membership-based woodshop seeking to create a safe, affordable, and collaborative space for makers.
communityworkshopnola.com

Photo by Cedric Angeles.

SPOTLIGHT
Music Box Village

Set on the levee next to the Industrial Canal, which opens onto the busy Mississippi River, Music Box Village occupies a one-acre forest where the sounds of the river—ship horns, train whistles, and drawbridge signals—create the right ambiance for making music. Its centerpiece is a collection of artist-made interactive "musical houses," which were made in the village's own metal fabrication shop; each structure makes its own music. This sonic playground is beloved by children, but it also serves as the setting for performances and concerts, where audiences relax under the leafy cover of oak trees. —Katy Reckdahl
musicboxvillage.com

SPOTLIGHT **Jeff Poree**

For five generations, master plasterer Jeff Poree and his family have created and maintained New Orleans's decorative plaster: ornate ceiling roses and medallions, crown moldings, columns, walls, beadwork, scrolls, lions, gargoyles, panels, domes, and arches. At the Poree casting shop, artisans sometimes shape up to 1,200 pounds of plaster a day.

—Katy Reckdahl

@poree_plastering

TOP: Photos courtesy of Jeff Poree. MIDDLE: Photo by La'Shance Perry. BOTTOM: Photo by Tod Seelie.

Crescent City Clay Connection is a group of potters and ceramists that includes Kinnord. "It's a way for people to check out their local communities and build communities," she says. Among its benefits, the connection provides an avenue for sharing large amounts of clay. "We are able to help with resources," Kinnord says, "and spread the cost around."

crescentcityclayconnection.org

Located in the 9th Ward, the nonprofit arts center **Material Institute** offers classes and other learning opportunities in the fields of music, fashion, and community gardening. Thanks to the guidance of participating artists, the emphasis is on experimentation and expression.

materialinstitute.org

Curt Anderson (left) and furniture designer Peter Scheidt work on a "storytelling chair" at YAYA Arts Center.

New Orleans Center for Creative Arts bills itself as "Louisiana's arts conservatory" for a reason. Founded in 1973, NOCCA is a regional arts training center with instruction in media arts, music, dance, visual arts, and more. Graduates include Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Wendell Pierce, and Jon Batiste. Chalew also attended and calls it an "incredible public arts magnet high school."

nocca.com

A private, historically Black, Catholic college in New Orleans, **Xavier University of Louisiana** boasts programs in disciplines ranging from business to medicine to the arts.

xula.edu

The **YAYA Arts Center**'s mission is to empower creative young people to become successful adults. With painting and glass studios, a gallery, and an impressive roster of teaching artists, this organization is having an impact.

yayainc.org

SPOTLIGHT **Darryl Reeves**

Master blacksmith Darryl Reeves hand-forges steel and brass furniture and railings, like this original musical bar railing on Frenchmen Street (below). He also painstakingly restores wrought iron picket fences and railings—complete with delicate leaves and tendrils and curves—that are a signature of New Orleans's French Quarter and other distinct historic areas such as the Garden District, St. Charles Avenue, and Esplanade Ridge. —Katy Reckdahl

neworleansblacksmith.net

PLACES AND SPACES (continued)

Galleries, Studios, Markets

Antenna is a multidisciplinary cultural institution that presents exhibitions and public programs, provides financial support to artists, hosts residencies, and runs a book production facility.

antenna.works

A contemporary art and craft gallery, **Ariodante** is located in the St. Claude Arts District.

ariodantegallery.com

Byrdie's Pottery is a nonprofit community ceramics studio in the Marigny neighborhood offering classes, memberships, and a storefront shop.

byrdiespottery.org

Originally called Defend New Orleans, **DNO** was founded in 2003 as a screen printing and T-shirt studio. At first the mission was to stop New Orleans from losing its unique culture. But after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the founders turned to focus on community and connections.

dno.la

"Julia Street is the part of town with the more upscale galleries, like **Arthur Roger Gallery** and **LeMieux Galleries**, to name just a few," says Frisbie-Calder. "I have been represented by LeMieux Galleries since 2019 and find the work in this part of town to be very inspiring."

arthurrogergallery.com
lemieuxgalleries.com

Because of Mardi Gras, mask making in New Orleans is considered high art. **Mask Gallery** in the French Quarter, owned by renowned leather mask maker Massud Dalili, has a nice collection.

neworleansmask.com

New Orleans Community Printshop & Darkroom is a collectively run, nonprofit community art space specializing in screen printing, relief printing, and black-and-white darkroom photography.

nolacommunityprintshop.org

NOLA DDM is an apparel design, development, and production studio in the Marigny neighborhood that does everything from making patterns to sewing the final product.

noladdmfashion.com

A private atelier on Magazine Street, **Pollack Glass Studio and Gallery** emphasizes lampworked glass techniques. Founder Andrew Pollack teaches and shows his work and that of others.

pollackglassnola.com

Every three years, the organizers behind **Prospect New Orleans**, a recurring civic exhibition, invite artists from all over the world to create projects that are displayed or performed in local venues.

prospectneworleans.org

Photos courtesy of Darryl Reeves.

SPOTLIGHT

Dutch Alley Artists's Co-op

Operating for 20 years in the historic French Market, steps from tourist staple Café du Monde, Dutch Alley is a true co-op staffed by the two dozen artists who make the work that's sold in the gallery. Shop for handmade hats, fiber art, pottery, jewelry, sculpture, photography, prints, and linoleum cuts, including Robin Daning's well-known paintings made on dominoes, Nick Conner's wooden bowls, Kimberly Parker's mixed-media visual pieces, Wanda Wiggins's African-influenced fabric collages, and Pat Lee's figurative sculptures (pictured here with the artist). —Katy Reckdahl

dutchalleyonline.com

BELOW: Patrons gather for an opening at The Front, a gallery in the St. Claude Arts District.

"**St. Claude Arts District** is a really fun place to see a broad range of New Orleans art," says Frisbie-Calder. "With some of the more exciting and innovative work in the city, you might step into **The Front** to find yourself in a world of paper-pulp oil refineries and pipes by Hannah Chalew, or into **Antenna Gallery** to see Abdi Farah's large-scale portraits of Black football players sewn out of flags and made lifelike through layers of drawing." Holdren recommends St. Claude as well, singling out The Front and **Good Children Gallery**.

nolafront.org
hannahchalew.com
antenna.works
abdifarah.com
goodchildrengallery.com

Since 1996, **Stella Jones Gallery** has worked to make African American, contemporary African, and Caribbean fine art accessible to all.

stellajonesgallery.com

MORE ONLINE! To see more photos of artists—and read about the New Orleans bars, restaurants, and clubs they recommended—go to: craftcouncil.org/NewOrleansScene

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This story was written and edited by *American Craft* Senior Editor Jennifer Vogel and Katy Reckdahl, a reporter extraordinaire in New Orleans who has written for publications including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and this magazine. You can read her *American Craft* story about Black Masking Indians here: craftcouncil.org/MardiGrasSuits

Photos by Cedric Angeles.

light houses

Four artists light up their architecturally influenced works to tell stories, create moods, and explore ideas—all with the mysterious poetry of illumination.

BY JON SPAYDE

Ayumi Shibata's *Konjiki no No*, 2022, paper, string, 8.25 x 5.5 x .25 in. OPPOSITE: Shibata works on a new piece, *Cyouwanomori*, which translates from Japanese to "forest of harmony."

Konjiki no No, 2022
AYUMI SHIBATA

It's called *Konjiki no No,* Japanese for "the golden fields"—a glass case through which light is shone from behind and below, in a darkened environment, to gild a land-and-townscape made entirely of cut paper.

The fusion of nature, human habitations, and something like a temple in the piece's imagery sums up the passionate idealism of Ayumi Shibata. "The theme of my work," she says, "is to create a sustainable, harmonious world. I put into my artwork a vision of hope for the future—for example, an ideal city or a forest where animals, humans, and nature coexist." Shibata's oeuvre contains many such visionary marriages of glass, layers of cut paper, and light, as well as other cut-paper works, large and small.

Born and based in Japan, Shibata lived in New York from 2012 to 2015, and it was there that she discovered her vocation. One day, after meditating in a quiet church in the hectic city, she opened her eyes and saw "seven-colored light spreading through stained glass all around my feet and the floor. The beauty of it shook me to my core. At the same time, I recalled how much I loved arts and crafts in school, especially cutting black paper and pasting colored cellophane to make something that looked like stained glass."

After some years of cutting paper as a hobby, she turned professional in 2020 and since then has contributed to international exhibitions as well as to haute couture shows and the stage sets of Japanese folk music icon Ryoko Moriyama.

She's developed a genuinely religious devotion to paper, pointing out that the Japanese word for it, *kami,* is a homophone for *kami,* the country's ancient deities. She celebrates the spiritual power of light too. "Life can't be nurtured without the light of the sun," she says. "We're alive in the hands of the Great Love."

◆

ayumishibata.com | @ayumishibatart

"I put into my artwork a vision of hope for the future."

—Ayumi Shibata

Photos courtesy of the artist.

LEFT: Tom Fruin made *Hi 5 Taxi Cab*, 2022, from steel and found plexiglass, 10 x 8 x 8 ft. BELOW: Fruin with his *Watertower 1*. OPPOSITE: Light from a single lamp shines through the stained glass of *Hi 5 Taxi Cab*.

Hi 5 Taxi Cab, 2022

TOM FRUIN

As sunlight streams through it, Tom Fruin's *Hi 5 Taxi Cab* house seems to be a sweet sanctuary in stained glass. Yet the piece is rooted in city grit. The rich colors come from plexiglass scavenged from bankrupt sign shops and demolition sites. The patchwork patterning owes its origin to "quilts" Fruin made in the late 1990s by stitching together plastic bags of drug detritus from the sidewalks of his then-funky, now-gentrified Brooklyn neighborhood.

Fruin, a Southern Californian who relocated to New York in 1996, loves patching things together, at scales ranging from those quilts to two colorful faux water towers. And he loves scouting going-out-of-business sales and EPA cleanup sites for stuff to incorporate into sculpture.

In fact, scavenging was what first connected him with his new city. He'd pick up urban refuse, including empty drug packets decorated with the dealers' colorful "brand" logos, seal the items into clear bags, and sew the bags together. "I assumed these 'quilts' were going to be abject, but they ended up being really beautiful," he says. "I hung them off from the wall about six inches so that when the light went through them, it projected the colors onto the wall."

It wasn't long before he'd embarked on his *Icon* series of translucent buildings, to which *Hi 5 Taxi Cab* belongs—works that can be found from Copenhagen to Hoboken to Buenos Aires and beyond. Many of the *Icons* move around from site to site, but the series's most famous exemplars are two "water towers" installed on top of Brooklyn buildings.

