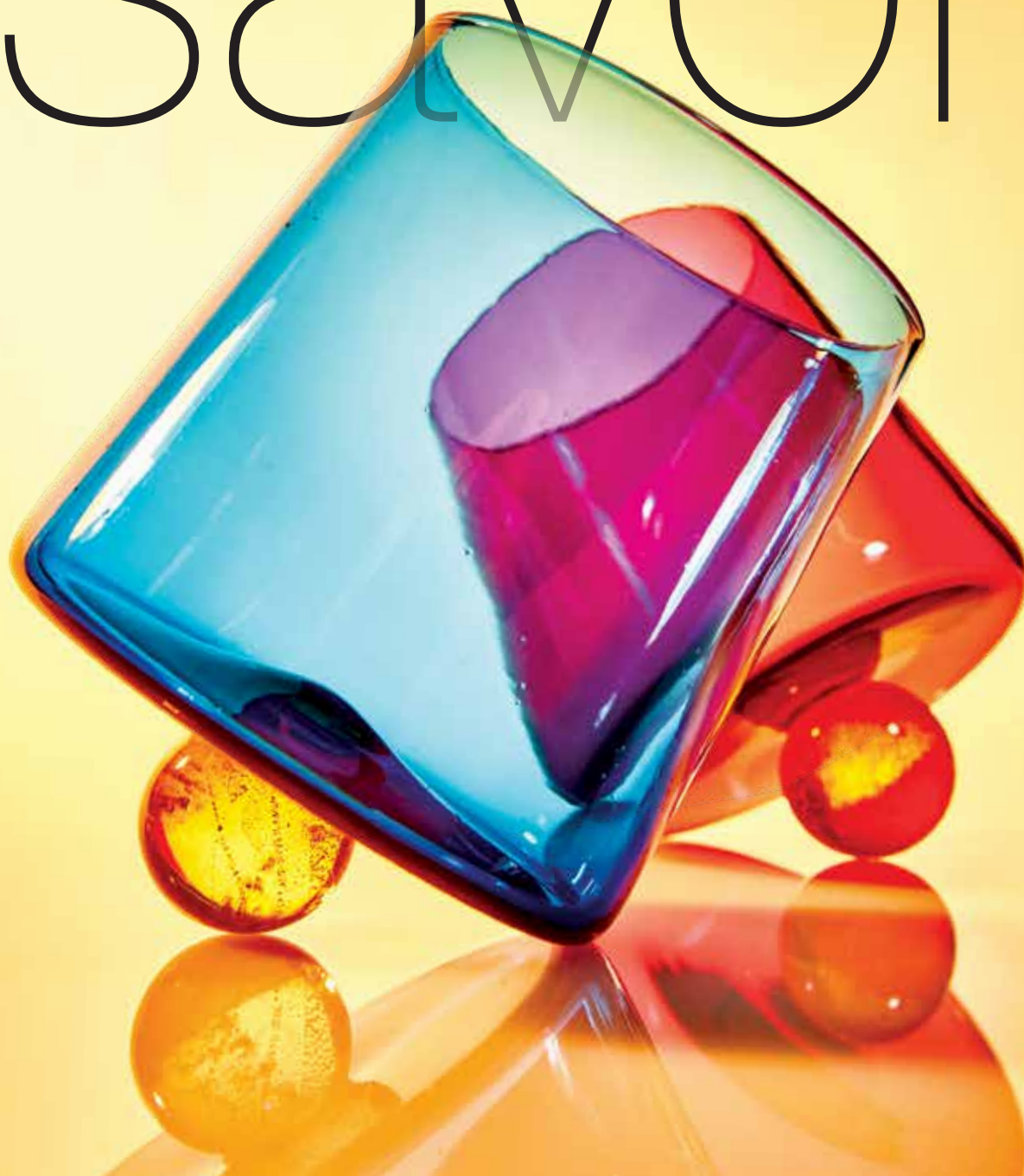


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Summer 2024

savor





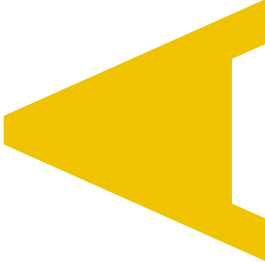
Penland School of Craft's

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August 23 & 24, 2024

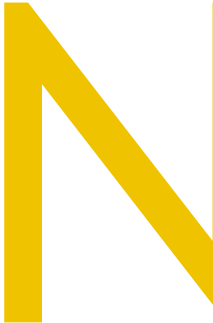


Dan Friday
Aunt Fran's Woven Basket
Blown glass
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Artist: Ashley Mary

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CROCKER
art museum

Chris Antemann (American, born 1970), *Cameo*, 2023. Porcelain, 27 x 18 x 18 in.
Courtesy of the artist and Ferrin Contemporary.



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DEBORAH BISHOP

Knife maker Everett Noel creates stunning blades in an off-the-grid mountain cabin in California.

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KEMI ADEYEMI

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34 **A Good Place to Sit**

PAOLA SINGER

These well-designed benches offer moments of rest and reflection—and a beauty all their own.

40 **The Scene: Craft in the Twin Cities**

SHEILA REGAN AND JENNIFER VOGEL

Six local artists share insights into working and living in Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

ON THE COVER:

Clear version of these *Colorful Kinetic Glasses* by Cedric Mitchell Design in Los Angeles are featured in our handcrafted happy hour story on **page 14**. Photo by Julie Dickinson.

THIS PAGE:

Untitled, Oblong Table with Colored Stool, 2011, 17.75 x 69 x 30.75 in., was made by Hun Chung Lee, one of five artists whose benches appear in this issue. **page 34**.



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TOP LEFT: Photo by Andrea Specht. TOP RIGHT: Photo courtesy of Crisloid. BOTTOM: Photo by Eric Stoner.

ABOVE LEFT: ACC Executive Director Andrea Specht selected Julia Harrison's *Kamakura* brooch as her pick in our new Finds section, featuring fresh craft chosen by ACC staff. **page 10.** ABOVE RIGHT: A yeti peeks out from a *BackCountry* backgammon board by Crisloid, a Providence, Rhode Island-based luxury board game maker. **page 62.** LEFT: Wabanaki basketmaker Jeremy Frey's 2022 ash and sweetgrass basket *Observer* will appear in a major retrospective of his work at the Portland Museum of Art in Maine. **page 8.**

Savor. Craft can help us slow down and create a life filled with more gratitude and connectedness. Simply spending time appreciating the materials, labor, and creative vision that go into making handcrafted objects can usher in a sense of wonder. We hope this issue, and the work featured within, will inspire you to find new ways to savor the world around you, the season of summer, and the elements of your daily life.

Take a moment to pause. Our roundup of handcrafted benches—in comforting ceramics, steam-bent wood, aluminum, and bronze—is designed to inspire you to create moments to ponder what's good.