Fruin put lighting systems into them so they would glow and pulse at night—and even *Hi 5* has a single lamp inside, "like a fire in the fireplace," he says.

Originally sited at New York's South Street Seaport, *Hi 5 Taxi Cab* joins several other Fruin structures this winter as part of the "Enchanted Forest of Light," a holiday feature of Descanso Gardens in La Cañada Flintridge, California.

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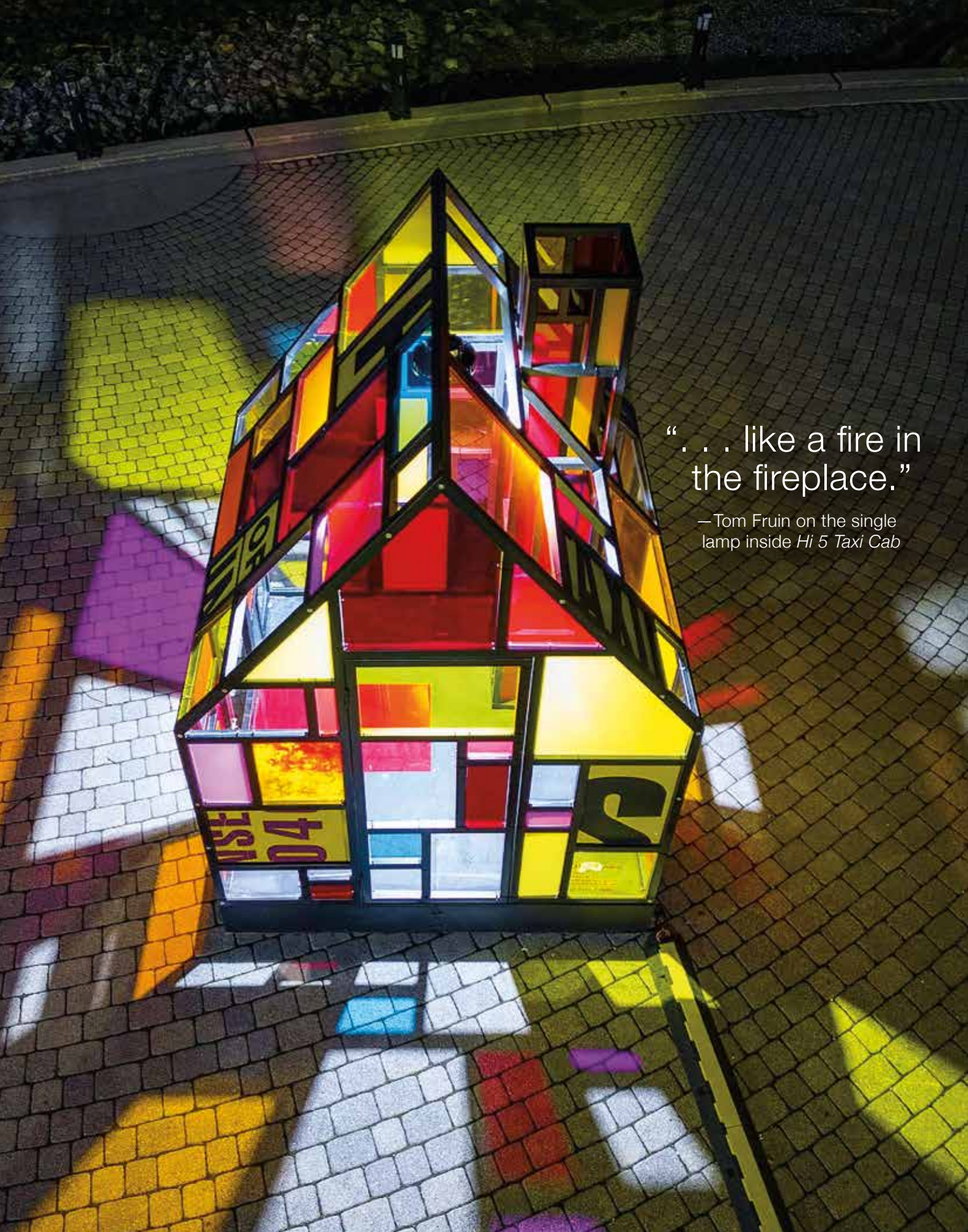
tomfruin.com | @tomfruin

TOP: Photo courtesy of Fruin Studio. BOTTOM: Photo by Guerin Blask. OPPOSITE: Photo by Matthew Pugliese.



“. . . like a fire in the fireplace.”

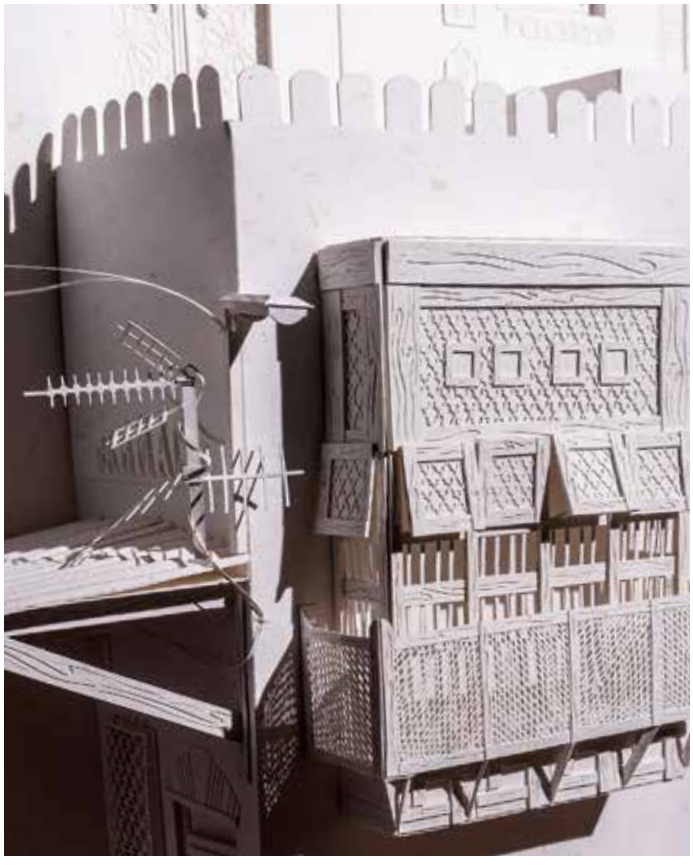
—Tom Fruin on the single lamp inside *Hi 5 Taxi Cab*

Where We All Meet, 2022

LAYLA MAY ARTHUR

The year after she graduated from Academie Minerva, the art and design school of Hanze University in the Netherlands, paper artist Layla May Arthur entered a competition, open to alumni, to create a sculpture for a new university building. She was competing with artists with substantial careers—but she blew them away with *Where We All Meet*.

Arthur, born on the English Channel island of Jersey, combined styles from many nations in this architectural composite, as a tribute to her fellow international students at Hanze. "I try and make it so everybody can look at my work and find something they can connect to, that



OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Photo courtesy of the artist. ALL OTHER IMAGES: Photos by Layla May Arthur.

> "It's important to me to make an experience rather than just an object."
>
> —Layla May Arthur

tells their story," she says. "In *Where We All Meet*, I didn't indicate where the architecture is from. People look at a part and say, 'Oh, this is definitely Italian.' It's really Spanish, but I don't tell them, and it starts really nice conversations."

Arthur's work, which ranges from immersive, dramatically lit installations to small works promoting businesses, requires a sharp blade, almost infinite patience, and midnight oil. "You work a whole day and you've made something that's a few square inches," she says, "so you tend to work long hours, so you feel like you've achieved more."

The artist fell in love with her medium when a traveling exhibit of paper art came to Jersey. "I loved the fact that it was only paper, and that they were completely transforming it and telling a story," she says. For the viewer to appreciate the stories told by *Where We All Meet* requires clear exterior light and crisp shadow. "It's placed in a corridor, and the lighting and shadows change throughout the day, like in a normal city. That means that it's never static, which is what I like about working in 3D. It's important to me to make an experience rather than just an object."

◆

laylamayarthur.com | @laylamayarthurpaperstudio

OPPOSITE TOP: In her paper sculpture *Where We All Meet*, 2022, Layla May Arthur incorporates architectural forms from many cultures, 39 x 39 x 39 in. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Layla May Arthur. THIS PAGE: Two detail images.

Carpenter Gothic #2, 2018
TED LOTT

> “ . . . you turn the corner and you see your house in the distance and the lights are on—warm and welcoming light.”
>
> —Ted Lott

OPPOSITE: Ted Lott’s *Carpenter Gothic #2*, 2018, is made from Eastern white pine, found objects, and electrical components, 85 x 19 x 21 in. ABOVE: Ted Lott.

Photo by Mark Andrus. OPPOSITE: Photos by Ted Lott.

Carpenter Gothic #2 is a strange chair; it’s a miniature building; it’s a chair *interrupted* by a building.

“Sometimes people see the miniature first and sometimes the furniture,” Ted Lott says of the work, which is one of a series. “It’s fun to notice where people land before they go the other way. Then there’s that moment when they realize it’s this, but also that!”

If you focus on the miniature dimension of the work, you also enter into a mood. Each story of the building is illuminated by a six-watt chandelier bulb. “The idea,” he says, “is that it’s evening; you turn the corner and you see your house in the distance and the lights are on—warm and welcoming light.” The Grand Rapids, Michigan–based wood artist’s father died while he was working on the piece, and he’s sure that the need he felt to add that warm light to it was an homage to family memory.

The tiny exposed ribs on the walls and ceilings are another homage: to the stud frame style of building, in which the supporting frames of walls are nailed together before being erected, combined, and covered with paneling and drywall.

Stud-framing is widely considered less artisanal than the far older post-and-beam approach, in which walls are built up from the ground. But Lott, a scholar of construction history who has worked on house-building and historic preservation teams, is a fond advocate. “I think it’s an amazing invention. Stud-framing takes more skill than post-and-beam, and it’s a much more efficient way of building. And I like to reveal it, because it’s usually covered up.”

The items of furniture in the *Carpenter Gothic* series are all found pieces, generally a century or more old, in styles that Lott admires and that he feels mesh with his archaistic buildings. It’s another way this artist harmonizes dimensions—physical, personal, technical, and historical.

◆

tedlott.com | @tedworks

Jon Spayde is a frequent contributor to *American Craft*.