Enjoy being together. When you gather with family and friends, make the moment special. Enjoy a mocktail or cocktail happy



Explore the work, studio, and home of California knife maker Everett Noel on page 20.

HEARTBEATS
& HARMONY
.....
JUNE 21 - NOV 2

CARL LOPES & ROBERT DANE
.....
sandwichglassmuseum.org
Sandwich, MA

hour with handcrafted glassware—like the glasses and decanter featured in our Market section. Or have fun playing a game of backgammon on a handmade wood, leather, or cork board.

Take pleasure in the bounty. Craft and food are intimately connected. In this issue, we highlight knives by Everett Noel, who was inspired as a teenager by sculptor JB Blunk, along with tableware, jewelry, and sculpture that hold deep meaning by Kristina Batiste. We also revisit *The Craftsman's Cookbook*, which was published by ACC in 1972 (recipe included!).

Delight in discovering local craft. We hope you'll spend time this summer exploring the craft scene in your community. Following our in-depth looks at Detroit (Summer 2023) and New Orleans (Winter 2024), we now take you to the Twin Cities, the American Craft Council's home base since 2010. We asked a diverse array of makers to share their insights about craft in Minneapolis and Saint Paul—and wish we had room to include the voices of so many other talented Twin Cities–based artists. We are grateful to all the artists who've shared their knowledge and love of local craft with us.

Thank you for spending your precious time exploring this issue, and learning and discovering more about craft.

Karen

KAREN OLSON / Editor in Chief

american craft

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MESA CONTEMPORARY
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CALL FOR ENTRIES



45th Annual Contemporary Crafts (Feb – Apr
2024). Right Image: Joseph Sivilli (Tucson, AZ),
Reclaimed Moonjar, 2019, clay, glaze, grass,
16x16x16 inches.



46TH ANNUAL CONTEMPORARY CRAFTS

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CONTRIBUTORS

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



Discover the work of Tacoma, Washington-based ceramist Kristina Batiste in this issue through the eyes of arts writer and editor **Kemi Adeyemi**. An associate professor of gender, women, and sexuality studies at the University of Washington in Seattle, Adeyemi is the author of *Feels Right: Black Queer Women and the Politics of Partying in Chicago*. **page 28.**

Gabriela Hasbun photographed West Coast Craft in 2023 for her first *American Craft* online assignment. Here, the San Francisco-based photographer, who is originally from El Salvador, visited the home of Everett Noel, a knife maker in California's Sierra Nevada foothills. Hasbun's work has appeared in publications including *House Beautiful*, *Outside*, *People*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Time*. **page 20.**



Freelance photographer **Dina Kantor's** candid and elegant images, which explore community and identity, are included in several museums' permanent collections. In this issue Kantor, who divides her time between Minneapolis and Brooklyn, photographed the handful of artists who shared their perspectives on the craft scene in the Twin Cities. **page 40.**

As readers will learn in this issue's "In My Studio" essay, hand tool maker **Eric Meyer** has a deep interest in historic, non-mechanized ways of making. In his Chatham, Illinois, workshop, Meyer designs hand tools for fellow artists. To accompany the article he wrote about his small workshop, he created a virtual studio tour, which you can see at craftcouncil.org/EricMeyerStudio. **page 58.**



We were thrilled when Minneapolis-based visual artist and curator **Dyani White Hawk** agreed to contribute to "The Scene: Craft in the Twin Cities." Though she's busy with commissions as a newly minted recipient of a 2023 MacArthur Fellowship and a 2024 Guggenheim Fellowship, White Hawk said it was important to participate because she "wholeheartedly values the community here." **page 40.**



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Letters from Readers

This is a marvelous issue which I read cover to cover and thoroughly appreciated. The stories of ritual and individual crafters were all fascinating.

—Elizabeth Ewing, Ardmore, Pennsylvania

The Spring 2024 issue is fantastic! I've read almost from the first page to the last. It's full of wonderful stories with beautiful photos that touch the heart of every artist.

I'm thankful to see so many creative souls who have passion for their unique works.

—Lorraine Prazich, Minnetonka, Minnesota

I have a collection of *yunomi* cups. After reading the article about Akira Satake ("Craft That Calms") in the Spring 2024 issue, I went to his website and found a cup to buy. Many cups had already been sold, but the very one I liked was still available. In just three days, it arrived well-packed from Asheville.

—Lynn B. Sealey, Walla Walla, Washington

This is the best issue in a long time! I loved the focus on fine, skilled, thought-provoking craft created by very accomplished artists. It's a huge

positive shift away from the direction I feared *American Craft* was moving toward as I was growing tired of the inclusion of so many interior design knickknacks and slick wedding gifts. Keep up the good work!

—Ron Letourneau, Sebastopol, California

Talk to Us

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

American Craft Forums

After each issue of *American Craft* is published, ACC hosts an online forum in which artists and others discuss topics related to each issue's theme. The forum "Simple Pleasures: Crafting Our Daily Rituals" took place on April 18. A recording of that Spring 2024 event, and all our forums, can be found at craftcouncil.org/Forums.

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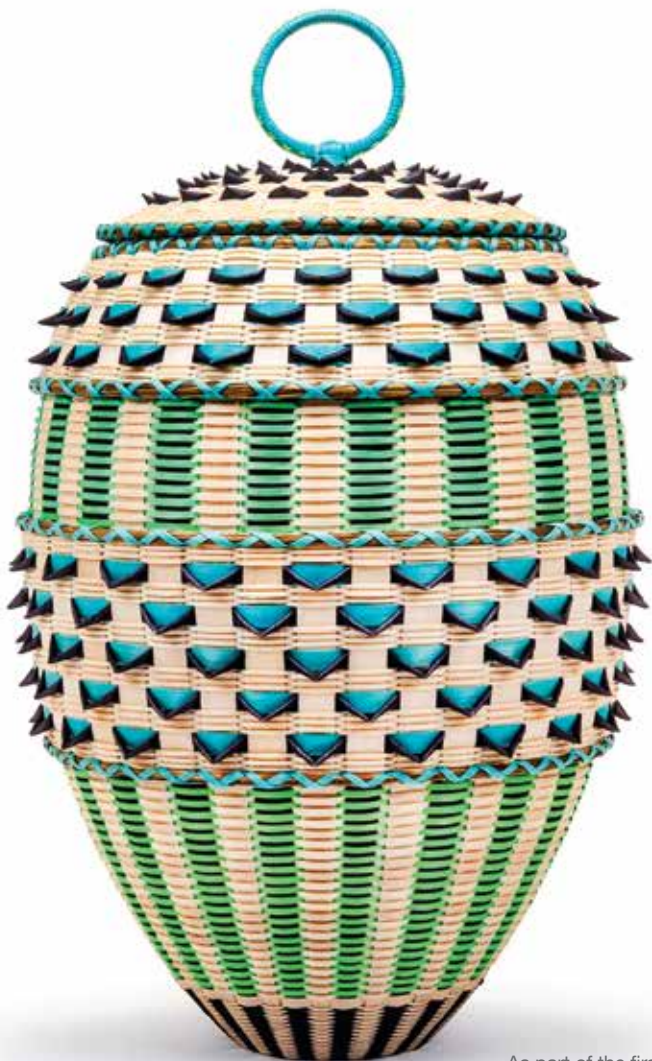
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As part of the first-ever major retrospective of a Wabanaki artist in the US, Jeremy Frey's *Defensive*, 12.5 x 7.5 x 7.5 in., will be at the Portland Museum of Art. RIGHT: This Gonzalo Córdoba mahogany and rattan armchair is part of Cranbrook's *A Modernist Regime* exhibition.