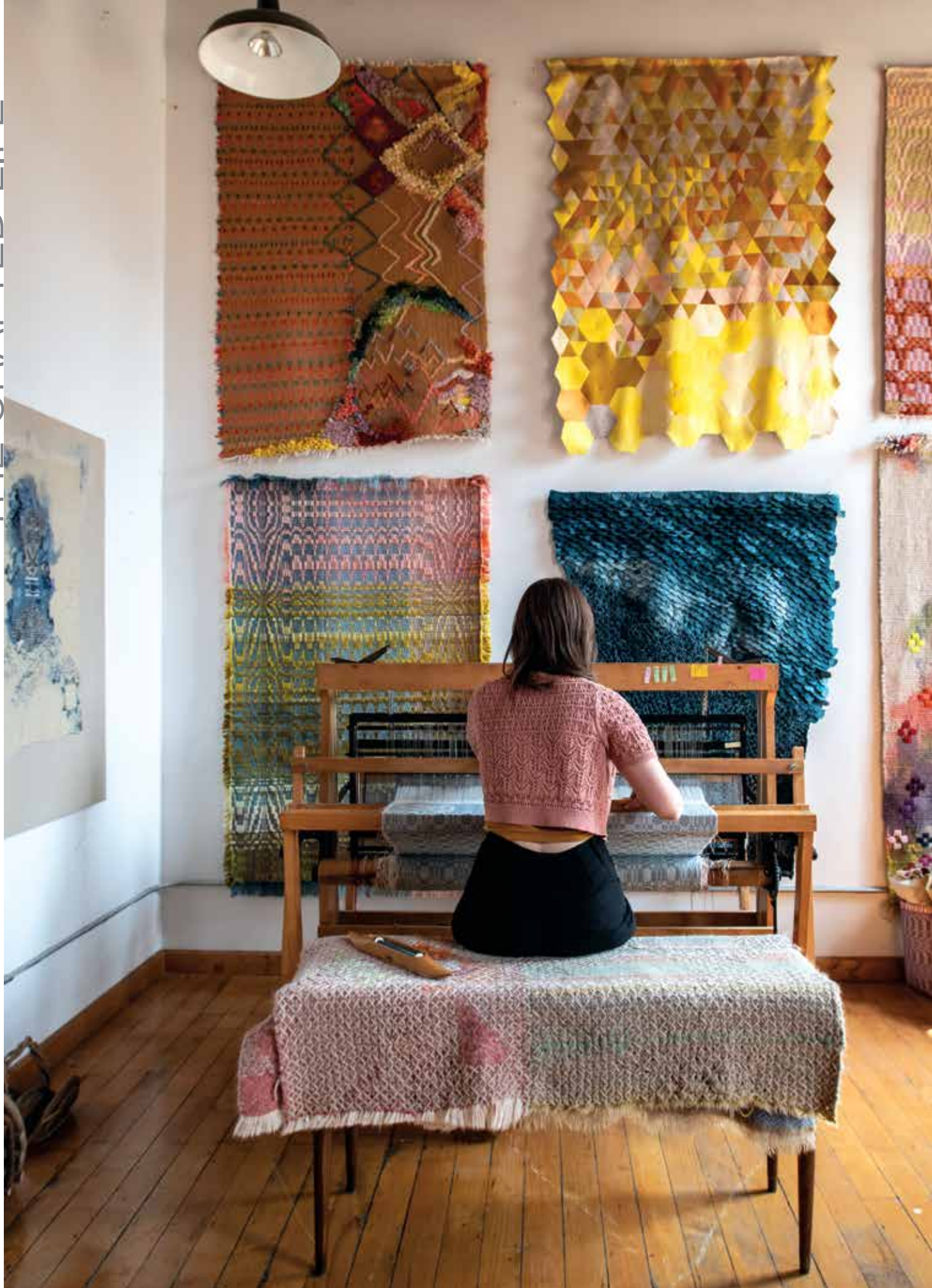


Photo © Caroline Yang.

Immersed in Beauty

A Minneapolis-based textile and visual artist describes finding inspiration and introspection in her warehouse studio during winter.

BY AMBER M. JENSEN

When I wake up in my Minneapolis home in winter, the first thing I do is peel back the bedside curtain to assess the day. Sometimes there's a fresh blanket of white snow covering the ground and powdering the trees. If it's very cold out, I sip my cup of hot black coffee and consider how many woolen layers I'll need to pile on for my commute to my studio.

Having moved back to the North two years ago, after over a decade living in the rural Appalachian Mountains, I'm still getting used to the climate. I'd forgotten that just a little sun can make the day a whole lot brighter, with light reflecting off a sparkly white cloak that envelops the city.

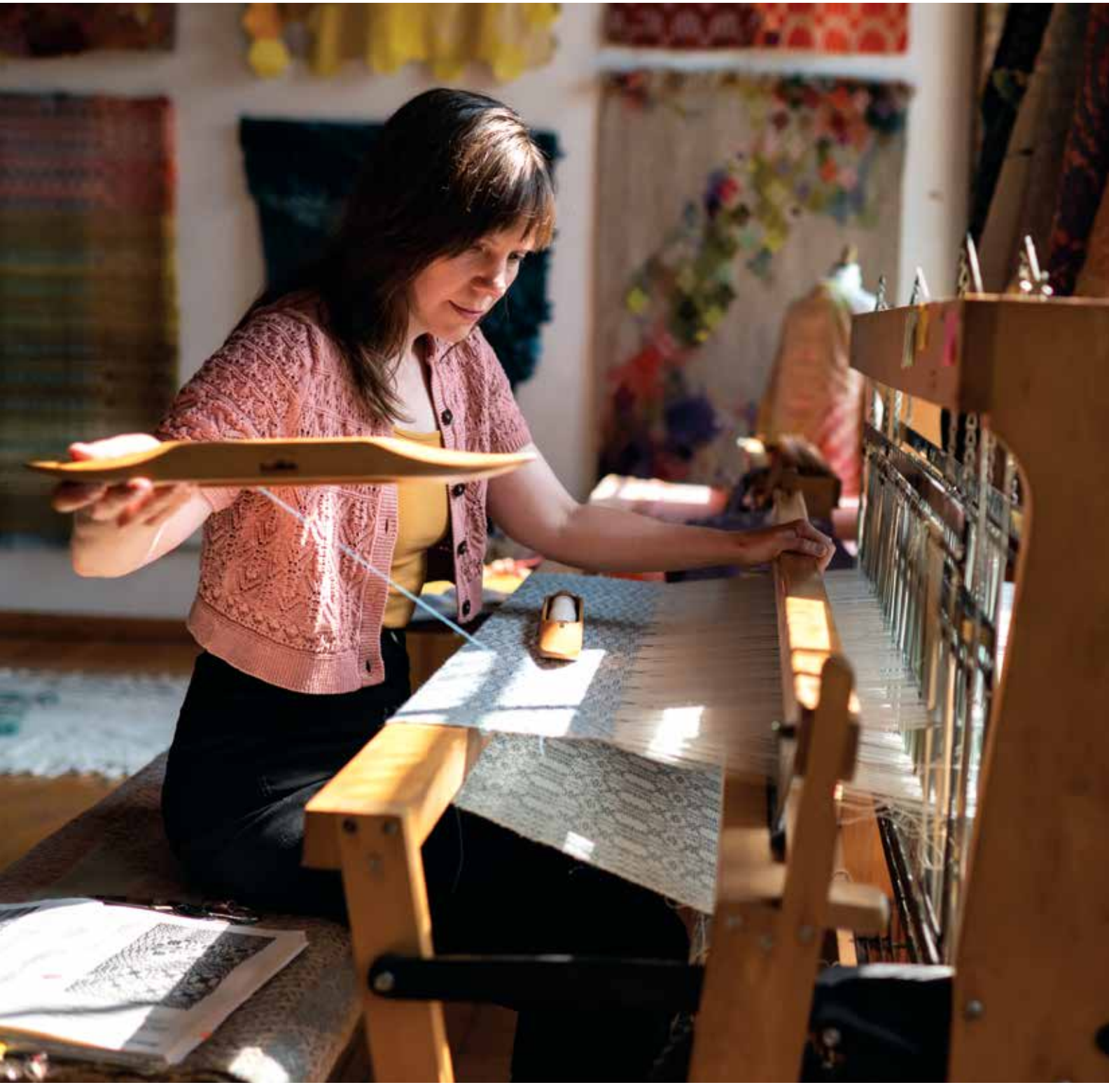
I put on my mittens, hat, scarf, and big red puffy coat zipped all the way up. Then I slide over the icy streets of my South Minneapolis neighborhood and hop on the light-rail train that deposits me at my studio on the edge of downtown. It's on the third floor of a towering limestone building—an appliance warehouse turned cracker factory turned art studios—which is one of the last art spaces in this once-thriving art neighborhood.

My studio is where I find my inspiration: paint on paper, threads on a loom. The feeling there seems to dictate my day, my mood wandering with the weather.

If the sun is pouring in, warming up the room, I tend to get energized, working across mediums—weaving at the loom or painting on the floor—basking in the space as the light bounces off the exposed beams in the ceiling, the bright white walls, and the worn patchwork wooden floors.

If it's a cold, dark morning, I tend to be more inward. I make a warm herbal tea and work on something more technical, like warping a loom or prepping paper or gessoing a canvas for a new work. I like to think of the darkness as a time to prepare for the light again. I think of an interview with the poet Ruth Stone, where she described her inspiration as a thunderous train of air that runs through her. When the inspiration comes, I need to be ready for it.

Amber M. Jensen at her loom weaving cloth for a series of new artworks. To her right are baskets of cloth and a wearable woven coat. On the wall are her woven, quilted, and embroidered pieces.



ABOVE: At her loom Jensen weaves fine blue and ivory woolen threads into a classic Whig rose pattern. OPPOSITE FROM TOP LEFT: Jensen pins a small painted sketch of an imaginary landscape to her inspiration wall. Here, the artist weaves together two of her drawings on paper. A sampling of Jensen's one-of-a-kind handwoven and embroidered clothing. On the floor is her personal archive of notes, sketchbooks, and other reference books.

My space energizes me, jolts me out of my cycling inner dialogue and into the action of creation. I allow myself to improvise. If something feels interesting—like a cross-stitch embroidery I made of two birds held together by a heart, where the ivory stitches turned light blue from the darkly dyed indigo ground cloth I'd embedded them into—I tack it to the wall, stand back, and squint. As I create work, I drape my art across my dress form or lay it on the floor. My studio is filled with these seemingly disparate handmade things that live next to each other, and my mission is to find connections between them. Art happens in those in-between spaces. When that occurs, it feels like magic. And if I'm patient, my work becomes timeless.

Sometimes I can live with something in my space for a whole year before it finds its way into my art—often even longer. I think this patience is really my secret ingredient when it comes to making art. I need to allow time and space for these bits to find their own way, to mystically somehow absorb more of me and my life experience, before taking their creative places. I think good art needs that. My work gains meaning after I patch together all these pieces that represent how I felt on particular days. It's a memorial to my life as it is lived in moments.

When visitors enter my studio, I want to transport them to the fantastical world I have created in my mind. It's a direct sensory interpretation of the world around me. I'm drawn to paper and fiber because of their delicacy. Paper and cloth are inherently fragile. They represent vulnerability and tenderness. That's how I approach my work too.

The brick and white-painted walls of my studio are covered up to the 20-foot-high rafters in colorful handwoven cloth and large-scale drawings on paper. My goal is that a person's whole peripheral vision is soaked in texture and color. The floor is littered with stacks of books, including even children's books such as *The Moomins and the Great Flood* by the Finnish author Tove Jansson, which seems to mirror some of the struggles our world is facing today. I keep baskets of woven remnants close at hand, just waiting to find their forever home when I

Photos © Caroline Yang.

embed them in a new piece of artwork. The shelves are stacked with cones of yarn in gradients of hues from natural earth tones to fluorescent colors like neon pink. I keep stacks of wool-felted yardage and surplus cloth piled in baskets so high they teeter on the brink of collapse. It's imperative to my improvisational process to have my materials and inspirations out in plain sight so that I can experiment from the moment I walk into my studio.

It's also very important to my process that there be a lot of open space around me, my equipment, and my materials. With so much to look at, my eye needs a lot of breathing room to absorb all of it. Spaced around the studio are several hand-me-down looms, warped up with various in-process weaving threads, and two large Scandinavian-design maple worktables, handmade by my father. The well-loved tables are now full of scratch marks, with worn indentations on the corners from the many spools of yarn wound around the winding device I clamp to them. I love the marks on the tables, as they remind me of all my projects and the countless times I've poured my heart out into the work over the years.

In the back by the boxes of storage are all of my dye pots, tiny jars of pigment, and jugs of vinegar that I use to paint my wool. I hand-paint my threads before adding them to the loom.

This is a place where I'm safeguarded from sabotage. Everything I create comes from a place of complete freedom.

ABOVE: Jensen unfurls woven wool yardage from her loom. OPPOSITE LEFT: A basket full of weaving tools, embroideries, quilt squares, and handwoven cloth waits to be incorporated into future textile artworks. OPPOSITE RIGHT: Jensen leans on her well-loved Macomber loom with one of her woven artworks in the background.

Or if I feel the cloth is in need of a more dynamic color composition, I spontaneously drip dye over the weaving after it's been unfurled from the loom, saturating it with wet pools of color.

Weaving is a process tied to a grid. The patterns embedded in that grid often remind us of something very old and nostalgic. Something from a simpler time before mass production, made by hands rather than machines, like that well-loved blanket found in a grandmother's attic. The grid gives a structure and form to the light and to the color that comes with it. My art can then carry that energy to other spaces across the world.

Each day I enter my studio, full of perfect, peaceful light pouring in through the old windows. This is a place where I'm safeguarded from sabotage. Everything I create comes from a place of complete freedom. My mantra is *Nothing is a mistake; only opportunity lives here.* This freedom allows me to be myself and bring things out from their hiding place into a physical form. This process informs the way I see and hear the world, and reinforces my ultimate purpose.

My life's work is to create beauty. I love beauty's quiet power. I am an activist for beauty. My protest is a prayer for a world set aflame by beauty. The writer bell hooks saw beauty as a virtue not reserved for art, but rather abundant in the everyday and the natural world. Hooks celebrated "the insistence that elegance and ecstasy are to be found in daily life, in our habits of being, in the ways we regard one another and the world around us."

Beauty pulls at our heartstrings. It helps us sift through the clutter, grab hold of the darkness and destroy it like nothing else can. And when darkness is lifted, joy can spread. It multiplies. It expands. It gets into the shadowy corners and burns them clean.

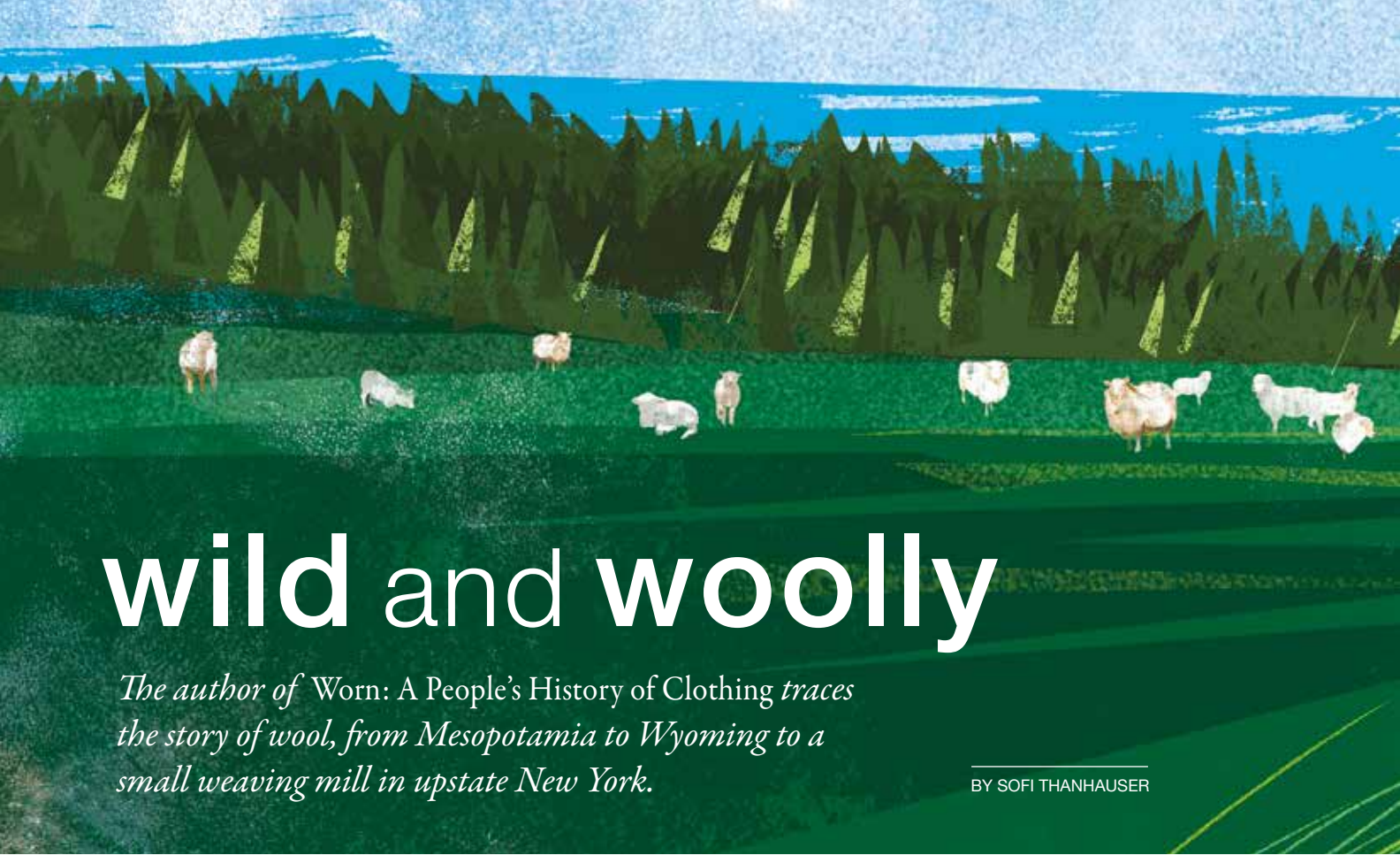
I spend a lot of my time listening and watching. I aim to quietly bring light and beauty to this loud world. My devotion is to the humble piece of handwoven cloth. It's my offering.

◆

ambermjensen.com | @amberm.jensen

Amber M. Jensen is a painter, textile artist, and teacher working out of her downtown Minneapolis studio. Her work is an invitation for viewers to join her in a fantastical world of imagination that's grounded in the often elusive sense of place, home, and shelter.

Photos © Caroline Yang.



wild and woolly

The author of Worn: A People's History of Clothing *traces the story of wool, from Mesopotamia to Wyoming to a small weaving mill in upstate New York.*

BY SOFI THANHAUSER

Zawi Chemi Shanidar, in northeastern Iraq, is home to the earliest known site for the domestication of sheep. Evidence at the proto-Neolithic site shows that sheep were domesticated at the beginning of the ninth millennium BC, although domestication may have occurred earlier among nomads, who then brought their knowledge of shepherding to the people at the settlement. In the first phase of the domestication of sheep, people moved from hunting animals in the wild to keeping them in pens for slaughter later on. A second phase in the domestication arrived at around 4,000 BC, when people in Mesopotamia realized they could extract materials from their animals other than meat and hides. Kept alive, they could provide secondary products: milk, wool, and strength to pull the plow. As people discovered they could get a steady supply of cloth from live sheep, the wool on these sheep's backs changed in character. Wild sheep, and the earliest domesticated sheep, were hairy, but by selective breeding practices early domesticators created breeds that were woolly.

Wool in Wyoming

The process of breeding sheep to improve their wool has been with us ever since. It entered a new phase in the 20th century United States, when sheep breeders were tasked with meeting the needs of an industrialized society that mechanically processed its wool into thread and fabric. The University of Wyoming in Laramie—the only university in the country to offer a PhD in wool—was for a time the epicenter of this effort. The university's Wool Department was created in 1907—when the state of Wyoming was just 17 years old and home to more than six million sheep and fewer than 150,000 people, a ratio of about 41 to 1—with the goal of improving the quality of western fleeces.

In the late 1930s, the USDA tasked the UW Wool Department with using its Wool Laboratory—a small pilot plant for scouring wool that would grow into a semicommercial operation—to develop federal standards for wool fiber, particularly as they pertained to fiber diameter, length, and shrinkage. The ones they developed would determine labels we see on wool products, so that fabrics marked "Super 100's" were comprised of wool fibers with an average width of 18.75 microns or finer; while "Super 250's" indicated 11.25 microns or finer.