Craft Happenings

MAY

Jeremy Frey: Woven

Portland Museum of Art
Portland, Maine
May 24–September 15, 2024

Frey, a celebrated seventh-generation Indigenous basketmaker, uses the traditional designs of the Wabanaki tribal confederation of New England and the Canadian Maritimes as takeoff points for bold departures. Weaving together black ash, sweetgrass, cedar, spruce root, birch bark, and porcupine quills, he produces works of startling originality, more than 50 of which will be on display here.

JUNE

2024 SNAG Conference

San Diego State University
San Diego, California
June 5–8, 2024

The university's Conrad Prebys Aztec Student Union will be the site for the Society of North American Goldsmiths' 51st annual get-together, where members of the jewelry and metals community gather to admire new work, explore techniques, and share support. Among the highlights: a pin swap, a trunk show, and a juried exhibition of student work.

West Coast Craft

Fort Mason Pavilion
San Francisco, California
June 8–9, 2024

More than 275 artists and designers will be on hand when this prestigious fair opens at the Festival Pavilion at Fort Mason Center. Free and open to the public, the confab will offer crafted food and drink, bath and body care items, and housewares, as well as ceramics, textiles, woodwork, paper, and jewelry.

A Modernist Regime: Cuban Mid-Century Design

Cranbrook Art Museum
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
June 15–September 22, 2024

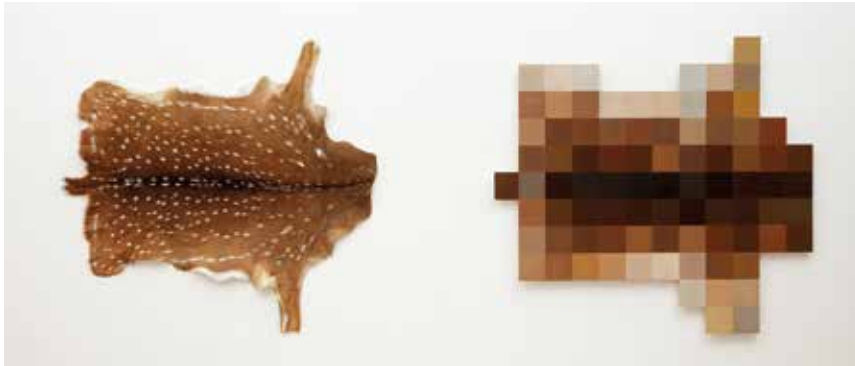
Cuba's 1959 revolution ushered in an era in which design responded to new realities: a centralized economy, constraints created by embargoes, popular demand for equal access to goods, and questions about how modern design could help shape a new society. The designers represented here used indigenous materials, modular approaches, and other means to create a distinctive socialist modernism.



Egyptian and Islamic Design in Clay: Forms, Drawing, Relief, and Carving

SF Clayworks
San Francisco, California
June 21–23, 2024

In a workshop and lecture, Ibrahim Said—a renowned Egyptian ceramist living in North Carolina, whose work appeared in the Spring 2024 issue of *American Craft*—will draw upon his own work and his family background in the venerable ceramic community of Fustat in Cairo to explain how geometry forms the basis of Islamic design, how to translate drawings into clay, and how to fashion traditional Egyptian forms on the wheel.



LEFT: Nicholas Galanin's mixed-media diptych *Unconverted/Converted* (left panel, deer hide: 42.5 x 46.25 in.; right panel, acrylic on wood: 44 x 47.5 in.) will be at the Baltimore Museum of Art. BELOW LEFT: George Lorio's 2021 wood and fabric sculpture *Curl*, 19 x 16 x 8 in., is part of *Fiber Reimagined II* at Gravers Lane Gallery. BELOW RIGHT: Michael Thorpe's 2023 75-by-58-inch quilt *Homage 2 An Exile* will appear in *Homeowners' Insurance* at the Fuller Craft Museum.

JULY

Nicholas Galanin: Exist in the Width of a Knife's Edge

Baltimore Museum of Art
Baltimore, Maryland
July 14, 2024–February 16, 2025

This show combines older work by the Lingít and Unangaꝥ installation sculptor with new pieces created in consultation with the local Native community. It's part of *Preoccupied: Indigenizing the Museum*, a wide-ranging effort by the BMA to “refuse the oppressive hierarchies of coloniality that pervade the realm of culture and serve as the underpinning of museums.”

Rose B. Simpson: Strata

Cleveland Museum of Art
Cleveland, Ohio
July 14, 2024–April 13, 2025

Visitors entering the museum's expansive Ames Family Atrium will encounter two hovering 25-foot-tall figural sculptures in clay, metalwork, porous concrete, and cast bronze. They're among the latest examples of this Santa Clara Pueblo artist's image making, which blends the Pueblo's 1,500-year-old ceramic tradition with modern methods and a piercing awareness of the legacies of colonialism.

Neon as Soulcraft

Museum of Craft and Design
San Francisco, California
July 20–November 24, 2024

A new exhibition curated by the leaders of She Bends, an organization committed to building an equitable future for neon art, will include works in neon bending by established artists and their students in recent residencies, with the goal of “illuminating the process of hand-creating neon, and promoting the future of the form.”

AUGUST

Fiber Reimagined II

Gravers Lane Gallery
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
August 1–September 20, 2024

The second iteration of this exhibition will present selected pieces dedicated to what its organizers call “innovative contemporary art created from fiber and recycled and repurposed mixed media.” Juried pieces from the show will also appear in the Summer 2024 issue of the quarterly *Fiber Art Now*.



Between the Lines: Prison Art & Advocacy

Museum of International Folk Art
Santa Fe, New Mexico
August 9, 2024–September 2, 2025

The works here are drawn from MOIFA's prison art collection, including pieces from the Penitentiary of New Mexico Inmate Craftsmanship and Trades Fair, and from local artists, teachers, and prisoners' rights advocates. It's part of a multiyear, multi-event initiative illuminating hidden forms of incarceration—such as ICE detention centers—and celebrating prisoners' resilience, resistance, and rehabilitation.



THORPE TIMES TWO

A Basketball Standout Turned Quilter Stars in a Pair of Shows

Michael Thorpe: Homeowners' Insurance

Fuller Craft Museum
Brockton, Massachusetts
June 8–December 1, 2024

Michael C. Thorpe: No Expectations

Hickory Museum of Art
Hickory, North Carolina
June 22–November 10, 2024

Not many basketball players sew quilts, but for Thorpe, a onetime MVP for Boston's Emerson College, assembling colorful images of friends and family, his daily surroundings, athletics, and figures who inspire him—plus abstractions and text-based pieces—gives him a way to honor the quilting traditions of both his white and African American foremothers while asserting his own values. The Fuller show, say organizers, will demonstrate how Thorpe “brings together . . . intention and intuition, structure and freedom, technique and theory—to suggest the expansive possibilities of art and life,” while the one at Hickory will explore interconnections between art and basketball and will inform curricula at local schools.

TOP: Photo courtesy the artist and Peter Blum Gallery, New York. RIGHT: Photo by George Lorio. FAR RIGHT: Photo by Michael Thorpe.



Eye Catching. American Craft Council staff members have found themselves oohing and ahing over these craft works. Discover more staff picks in coming issues.

“Shari Mendelson’s airy sculptures, which reference art from ancient civilizations, are made not of an earthy material like glass or clay, but of repurposed plastic. I’m particularly struck by the Brooklyn-based artist’s 2023 **sculpture *Winged Animal with Headdress***. My eyes wander from the halo of circles to the hole where the animal’s heart should be, a void that feels like a portal to another time.” —Shivaun Watchorn, associate editor, *American Craft*

sharimendelson.com | @sharimendelson
Dimensions: 24.25 x 19 x 3.5 in.

Photo courtesy of the artist and Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York.



ABOVE LEFT: “Oceanside, California-based **Natasha Khiev**’s delightful collection of **‘daily tapestries’** produced in 2023 employs innovative techniques that push the boundaries of woven textiles. Extending the tapestry into a three-dimensional structure takes the traditional warp and weft of weaving and builds upward. And not only are there woven strips that extend out from the base tapestry, but those elements in turn are woven with an orange fiber, creating this beautiful meta-weaving.” —Madie Ley, data systems administrator

@mightyloom
Dimensions: 3.5 x 3 in.



ABOVE RIGHT: “From the moment I saw this pair of **Kamakura brooches** in **Julia Harrison**’s studio at Penland School of Craft in North Carolina, I couldn’t think about much else until I returned the following day to buy them. These one-of-a-kind maple brooches feature reverse-painted and gilded watch crystals and evoke, among other things, the lover’s eye jewelry that became fashionable in the late 1700s. I wear only one at a time, and every time I do, I feel like I have an unspecified superpower.”

—Andrea Specht, executive director
juliaharrison.net | @byjuliaharrison
Dimensions: Each 2 x 1.75 in.



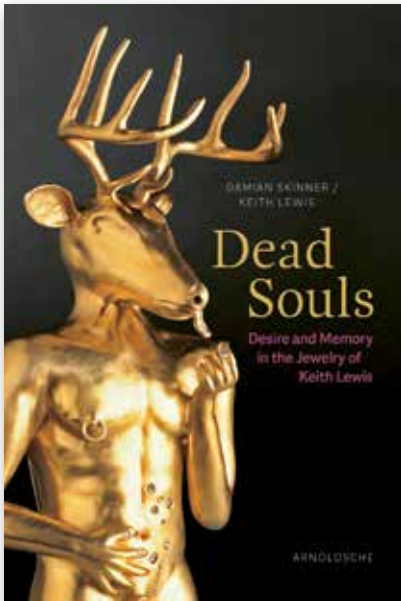
MIDDLE RIGHT: “**Ashley Buchanan** has been one of my favorite artists since I started at ACC in 2014. I love her work. In 2019, when Ashley’s home state of Georgia passed a bill restricting abortion access, she re-created a design of hers as limited-edition statement **earrings celebrating women’s bodies**. All the proceeds went to Planned Parenthood and the ACLU. Hands down, one of my favorite pairs of earrings.” —Rachel Messerich, programs manager, legacy and editorial

ashleybuchananjewelry.com | @ashleybuchananjewelry
Dimensions: 2.75 x 1.5 in.

BOTTOM RIGHT: “I stumbled into Kalamazoo, Michigan-based ceramic artist **Ed Brownlee**’s booth at Minneapolis’s Loring Park Art Festival last summer and immediately fell in love with this charming **teal-blue cyclops**. He looks to me like he could be from a time before time, another dimension, an alien planet, or the early internet. No matter where he came from, I appreciate that he’s still smiling.”

—Andrew Yarish, marketing manager
edswareclay.com | @edswareart
Dimensions: 6.5 x 4 x 4.5 in.





The work of 2022 ACC Fellow Keith Lewis has been called “sculpture [with] a pin on the back” and “jewelry as a transportable polemic.” His startling images—often of hybrid animal-human torsos with prominent male genitalia—celebrate (and sometimes satirize) gay identity and mourn those lost to AIDS with a wit that’s elegant, somber, and often transgressively sexy. Essays by the artist, a prolific writer himself, and by art historian Skinner put the work in historical, cultural, and personal contexts.

DEAD SOULS: DESIRE AND MEMORY IN THE JEWELRY OF KEITH LEWIS

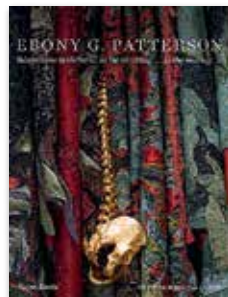
By Damien Skinner and Keith Lewis
 Arnoldsche, 2023
 \$50



CONTEMPORARY ART UNDERGROUND: MTA ARTS & DESIGN NEW YORK

By Sandra Bloodworth and Cheryl Hageman, with a foreword by Hilarie M. Sheets
 Phaidon, 2024
 \$60

Between 2015 and 2023, New York’s transit authority installed more than 100 large-scale artworks by the likes of Yayoi Kusama, Alex Katz, and Nick Cave (recipient of an ACC Gold Medal for Consummate Craftsmanship in 2024) in its subway and commuter rail stations. This lavish book explores many of the pieces in detail and describes how skilled craft artists fabricate and translate artist renderings into durable mosaic, glass, and metal works.