Access to plentiful grass on the open range alongside strong wool and lamb prices created Wyoming's first major sheep boom in the 1880s. Wyoming sheepherders competed for grass with cattle ranchers, and "away from the settlements the shotgun is the only law, and sheep and cattlemen are engaged in constant warfare," Wyoming banker Edward Smith testified before Congress in the early 1880s. An 1897 tariff on Australian wool started a second boom, and by 1900 Wyoming had more than five million sheep. As grass became scarcer, conflicts escalated. These conflicts were brutal. In 1905 masked riders rode into a sheep camp in Big Horn County and shot,

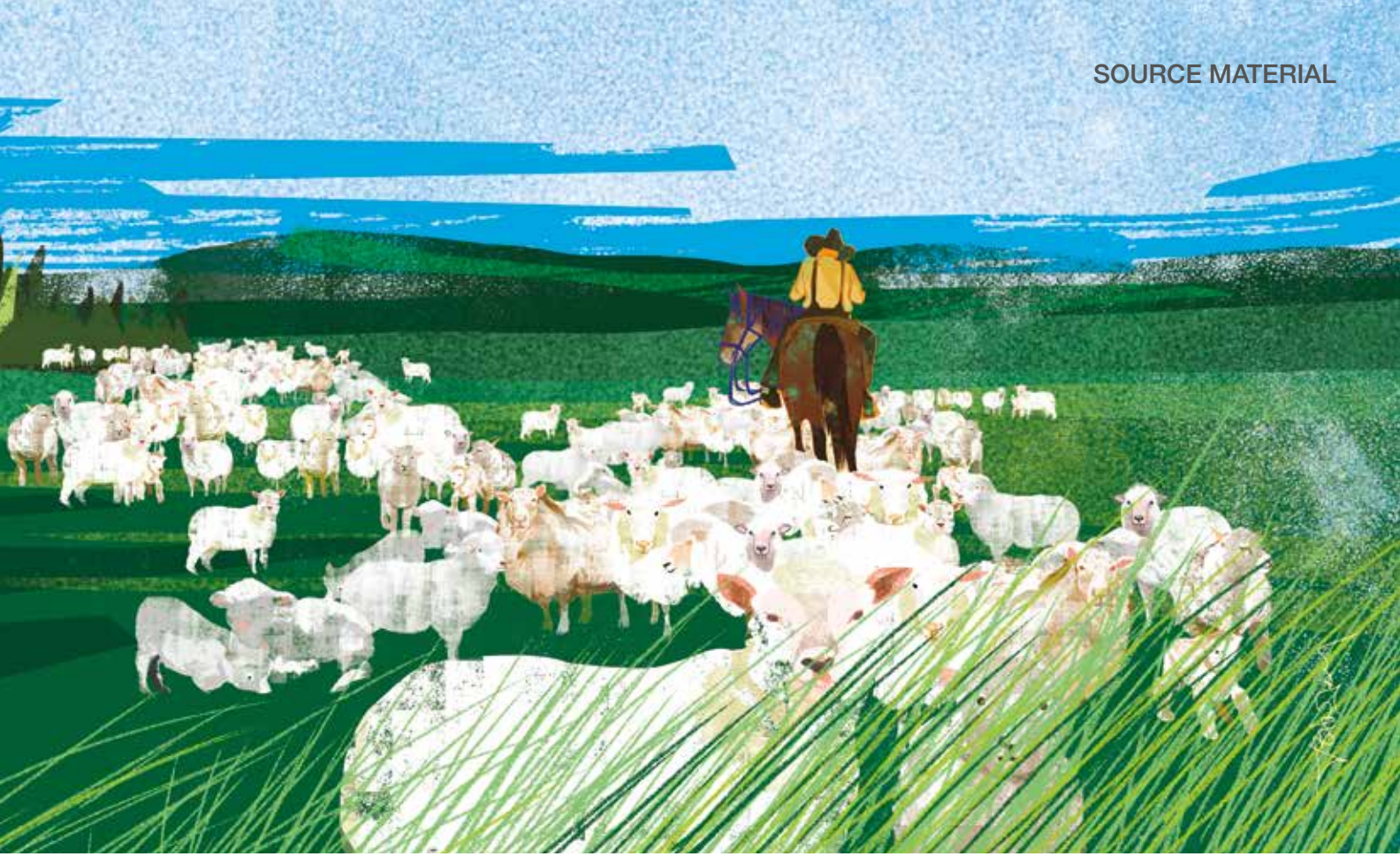


Illustration by John Jay Cabuay.

dynamited, or clubbed to death four thousand sheep, burning the herder's sheepdogs alive. Nevertheless, sheep herds kept expanding. By 1908, Wyoming led the US in wool production.

In addition to performing scouring and research services, the UW Wool Laboratory became a hub of research, a place to work out the best diet for minimal wool shrinkage, and breeding protocols to maximize wool production. Further research ventures of the Wool Department extended throughout the world, and faculty traveled internationally on United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) programs. They published research carried out in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and China. A career in wool might look like that of Robert Homer Burns, onetime head of the Wool Department, who worked from 1937 to 1939 with the USDA as a wool shrinkage researcher and marketing specialist. He traveled to China to study carpet wool in 1946, and went on to serve as consultant to the Iranian government in New York.

From its inception, the Wool Department sought to improve the quality of Wyoming wool, through careful testing and breeding recommendations. By mid-century, the project had succeeded: it increased both the quality and quantity of Wyoming wool. Wyoming sheep alone produced almost 17.5 million pounds of wool in 1950.

Like many American projects, the work of the Wool Department and the industry it supported were vastly productive, and destined to last only a few decades. By the mid-1970s, trade liberalization and competition from cutting-edge acrylic fibers caused the price of wool to tank. Some years, the price of wool was so low that sacks of wool were left to rot in warehouses and barns. Wyoming's sheep producers had to adapt, and they started breeding their sheep to optimize the meat, letting wool quality slip. And all the work done by the Wool Department to increase the quality of American wool was rapidly undone.

In February 1977, in the midst of an energy crisis precipitated by a global shortage of petroleum, Jimmy Carter famously appeared in a television fireside chat wearing an oatmeal-colored wool cardigan to dramatize the fact that he had turned down the heat in the White House in an effort to conserve energy, imploring Americans to likewise turn down their thermostats. But the energy crisis was not resolved, as Carter quaintly proposed, by Americans who turned down their thermostats and bundled up in wool cardigans. Rather, it was resolved by finding bigger stores of hydrocarbons, commonly known as coal, in the American West, a rich supply to be exploited in new and novel ways.

World War II brought the last big boom for Wyoming's sheep industry, and its numbers declined steadily. In 1984, Wyoming's sheep population fell below one million. In 2011 the USDA counted just 275,000.

Small Production in Upstate New York

Sheepherding can be, and often is, carried out on an industrial scale. However, sheep and wool are also eminently compatible with small-scale production. And they have become central to a widespread turn toward local fiber production in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Rather than relying on high doses of coal and petroleum to fire large machinery and transport materials across continents, there is an increasing interest among environmentalists and people with a longing for handcraft, in the US and elsewhere, in working with materials that can be found close at hand. Often, for the fabrication of garments, that has meant working with wool.

When American wool fell behind in quality in the 1970s, scouring facilities across the US disappeared, making it more difficult to process wool locally. When they returned, they would be geared toward cleaning much smaller quantities of wool. Small-scale fiber production, ranging from hobby farms to full-time businesses, has grown up alongside the burgeoning fiber craft movement. This has stimulated the rebuilding of infrastructure on a new, modified scale, resulting in the creative reuse of earlier machines and processes. Smaller farms engendered smaller mills—whether engaged in scouring, carding, spinning, weaving, or a combination.

One such small mill is Thistle Hill Weavers in Cherry Valley, New York. Its owner, Rabbit Goody, warps all of the vintage cast-iron industrial looms herself, enabling her to use them to manufacture a great variety of woven products on an artisanal scale. Thistle Hill can make every weave imaginable in wool, cotton, or whatever the job demands. When I visited Thistle Hill a few years ago, they had just finished manufacturing a plaid that faithfully reproduced an early-20th-century Cone Mills flannel for Evan Morrison of Greensboro, North Carolina, who was looking to reconstruct historic shirts with perfect fidelity to the original textile. The red, black, and white plaid shirting from Evan's project was still on the loom. Goody said she hadn't actually made a profit from the job: she just did it because she believed in it. I asked her whether Evan knew that. She said she didn't think so. She had short hair in front and a long red auburn braid, Keen sandals, wool socks, army green cargo shorts, and a merlot-colored T-shirt with a Coelophysis on it.

"Weaving," Goody said, taking a spoonful of honey, "is math, it's not creative. I am a weaver *by trade*. I believe in trades. I'm very good at it, but it's a trade." Like most of those deeply involved in mechanical weaving and the resurrection of American textile equipment, Goody said, "I don't really have an attachment to cloth, I have an attachment to *machinery*."

Goody specializes in weaving reproductions. She turned on her computer to show me something she was producing for the Cleveland Museum of Art, a new fabric for a 19th-century Shah's tent. By using images of ancient scraps of tent fabric, Goody could identify the weave structure, which she would then warp onto one of her late-19th- and early-20th-century industrial shuttle looms.

With her tinkerer's knack, she makes her machines work like short-order cooks. "I make them do things they were never intended to do." All of her looms are Crompton and Knowles, one of the most celebrated makers in the US. Her shuttle looms are far slower than the Swiss-designed shuttleless looms and other air jet looms used in modern manufacture, but they produce fabric with a selvedge, which allows her to do work that most factories can't.

Goody is like many people who got into handweaving in the 1970s, when weaving kits could be purchased from the *Whole Earth Catalog* alongside agricultural equipment for back-to-the-land projects. In some ways, she was a hippie. Goody became a Quaker and got involved in nonviolence and the antiwar movement. During the protests against the Vietnam War, she said, "I marched with the communists because they sang better songs." When her friends started advocating for the political use of violence, she went back to the land. "I felt like I had to do something legitimate. The only thing I could do was farming." She was given land by a woman who wanted to populate Cherry Valley with like-minded young people, and Goody has been there since.

Unlike many people from the crafting scene of the 1970s, Goody stuck with weaving. Handweaving only whetted her appetite for mechanical weaving. She began buying up machinery from mills that were going out of business or scrapping old looms that were obsolete by modern standards. I asked whether it was disappointing to watch the enthusiasm for weaving fade out. No, she said, weaving revivals have always been cyclical: there have been revivals both before and since the 1970s.

In America, the first revival in the interest for weaving happened in the 1870s in connection with the broader Colonial Revival movement, at which time handweaving was already an anomaly. The next big revival came in the 1920s, this one attached to an interest in Appalachia. In programs initiated by settlement schools, Appalachian women sold coverlets, baby blankets, and tea towels to support their families. After the 1976 Bicentennial, there was another revival. This one emphasized the Scandinavian tradition, Goody told me, which is a tradition that continues to this day.

Ironically, Goody said, although newer handweavers based their practice on the Scandinavian weaving tradition because of its unbroken line, the handweaving traditions of New England had also never really vanished: they had been passed on to mechanical looms. If you wanted to be in direct contact with an ancient weaving tradition, she said, you had to get to know the cast-iron Crompton and Knowles.

In Goody's mind, weaving evolves according to the tools at hand: it is a plastic art that meets the various exigencies of the

In this illustration of Rabbit Goody at work in her weaving mill, the background patterns are based on textiles she made.

time. Innovation, she believes, is essential human behavior. "Human beings in every culture come up with the solution to the problems of food, shelter, and clothing." This includes discovering weaving. Goody is prone to looking toward the big, panoramic picture, and to her, "The breadth of textile knowledge that exists in the world is unfathomable."