EBONY G. PATTERSON: THINGS COME TO THRIVE... IN THE SHEDDING... IN THE MOLTING

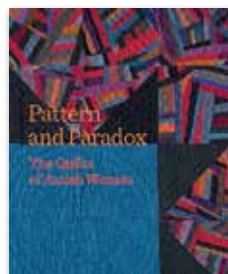
By Joanna Groarke, Karena Gore, Abra Lee, and Seph Rodney
 Rizzoli, 2024
 \$45

This volume documents the Jamaica-born multidisciplinary artist’s installations in the New York Botanical Garden in late 2023. Patterson added cast-foam vultures to the garden’s flowerbeds, as well as ghostly glass images of vanished species and of dismembered feet, evoking the ecological damage and colonialist brutality inseparable from our hemisphere’s landscapes. Essays connect the project with touchstones of Patterson’s career: the natural world, the legacies of colonialism, and the role of death and decay in renewal.



5 PLAIN QUESTIONS WITH JOE WILLIAMS
 Podcast

The questions Fargo, North Dakota–based Dakota artist and gallerist Williams asks on this podcast illuminate the lives and work of “Native American and Indigenous artists, creators, musicians, writers, movers and shakers, and culture bearers.” Prominent among the interviewees are craft artists such as Jeffrey Gibson, Janie Reano, Anita Fields, and Kevin Pourier. The 50-minute format allows conversations to go deep into the artists’ personal histories, methods, influences, and Native identity.



PATTERN AND PARADOX: THE QUILTS OF AMISH WOMEN

By Janneken Smucker and Leslie Umberger
 Smithsonian American Art Museum and Giles Limited, 2024
 \$34.95

Faith and Steven Brown first saw Amish quilts at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in 1973. Delighted by the bold designs and colors the women of the so-called “Plain People” employed, the couple built one of America’s finest collections. This catalog of an ongoing exhibition displays 50 quilts that the Browns have donated to the SAAM. Images and text illuminate the works in the context of Amish life and the wider world of quilting.

Savor the Flavor

BY ACC LIBRARIAN BETH GOODRICH

Historical recipes reveal how various cultures think about and celebrate around food. American recipes from the 1970s, for instance, often reflect a growing interest in healthy eating, as well as cuisines outside of European traditions. *The Craftsman's Cookbook*, produced in 1972 by the American Craft Council, had a “long and tasty germination,” according to editor Lois Moran. Unlike popular cooking practices of the previous decade, which celebrated convenience foods, the book is abundant with healthy ingredients, including plenty of whole grains and yogurt.

In Moran's first role as director of regional programs at the ACC, she traveled the country and sampled countless meals prepared by the craft artists she met along the way. When the Museum of Contemporary Crafts was preparing the 1972 exhibition *Objects for Preparing Food*, Moran—then ACC's director of research and education—decided it was “the right time to celebrate the American craftsman as the imaginative cook he is.”

Recipes were submitted by artists, then tested and prepared for publication by Malabar Brodeur, who worked as a Time-Life staff member on *Foods of the World*, a 27-volume cookbook series. ACC's 192-page cookbook includes biographies of each contributor and was designed by Emil Antonucci, who also designed a number of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts' exhibition catalogs in the 1960s and '70s. The cookbook received complimentary notices in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Vogue*, and *House & Garden*.

Alongside classic recipes such as ACC founder Aileen Osborn Webb's quiche lorraine, readers are treated to a survey of international cuisine that reflects both the cultural traditions and the travel experiences of home cooks, including American artist Gwen-Lin Goo (Chinese beef and asparagus), woodworker Sam Maloof (baked stuffed kibbi), and Ellamarie Woolley (kiln-baked potatoes). On the right is another tasty delight found within.

A digital facsimile of The Craftsman's Cookbook can be found in the ACC Library's Digital Collections. Go to digital.craftcouncil.org and search for “Craftsman's Cookbook.”

ROSE GERANIUM POUND CAKE

JOAN LINTAULT

1 teaspoon butter, softened, plus 1 cup butter, softened
20 rose geranium leaves, washed and patted dry with paper towels
1¼ cups sugar
5 eggs, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon rind
1¼ cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
Confectioners' sugar

Grease the bottom and sides of a 9-by-5-by-3-inch loaf pan with the teaspoon of softened butter. Carefully arrange the rose geranium leaves around the bottom and sides of the pan.

In a large bowl, beat the remaining cup of butter until it is very light and fluffy. Gradually add the sugar while you continue to beat, then pour in half the eggs and mix until they are thoroughly blended. Add the remaining eggs along with the vanilla and lemon rind and mix thoroughly.

In another bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. Add the sifted ingredients to the butter mixture, blending them well. Gently spoon the batter into the prepared loaf pan, taking care not to disturb the leaves. With a rubber spatula, spread the batter evenly in the pan and smooth the surface. Bake in a preheated 325° oven for 1 hour, or until a knife inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean.

Remove the cake from the pan, invert it on a wire rack and peel off any adhering leaves, then cool. Sprinkle with the confectioners' sugar.

Yield: One 9 by 5 by 3 inch cake



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. For information about joining the Friends of the ACC Library & Archives, contact ACC Executive Director Andrea Specht at aspecht@craftcouncil.org.

Handcrafted Happy Hour. Sit back and enjoy the pleasures of summer with cool drinks in hot glassware. We reached out to makers from California to Pennsylvania, who shared their work with us for this story. Minneapolis-based Betsy Nelson, aka That Food Girl, created drinks and recipes to go with them—and her brother, Paul Nelson, photographed the delectable combinations. Cheers!



Herbal elixirs are so refreshing in the heat. A wonderful blend for summer includes dried nettles and mint leaves. Simply steep the herbs (you could also try others, such as lemongrass, lemon verbena, or lemon balm) with hot water and allow to cool. Then strain through a fine sieve or coffee filter. Stir in a little honey or sugar to add sweetness if desired. We've served up this mix, garnished with limes and sliced English cucumbers, in Jarrod Futscher's elegant wine decanter, 8 x 8 x 6 in., and lowball glasses. Futscher, founder of **TAKTTIME** near Pittsburgh, received an Award of Excellence at ACC's 2024 American Craft Made Baltimore Marketplace. / Decanter: \$150. Glasses: \$65 each.

taktimedesign.com

Photos by Paul Nelson.

Dried herbs and spices, fruits, roots, and even pine cones can make delicious ingredients for **homemade syrups** to include in cocktails and mocktails. Here, we've made a brûléed strawberry and basil drink syrup with balsamic vinegar and added it to sparkling water. The glassware is by Danté Germain of **Danté Germain Glass** in Somerset, Wisconsin. In his *River Rock* series, he uses rocks from four Midwestern rivers to shape four versions of lowball glasses. / \$80 each
dantegermainglass.com | @dantegermain



How to Make Your Own Syrups

Basic instructions to make a syrup: Simmer roots, fruits, or dried herbs covered with water for 5 minutes and allow to steep for 20 minutes before straining through a fine sieve. Then add the flavorful liquid to a base of simple syrup or your favorite honey or maple syrup. Experiment with the following ingredients to find your favorites.

Roots: Ginger and turmeric root syrup can be made by grating fresh ginger and turmeric roots, simmering and straining them, then adding the resulting liquid to your base. Store in the refrigerator for up to two weeks to add to drinks.

Fruits: Summer is the season of fruits, and there are so many options to explore, such as peaches and melons. Try rhubarb and strawberries in the spring, apples and pears in the fall, and citrus in the winter. Simply simmer, then add the liquid to your base.

Herbs and spices: Turn to your spice cabinet for inspiration. Savory rosemary and thyme, uplifting mint, aromatic cardamom—even celery or fennel seed can be surprising additions to a drink syrup (and aid digestion as well). Simmer, strain, then add the liquid to your base.

Mugolio: For the forager, mugolio is a syrup made with immature pine cones that are chopped coarsely, mixed with sugar, and allowed to “ferment” for several months in a cool, dark space. Find recipes for making your own on Chef Alan Bergo’s foragerchef.com.

MARKET

Many petals are edible and can be used to make delicious **floral teas**. We've made one here with hibiscus and rose petals, cinnamon, honey, pomegranate juice, and carbonated water, and garnished it with fruit and mint leaves. These *Sphere Wine Glasses* by **Nate Cotterman**, who lives near Cleveland, are perfect for such teas—or for any drink you don't want watered down by ice. Cotterman makes glasses in several shapes and sizes, with spheres or cubes fused to the bottom. You just pull them out of the freezer before pouring your drinks, and they'll stay cool—no ice cubes necessary. / \$120 each

natecotterman.com | [@natecotterman](https://www.instagram.com/natecotterman)



Want these tasty recipes?

Go online to find the recipes for these drinks:
craftcouncil.org/HandcraftedHappyHour



Single-sourced honeys can be found from all around the world, and each has its own unique flavor profile. They're lovely to add to fizzy water with a touch of citrus or your favorite cocktail or mocktail recipe. You can substitute honey when simple syrup is called for in a recipe. Here we've drizzled chestnut flower honey into the glass, topped it with lemon ginger kombucha, and added a sprig of fresh thyme. You might also try acacia flower, buckwheat, or other honeys from faraway places—or better yet, from right near home.

These *Clearly Kinetic Glasses* by **Cedric Mitchell Design** in Los Angeles (the *Colorful* version is on the cover of this issue) can help you savor the scent of the honey. Designed to be slowly turned, the unusual glasses enhance the aroma of spirits such as cognac or whiskey, and work beautifully for small, fragrant sips of other drinks too. / \$110

cedricmitchelldesign.com

◆ Betsy Nelson is a freelance food stylist, recipe developer, cooking teacher, Ayurvedic chef, and certified herbalist. She's passionate about teaching people how to incorporate foods and herbs that support health and to forage for wild edibles. Paul Nelson, Betsy's brother, is a freelance photographer.

Congratulations to our 2024



▲ Wendy Maruyama
Memory and Loss (2020) ▶



▲ Nick Cave
Soundsuit (2009) ▶



ACC Awards Recipients



▲ Anne Wilson
*Topologies: Made at
the V&A (2008)* ▶

FROM LEFT: Photos by Jenny Siegwart, Philipp Scholz Rittermann, Anjali Pinto, James Prinz, Joe Mazza, Anne Wilson Studio.

Since 1970, the American Craft Council has honored individuals and organizations for exceptional artistic, scholarly, and philanthropic contributions to the craft field. Please join us in congratulating our 2024 awardees, who are continuing to uplift traditions while advancing the boundaries and impact of contemporary craft.

Gold Medal for Consummate Craftsmanship

*ACC's highest honor, presented to existing fellows.
(Recipients pictured at left, along with their works.)*

Nick Cave, Chicago, IL

Wendy Maruyama, San Diego, CA

Anne Wilson, Evanston, IL

Fellows

*A recognition from one's peers for 25+ years
of professional achievement.*

Syd Carpenter, Philadelphia, PA

Michael A. Cummings, New York City, NY

Einar and Jamex de la Torre, San Diego, CA

Yuri Kobayashi, Camden, ME

Mark Newport, Hamtramck, MI

Michael Puryear, Shokan, NY

Diego Romero, Santa Fe, NM

Lynda Watson, Santa Cruz, CA

Award of Distinction

*Honors an organization or individual for significant
contributions over 25+ years.*

JoAnn Edwards, San Francisco, CA, cofounder and
former executive director, Museum of Craft and Design

Carol Sauvion, Beverly Hills, CA, founder and
director, Craft in America

Aileen Osborn Webb Award for Philanthropy

*Recognizes exceptional contributions in support of ACC
and the craft field.*

Charles Duddingston, Minneapolis, MN

College of Fellows programming is possible
thanks to generous support from the
Windgate Charitable Foundation.

Learn more about our 2024 awardees at craftcouncil.org/Awards
and save the date for our online ceremony on **Thursday, September
19, 2024, at 3 p.m. CT** (details forthcoming).

A photograph of a man standing in front of a rustic wooden cabin. The cabin is heavily covered in moss and has a roof of fallen leaves. The man is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and brown pants. The scene is set in a dense forest with large trees and sunlight filtering through the leaves.

forging a path

Knife maker Everett Noel lives in this cabin his parents built near Grass Valley, California.



A young Northern California knife maker creates stunning blades—and an integrated artistic life—finding inspiration in the work of his heroes.

BY DEBORAH BISHOP

Everett Noel lives in the same off-grid cabin in which he was born, by candlelight, on a sprawling plot of land near Grass Valley, California, nestled in the foothills of the Sierras a couple hours from Sacramento. Noel's father built the cabin in the 1990s; his mother made the bathroom and living room tiles while she was pregnant with him. Today, Noel's 72-square-foot knife-making workshop is set up in what used to be a chicken coop, before a bear made a banquet of the poultry population.

Not far from a creek, surrounded by a grove of moss-clad canyon live oaks, Noel's cabin is a cozy, spare refuge. On a rainy November day, a wood-burning stove throws off heat and candles cast a soft glow around the kitchen, illuminating a chef's knife made by Noel during the second year of the pandemic, and a Damascus kitchen knife of more recent vintage.

Born to a family that fostered creative expression, self-reliance, and a deep connection to nature (his parents and grandfather still live just a five-minute walk away through the woods), the 25-year-old Noel has been making knives since he was 13, forging a singular path from mostly self-taught novice to master of his métier. In his hands, knives are not only perfectly balanced tools for pruning vines and chopping onions, they are also conduits for emotional expression and artistic connection.