Growing up in Tenafly, New Jersey, Goody spent summers at a socialist Jewish camp called Camp Northwood in Remsen, New York. Her father was a famous electrical engineer. She considered herself privileged enough to have had an inheritance from him, and she never took a paycheck from Thistle Hill Weavers. At the time of my visit, she had seven employees in the shop and three on the farm, which provided boarding and training for dressage horses. (Goody does not raise sheep or card or spin her own yarn, rather relying on other producers to perform those tasks.)

"I work hard, but this is a privilege. I am a socialist. The employees come first. I run it like a nineteenth-century trade shop." One of her employees, a middle-aged woman in plaid, came in to say goodbye for the day and shared the news of a death in the community. "I wonder whether Mary is able to stay on the farm," Goody murmured. A man in his sixties with a heavy build and a brown mustache splashed with gray came over to say goodbye as well. Goody offered him some tomatoes: "I am *overrun*."

Mammoth structural forces built the modern clothing system: a willingness to violently exploit the earth's natural resources, devalue women's labor, and build neocolonial trade regimes on old colonial foundations. These Goliaths are not only being stared down by scholars, activists, and politicians. They are also directly confronted by individual people insisting on simply doing something they really enjoy. This is the army of the small.

"I get more thrill out of pulling that handle," Goody said, "and having eight, ten yards come off the loom. That is *pure*, producing something real."

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thistlehillweavers.com
@thistlehillweavers

This article is a modified excerpt from Sofi Thanhauser's *Worn: A People's History of Clothing*, published in 2022 by Pantheon. Thanhauser is a writer, artist, and musician living in Brooklyn. A Fulbright Fellowship recipient, she teaches in the writing department at Pratt Institute. Her work has appeared in the *Guardian*, *Vox*, and the *Observer* magazine, among other publications.

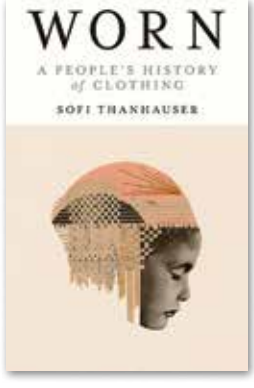


Illustration by John Jay Cabuay.

Like Candy

Ian Alistair Cochran discusses how resin allows him to make furniture and objects that play with light.

BY CLAIRE VOON

As an undergraduate focused on sculpture at Kansas City Art Institute in Missouri, Ian Alistair Cochran learned to work with a vast array of materials: wood, metal, glass, clay. But it was resin that eventually kept a hold on his imagination, with its malleability and clarity of form that allows for endless exploration of color and light. Now, with a studio in Chicago, Cochran is known for transforming resin into startlingly slick, see-through pieces of furniture and other objects that evoke gemstones and lollipops, with their bright bursts of color and meticulously molded forms.

"There's something always alluring about transparent objects—the way that humans interact with them just feels different," Cochran says. "I want to highlight the ways resin can bend light and alter the surroundings, kind of be there and not there."

In 2018, while working at the studio for designer Fernando Mastrangelo, Cochran produced his first cast-polyurethane piece, a coffee table constructed of five solid resin slabs—dyed to a glossy violet sheen—and a piece of cut colorless acrylic. As in traditional Japanese wood joinery, each slab notches into another without hardware so that the near-ovular acrylic tabletop rests on, and shows off, gracefully angled supports. This interlocking technique, which causes the resin to reflect against itself and creates rippling layers of color and shadow, has become Cochran's signature. Over the past five years, he has produced shelves, side tables, chairs, mirrors, and more that seem effortless in their clean, streamlined appearance.

"Every joint is sort of part of the visual," Cochran says. "The overlapping of shapes can compound the colors to give you different shades; they're going to pull color from the full depth of the piece to the edge, and then that's going to be a different color than the surface that you're looking through."

Fluid and sensitive to changes in temperature, resin—a kind of plastic—is notoriously tricky to work with. It's prone to trapping bubbles as it's getting poured, and it shrinks as it cures. Cochran learned how to manage these quirks firsthand while working at Atta Inc., a custom-fabrication company based in New York, after graduating in 2013. He'd had

some experience with resin while in school, but at Atta, he learned how to manipulate it to suit interior designers' needs, whether that meant fitting it with other materials or casting it to yield unique visual effects. In 2017 he joined Mastrangelo's studio as a fabricator and received an opportunity to produce a piece for the designer's showroom. That six-piece coffee table debuted in *In Good Company*, an exhibition of emerging artists that Mastrangelo curated, where it cast subtle shades of purple on the concrete floor.

Titled *Plump* for its pleasantly rounded forms, the table marked the start of Cochran's series of that same name. Each piece is playful, available in bold colors such as topaz yellow or mantis green, yet refined and polished to deliver a purity of form. The *Plump Chair* consists of a semicircular seat intersecting a C-shaped slab that serves as both legs and a backing; the *Plump Console* combines three narrow resin pieces into a minimalist, arched shelving unit.

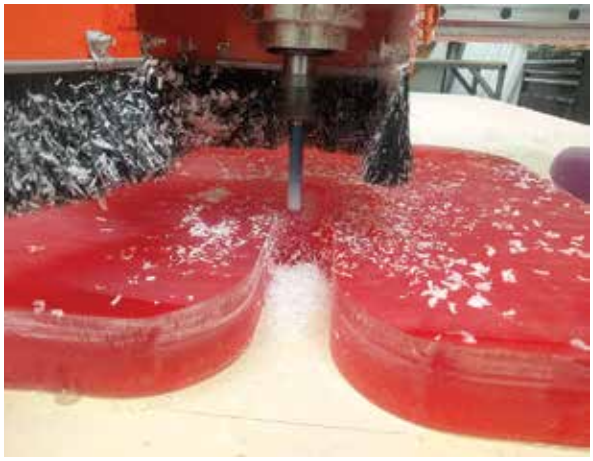
Cochran likens the production process to woodworking, as it requires more refining after a relatively simple casting process. "You're casting into a trough-like mold, and when the pieces are solidified, you end up with a raw material that needs machining, to be planed on both sides to a certain thickness,"

"I want to highlight the ways resin can bend light and alter the surroundings, kind of be there and not there."

—Ian Alistair Cochran

OPPOSITE: Ian Alistair Cochran holds a piece from his *Dew Drops* series. THIS PAGE TOP: *Dew Drop Small Table*, polyurethane, 20 x 18 x 18 in. BELOW: *Plump Coffee Table*, polyurethane, 16 x 32 x 54 in.

Photos by Ian Alistair Cochran. OPPOSITE: Photo courtesy of the artist.



TOP: These *Plump* series molds are filled with resin which, once hard, will be leveled using a custom-designed router sled. MIDDLE: A *Plump Side Table* part is carved using a CNC router. BELOW: Various cast resin samples.

he says. "If there's a bubble on the surface, that's probably going to get removed."

Another series, titled *Dew Drops*, is a deeper exploration of light and shape. Comprising hollow, domed objects with flattened tops, the glossy structures, also made of polyurethane resin, serve as accent tables or stools. Look closely and you'll see that each contains an inner dome with a rounded top. As these surfaces diverge from each other, they bend light to mesmerizing effect. "It's my first exploration of light moving through the piece," Cochran says. "This combination of the domed inside and outside with this flattened area gives [the work] these edges and curves that sort of bounce and reflect inside of the piece, in a way that's a little bit strange to look at."

Popular as a material for DIY art projects, resin has recently developed a bad rap as a medium for cheap, kitschy decor: epoxy-resin tables have become fodder for memes, and TikToks of trendy resin pours have been criticized for their wastefulness. Cochran is among a generation of artists who are taking resin to new heights to demonstrate the material's versatility and elegance.

In Paris, the South Korean designer Wonmin Park has produced a line of soft-toned tables and chairs made of two or three slabs, appropriately titled *Haze*; the airy, dreamy objects seem to radiate from within. Christine Espinal and Alvaro Ucha Rodriguez, two designers with the buzzy New York studio Lichen, recently debuted an elegant sconce that combines Espinal's experiments with resin and Rodriguez's lighting skills. When turned on, it emits a beautifully diffused, light-green beam. Smaller yet are the handmade jewelry pieces by Matthew Smith in Asheville, North Carolina—modernist, geometric creations that pair colored, cast resin with sterling silver or wood.

The challenge that remains, however, is one of sustainability: traditional petroleum-based resins are not

Cochran's *Echo III Coffee Table*, solid cast polyester, 20 x 40 x 40 in. BELOW: This small resin table was featured in a collaboration between *Elle Decor* and the design firm Fox-Nahem.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Photo by Kelly Marshall. ALL OTHER IMAGES: Photos by Ian Alistair Cochran.

biodegradable, and they can also emit harmful vapors prior to being cured. Cochran continues to use traditional resin because he wants to ensure that his work will last. Other artists are trying new approaches to the material. Smith has been experimenting with a nontoxic casting resin made from soybeans and peanuts; in the Hudson Valley, designer Kim Markel uses recycled resin to produce gauzy, translucent tables and chairs that seem plucked from a fairy tale.

Among the ideas Cochran is tinkering with now are creating a series of resin light fixtures and making objects through cold-casting, which involves mixing resin with a metal powder. Those projects will involve a lot of learning and problem-solving—which Cochran accepts as part of the nature of the work. "Really, resin can be finicky or resistant to certain things you want to do with it," he says. "I guess there's a little bit of being humble to the idea that you might not understand every element of what's going on."