Noel's first forays into knife fabrication consisted of thrusting bits of metal into a campfire,

Photo by Gabriela Hasbun.



then removing the metal and pounding away, with a railroad tie as his anvil. He also perused YouTube tutorials on the stock-removal method, in which saws, belt sanders, and abrasives are used to strip material away from a piece of steel in order to fabricate a blade—much as a sculptor coaxes shapes from a block of material. He practiced carving handles out of oak and madrone burls forged from the family woodpile. “There was a fair amount of trial and error,” Noel says with amused understatement. For an eighth-grade project, he apprenticed with a local blacksmith, Eric Clausen, to learn about forging Damascus steel, a labor-intensive process that requires repeatedly heating, layering, and folding different alloys, resulting in a hard blade with a telltale swirly pattern and patina. And by the time he was 14, Noel was selling his belt knives through Kitkitdizzi, a home goods boutique in nearby Nevada City.

That same year, Noel attended his first West Coast Craft (WCC) fair in San Francisco. “As we wandered the show, my mom kept watering the seed that I could do this too,” recalls Noel, who applied for, and won, a scholarship booth (WCC awards four per fair to emerging artists). His first display was cobbled together from a shipping palette and sawhorses, with his knives arrayed atop rock salt. “It was super scrappy, but successful,” Noel says. “And for the first time, I felt confident that *Oh, wow, I could actually make a living with this.*”

After graduating from high school, Noel devised a way to spend a year combining three of his favorite pastimes.



LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM: Noel's studio, a former chicken coop near his house. Weapons that the maker sketched as a child still figure into his project designs. Knives from Noel's "Spring Cleaning" pop-up sale at Blunk Space. BELOW RIGHT: Noel was inspired by the book *JB Blunk*. This photo shows Blunk's 1975 cypress sculpture *Hawk Arch*.

OPPOSITE TOP: Noel examines knives he made over the past 12 years for his "Spring Cleaning" sale. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: In the studio, Noel uses a belt grinder to bevel a vegetable cleaver.



Inspired by a mobile clothing repair vehicle made for Patagonia by painter, woodworker, and surfer Jay Nelson, one of Noel's artistic and life inspirations, he built what he calls a janky wooden trailer. Loaded up with his propane forge, belt grinder, and hand tools, as well as a surfboard and skis, he hit the road. "At the fairs—West Coast Craft, Mercado Sagrado, Renegade—I'd wheel in my trailer and set up shop, so people could watch the process firsthand," says Noel, who also made knives by the side of the road.

Last summer, Noel had occasion to collaborate, after a fashion, with another of his aesthetic beacons, the legendary sculptor, furniture maker, and ceramist JB Blunk, who lived with his family in a redwood cabin and art studio he built in the Marin County town of Inverness on Tomales Bay. Noel, who was only 3 when Blunk died in 2002, asked for a monograph on Blunk—edited by Blunk's daughter, Mariah Nielson—for his 18th birthday. "His aesthetic, his approach to life and to the land—it was as if he were speaking directly to me," says Noel, who was impressed by the way Blunk blurred the boundaries



between the functional and the artistic. “Basically, everything he touched was a work of art. In the same way, I want my knives to be like sculptures that hang on the wall and transform into tools when you take them down and use them.”

Soon thereafter, Nielson, who lives in the Blunk House with her husband and son, recalls receiving a handwritten letter from Noel, expressing his admiration for her father and interest in making knives for *Permanent Collection*, a rarefied line of objects and homewares that Nielson cofounded. “I imagined, from the tone and maturity of this beautiful letter, that it was written by some weathered, 80-year-old character from the backwoods who’d spent his whole life crafting knives,” says Nielson. “When I called, and this young man answered, I was so surprised and impressed.”

A couple of years after Noel began working with *Permanent Collection*, Nielson invited him to mount a solo show at Blunk Space, the gallery she founded in Point Reyes Station, a few miles from her home. She also offered Noel access to her father’s house and archives—including photography, writings, ephemera, and slides—for inspiration. At first, Noel was unsure how to proceed. “I love the idea of sampling in music, but have been reticent about ‘borrowing’ elements,” Noel explains. “But then I realized, this was such a rare opportunity to dive in and explore Blunk’s world.”

All of the 27 knives that Noel made for the show react to, echo, or allude to something made by Blunk, and some even share a common material. Noel was gifted offcuts for his handles from both Blunk’s woodpile and that of sculptor Bruce Mitchell, who assisted Blunk on projects including *The Planet*, a massive redwood installation commissioned by the Oakland Museum of California that inspired Noel’s quartet of *Planet* steak knives. Just as Blunk explored a variety of approaches to his material within a singular sculpture, Noel created four different iterations of the same knife.

Some of the visual relationships with Blunk’s work are explicit, others more nuanced. Noel’s redwood-handled *Man in Steel Ulu* (2023) is a mirror image of Blunk’s basalt *Man in Stone* (c. 1995–97). With a notch carved into its brass handle, *Muse Folder* (2023), one of Noel’s rare folding knives, is a love letter to *Untitled* (1976), a notched walnut bracelet Blunk carved for his second wife, Christine Nielson. And Noel reunited with Clausen, his eighth-grade mentor, to forge *Inverness Ridge Nakiri*, whose Damascus steel blade with cutout hole poetically evokes the moon rising over the rippled waters of Tomales Bay. A slew of culinary implements used for filleting,



ABOVE: Noel took inspiration for his *Planet* steak knives—with handles (from left) in bishop pine, redwood, manzanita, and walnut and antler—from Blunk’s 1969 monumental redwood sculpture *The Planet* (inset photo). OPPOSITE: Noel’s carbon steel and redwood *Man in Steel Ulu* knife (left) echoes the design of Blunk’s 1995–97 basalt sculpture *Man in Stone* (right).

TOP and OPPOSITE RIGHT: Photos courtesy of JB Blunk Estate; BOTTOM and OPPOSITE LEFT: Photos by Kian Berreman.



“ I want my knives to be like sculptures that hang on the wall and transform into tools when you take them down and use them.”

—Everett Noel, who is inspired by JB Blunk's life and sculptures





LEFT: Chef Michael Tusk of Quince in San Francisco commissioned Noel to create these brass-handled stainless steel steak knives for the restaurant's redesign. ABOVE: Two black oaks converging near Noel's cabin inspired the handles of the steak knives for Quince.

harvesting, spreading, and shucking are informed by Blunk's sculptures as well as by Noel's childhood memories and dreams for the future. "These tools are both nostalgic and aspirational," says Noel. "As I worked, I thought about exploring the coast as a kid, JB's life in Inverness, and how now, as an adult, I can feel the two worlds coming together."