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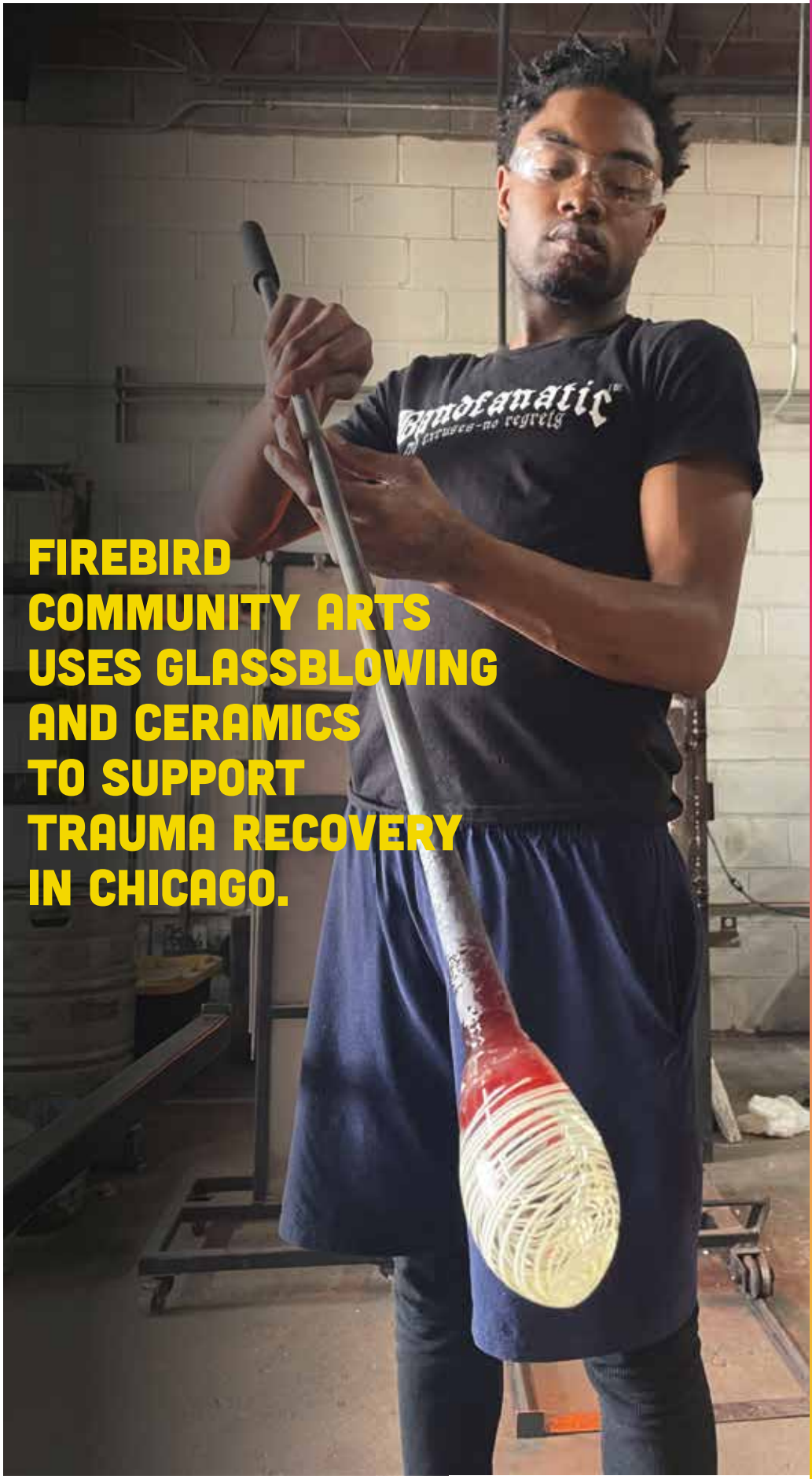
Writer and critic Claire Voon, who lives in Brooklyn, is a frequent contributor to *American Craft*.



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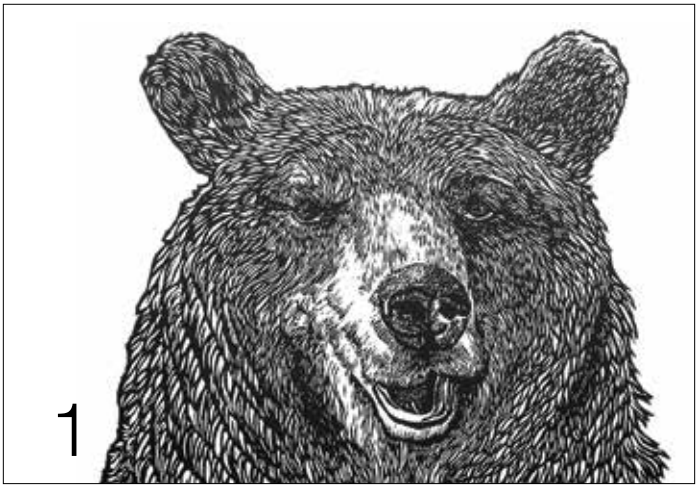

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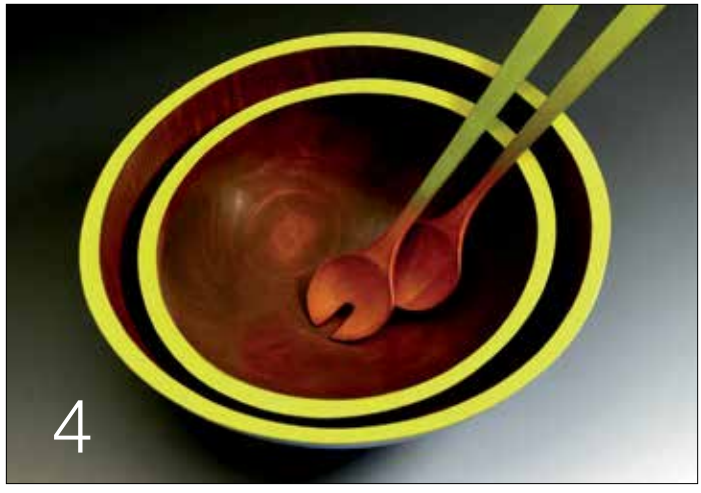

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At the end of July, the American Craft Council Board of Trustees voted unanimously to adopt a strategic framework that will guide our work for the next five years. The framework, which you can view at craftcouncil.org/Strategic-Framework, centers on this mission:

The American Craft Council fosters livelihoods and ways of living grounded in the artful work of the human hand, creating a more joyful, humane, and regenerative world.

In the months since we first shared this mission statement, the phrase that has sparked the most thoughtful conversations is "the artful work of the human hand." This does not surprise me. We live in a time when artists of all kinds incorporate digital technologies, from 3D printing to artificial intelligence, or AI, in their practice. This includes craft artists and makers whom ACC has supported and will continue to support through our educational programs, publishing and storytelling work, and in-person events.

To "foster livelihoods and ways of living grounded in the artful work of the human hand" is to value, celebrate, and advocate for handcrafting traditions and practices as essential to our collective well-being and resiliency. Research from a variety of academic fields tells us that the process of making things by hand has profoundly beneficial impacts for individuals and communities, and for our society. ACC's restated mission and core strategies recognize that the benefits humans have derived from handcrafting for millennia become more relevant and timely as digital technology becomes more powerful and pervasive.

Whether you are reading this message as an ACC participating artist, member, donor, moral supporter, or all of the above, thank you for joining us in recognizing, celebrating, and advocating for the handcrafted and its makers.

ANDREA SPECHT / American Craft Council Executive Director

American **Craft** Council

Photo by Devon Cox.

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ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS OF THE

2023 Lois Moran Award for Craft Writing

From the Jurors: Sara Clugage, Sarah Darro, and Andres Payan Estrada

For the 2023 Lois Moran Award for Craft Writing, we chose three essays that revise craft histories through fresh perspectives and reflect the breadth and strength of craft writing now. With great literary variety, the essays work together like matched clock gears, moving the field forward in handcrafted time.

Kerr Houston

"Close Looking: Edward Duffield's BMA Clock, in Context"
BMore Art

"Close Looking" peers at a somewhat unlikely object, an 18th-century clock, and refracts its timekeeping through a kaleidoscope of temporalities. Kerr Houston positions the clock at the start line of the emerging global capitalist economy, pulling contrasting time frames from its torch-shaped finials, the slow penmanship of Duffield's carved signature, and this clock's proximity to public clocks that emerged in Philadelphia in the same period. Taking the clock down to its cogs and out into the world, Houston deftly shifts time registers between a flickering flame, the US's long nostalgia for "great civilizations," and the capitalist form of waged labor-time.

Marie Lo

"The Philippine Craftsman: Empire, Education, and the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition"
The Journal of Modern Craft

In "The Philippine Craftsman," Marie Lo reads the materials associated with the Bureau of Education's "live exhibition" of Filipino craftspeople and their accompanying magazine, *The Philippine Craftsman*. Lo's incisive critique shows how these materials belie the Bureau's stated goal to form liberally educated citizens in the Philippines and instead further inscribe imperialist values, reflecting Philippine industrial education's "stratified racial system of labor" back to a US audience. This study excavates the idealized image of the manual craftsperson in colonized territories and provides a powerful corrective to our field's tendency to valorize all craft education as a process of liberation.

Samantha De Tillio

"Live Glass at the Turn of the Millennium: The Performance Troupe"
Glass Quarterly

"Live Glass at the Turn of the Millennium" writes the spectacular live glass performances of the late 20th and early 21st centuries into the canon of performance art. This important contribution to glass history combines original interviews and archival research to trace the relationships between glass artists and the institutions that have grown to support their work. Samantha De Tillio charts developing influences in glass and without to highlight glass's medium specificity in a time of dissolving barriers between artistic disciplines. While closely attending to these artists' conceptual framing and technical accomplishments, De Tillio never loses sight of the drama and entertainment of these performances, emphasizing that artists are often drawn to this format for collaboration with friends and the sheer fun of slinging hot glass around.

Each winner has been awarded $1,000 for their previously published work that moves the craft conversation forward.

Please visit **craftcouncil.org/LoisMoranAward** for more information about these writers, links to the articles, and additional thoughts from the jurors.

American **Craft** Council

Give the gift of a craft-filled life with a membership to the American Craft Council—now only $48!

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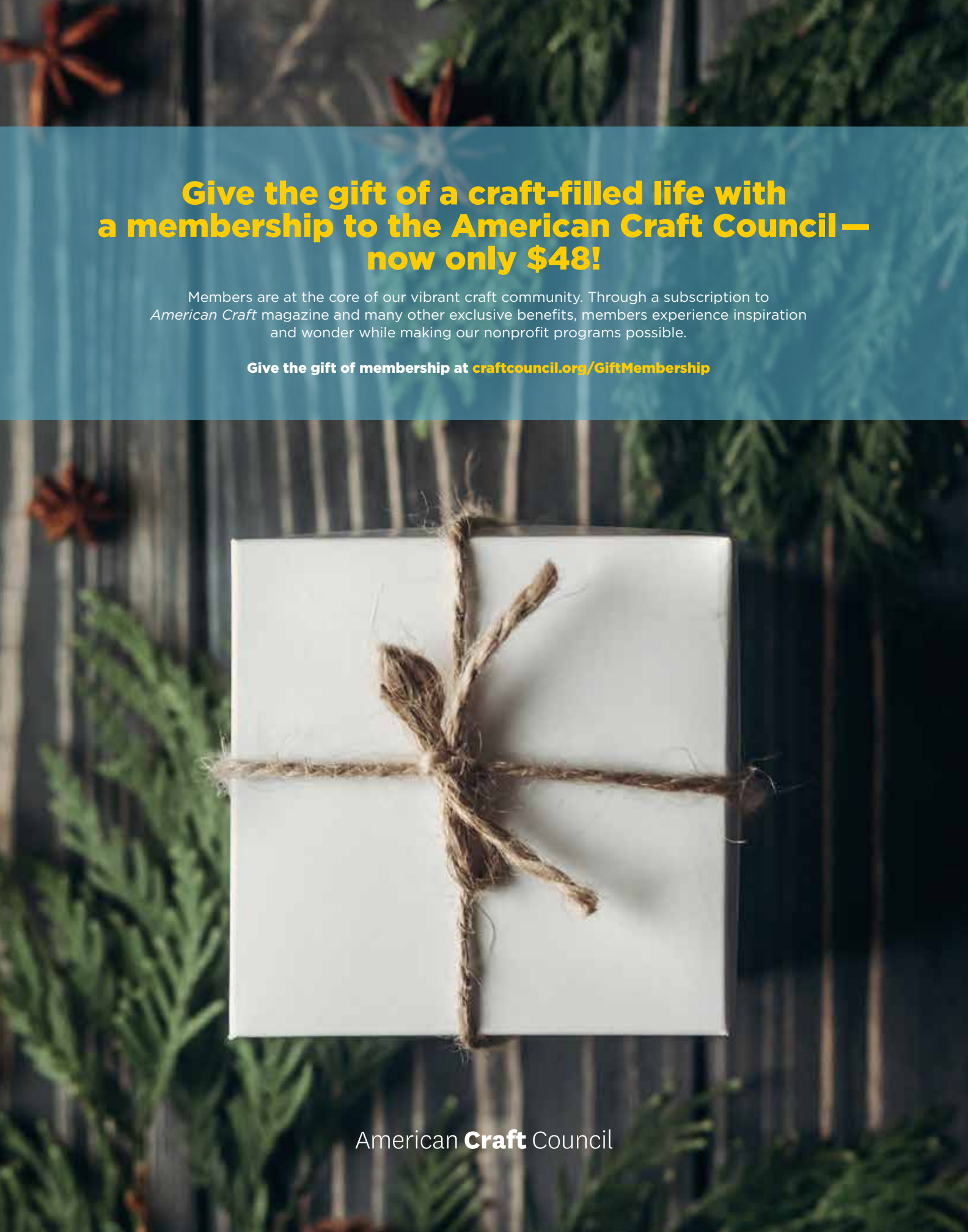

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American **Craft** Council

American **Craft** Council

The American Craft Council has valued, celebrated, and advocated for craft and its makers since 1941. ACC's work includes publishing the award-winning *American Craft* magazine and a variety of online content; providing educational opportunities, funding, and other resources for craft artists and makers; producing in-person and online events; and more. As a national nonprofit, we rely on members and donors who share our passion for fostering craft-centered livelihoods, developing an audience for craft, and building community among artists, makers, and those who value their work.

MISSION

The American Craft Council fosters livelihoods and ways of living grounded in the artful work of the human hand, creating a more joyful, humane, and regenerative world.

EQUITY STATEMENT

The American Craft Council is committed to justice, inclusiveness, and equity. Drawing on craft's rich legacy of openness and its deep roots in all cultures, the Council will work to create opportunities for creative people from all walks of life.

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The American Craft Council accepts gifts of stock, donor-advised funds, and more. Make a gift in support of our nonprofit mission at craftcouncil.org/Donate or call Andrea Specht at 612-206-3101 for more information. The above list recognizes those who donated $5,000 or more to ACC between September 1, 2022, and August 31, 2023.

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Come be part of the conversation around craft.

Our free, quarterly American Craft Forums bring our community together to explore new ways of thinking and talking about craft.

Tying into the themes of each issue of *American Craft*, these online discussions feature artists, writers, curators, community organizers, and more—diverse voices working together to move the craft field forward.

American Craft Forums allow us to gain fresh perspectives from inspiring people and their important projects.

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Deadline:
December 14, 2023, for the 2024 Spring/March-April-May issue.

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15. Extent and nature of circulation:	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)	15,438	14,914
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)		
1. Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions	10,440	10,075
2. Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions	0	0
3. Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales and Other Non-USPS paid distribution	10	41
4. Other Classed Mailed Through USPS	0	0
c. Total Paid Distribution	10,450	10,116
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4. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail	2,247	1,442
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (sum of 15d 1,2,3,4)	2,433	1,617
f. Total Distribution	12,882	11,733
g. Copies not Distributed	2,556	3,181
h. Total	15,438	14,914
i. Percent Paid	81%	86%

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c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15F) + Paid Electronic Copies	12,882	11,733
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies)	81%	86%

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership Will Be Printed in the Winter 2024 issue of this publication.

18. Hervey Evans, Publisher, 9/15/2023

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Spiky Wave Bowl, John Beaver.

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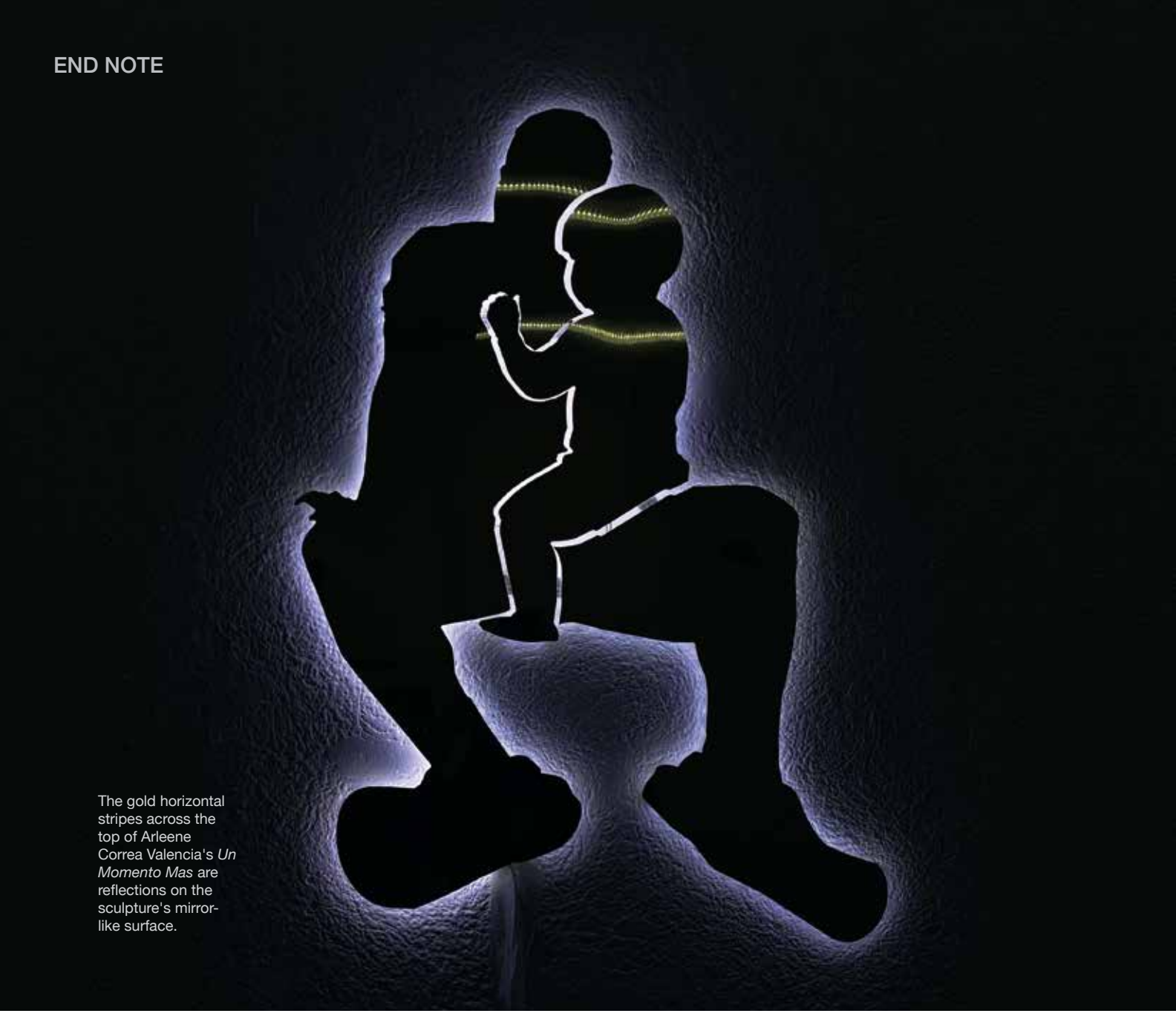

The gold horizontal stripes across the top of Arleene Correa Valencia's *Un Momento Mas* are reflections on the sculpture's mirror-like surface.

Light Unites Us. Arleene Correa Valencia's aluminum and LED light sculpture *Un Momento Mas/One More Moment* is an expression of longing. The child sits on the father's lap, but there is a line separating them, a border made hard by light. Yet it's also light that unites the two figures in a tug between love and pain.

Correa Valencia, who lives in Napa, California, came with her family from Mexico in 1997 when she was 3. She calls her body of work—which includes textile pieces, some made with US flags, and oil paintings—a "love letter" to her father, who migrated first. Most of her titles come from letters she wrote to him while they were separated.

"For my entire life, I've wondered how it's possible for a parent to leave their child behind, to sacrifice that moment of being together," Correa Valencia says. Then, in 2019, her niece was born and she realized that a person can love a child so much they'll make incredible sacrifices. "I understood how you can hold this tiny being and want to give them the world. I understood how two people can be together and apart at the same time."

Un Momento Mas, 2023, modeled on her brother and nephew and fabricated from mirror-like aluminum by a metal shop in Mexico City, urges viewers to consider their own relationships. "There is a moment in the darkness when all that matters is this connection to this other human being," Correa Valencia says. "If we can understand that love and the power of that light, then we can understand each other's humanity." —Jennifer Vogel

◆

correavalencia.com | @arleenecorreavalencia

Photo courtesy of the artist.

CONTEMPORARY CRAFT

Rainlight installation
by Will Dexter/Taylor Backes.
Blown glass.
19 x 6 x 6 ft.
For the exhibition
Brilliance: Covetable Gifts of the Season
at Gravers Lane Gallery.

Answer Robot
by Michael Klapthor.
Wheel-thrown and altered stoneware.
18.5 x 16 x 8.5 in.
For the group show *Sci-Fi*
at Signature
February 2.

Mini Quad Lamp
by George Biersdorf
at The Grand Hand Gallery.
Gum shade, cherry base.
18.5 x 10 in. diameter

Traveling Storyteller
by Robin & John Gumaelius
at White Bird Gallery.
Ceramic, wood, string, feathers.
18.5 x 14 x 8 in.

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