After seeing the sold-out show, Michael Tusk of three-Michelin-starred Quince in San Francisco commissioned Noel to craft a set of bespoke steak knives for his restaurant's redesign. Visually light but pleasingly weighty in the hand, the knife is a portmanteau of associations. The brass handles trace an oval outline that mimics the shape of Quince's brass-accented tables. And they riff on Noel's personal muses: a detail on Blunk's abstract ceramic sculpture of a woman's torso (*Untitled*, c. 1974), and two black oaks on Noel's property that have partially grown together, creating an oval window in the middle that frames the verdant landscape.



ABOVE: Noel at the sink in his modest cabin, which contains boxes filled with plans and schematics for future projects. RIGHT: A wood-burning stove heats the cabin. His parents made the mosaic heat shield, and his brother made the wood bench.

“ I want to make everything, inside and out, with my own hands—not only the knives, but the clothing I wear, the furnishings, the dishes, the art.”

—Everett Noel



Back inside his bucolic cabin, Noel leads a fairly ascetic life. Neatly stashed banker’s boxes are filled with fodder for projects, such as a passel of unfinished knives he has since completed for a recent pop-up sale at Blunk Space called “Spring Cleaning.” Another box contains sketches for a more tricked-out version of his mobile knife shop—“much more like a sculpture on wheels I can live and work out of, like a self-sustaining ecosystem,” says Noel. And he has notes for a mandolin he plans to make with his younger brother Bay, a woodworker.

In the longer term, Noel dreams of building his own home. “I want to make everything, inside and out, with my own hands—not

only the knives, but the clothing I wear, the furnishings, the dishes, the art,” says Noel, who pauses a beat before continuing. “I guess what I’m really describing is some version of the Blunk House. As JB said, ‘This whole place is a sculpture.’ And that’s how I see my life.”

♦ everettnoelknives.com | [@everettnoelknives](https://www.instagram.com/everettnoelknives)

Deborah Bishop writes about art, craft, design, and architecture from her home in San Francisco. She is a longtime contributor to *American Craft*.

power in simplicity

*Ceramic artist Kristina Batiste creates tableware
and sculptures imbued with a subtle yet formidable force.*

BY KEMI ADEYEMI





Photo by Ben McDonald.

Tacoma, Washington–based ceramic artist Kristina Batiste’s work lives in a space where functional craft and fine art intersect. In her studio, divining abstract sculptures for white cube galleries takes on the same weight as caring for the gentle slopes of her plates, cups, and bowls that find their way to our homes and restaurants. Employing both wheel-thrown and hand-built techniques, Batiste works in what she calls the “humble” material of clay to reshape how we come together, proposing new and perhaps more just modes of communing with one another.

“Clay has memory and is strong enough to hold powerful ideas, just like a line or a spare composition, or a shape, or a color,” Batiste says. “If you get it right, you can hold the universe in a line.”

Much of the power of Batiste’s work lies in her minimalist aesthetic. Her elegant serving-ware pieces are marked with various irregular lines mimicking hand drawing, as well as raised lines and dotted indentures, all providing ornamental and tactile details that quietly catch and focus our attention. She conjures a story or delivers a message via these markings, and in so doing, she slows down our meaning-making processes and focuses our attention on subtle transformations in material. She opens our minds to new and different sets of questions.

This is palpable in a set of wearable pendants and functional cups featuring three yellow stripes—echoing the stripes of the Black Lives Matter logo—that Batiste created the summer of 2020, after George Floyd was killed. At the time, far too many people were unaware of, or ignoring, the many forms of violence that characterize life in the US, and which disproportionately affect Black, brown, Indigenous, immigrant, and trans populations. And while many took to the streets that summer, the question remained of how to draw people into unfamiliar or uncomfortable conversations.

Kristina Batiste created *This is not a cup* during the summer of 2020. These ceramic protest signs provide conversational openings in the private sphere. Black stoneware, underglaze, cardboard, 2.75 x 3 in.



LEFT: Ceramic artist Kristina Batiste. ABOVE: Her *sour, hot, bitter, and sweet*, 2022—made of porcelain, cedar, and “Black joy”—is designed for use in a “tasting of the elements” wedding ceremony.

**“If you get it right,
you can hold the
universe in a line.”**

—Kristina Batiste



ABOVE: According to the artist, the stoneware pendants of *This is not a necklace* send “that signal of safety to the Black and brown people you encounter.” OPPOSITE BOTTOM: The coil-built bowls of *hope/memory*, 2023, were created with collaborators, 12 x 18 in.

THIS PAGE TOP and OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM: Photos by Ben McDonald. All other photos by Kristina Batiste.



“A lot of people in the world, they’re not going to protests, they’re not going to go to a demonstration,” says Batiste. “But you might have them over for a cup of coffee or a glass of wine. And you can use this protest sign as an invitation to have a conversation that you probably would not have.” With her protest ware, Batiste works to render dense, painful histories into small markings that we can touch and see in ways that might invite unexpected and productive interpersonal relations.

Batiste came to ceramics relatively late in life. Having worked as a writer and editor, and in graphic design and higher education, she had no formal art training when, in her 30s, she dove into the pottery communities of the Tacoma Community College and the local supply store Clay Art Center. “Instead of ‘30 Under 30’ it should be ‘50 Over 50,’” she laughs. “After you already know how hard the world is—you’ve got a mortgage, and you’ve got stuff to do, and you can’t take the kinds of risks you could take when you were 20—and you *still* pick up a paintbrush for the first time? And you *still* try this thing out for the first time? I’m gonna celebrate that.” Batiste is well on her way to making it onto such a list. In a span of a few short years, she has built a robust exhibition schedule and in 2023 was awarded The Current, the Tacoma Art Museum’s annual unrestricted award celebrating Black artists.

Batiste views the through line of her various jobs and roles as distilling complex ideas into accessible, memorable



forms. She did that with *sour, hot, bitter, and sweet* (2022), a set of 4-inch porcelain bowls installed on a flat cedar plinth that follows a Yoruba tradition: each bowl holds a different element that a newly married couple will experience in their lifetime together. The bowls are neither precious art nor ceremonial objects. “I wanted to make the piece that was used in the ceremony but then these little dishes that you can use forever,” Batiste explains. “You don’t keep them on their ceremonial plinth—you can use them for anything and remember that day.”

Her interest in multifunctional objects that hold multiple histories within them carries over to *hope/memory* (2023), a pair of stoneware bowls that feature Batiste’s characteristic

small markings and which she created with nine other people. As each person laid coils for the bowls, they invested their hopes and memories into the clay. The shiny glazed interiors of the bowls suggest both silky softness and shellacked protection that may be characteristic of the potters' inner lives, whereas the uneven surfaces of the bowls' textured exteriors underscore the many hits one takes while living a life.

Complementing the production of her functional ware, Batiste is moving toward more sculptural works. Earlier this year, she completed an abstract portrait of civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer called *five feet four inches forward* (2024), a composition of 64 slabs of clay that speaks to the massive amount of work done by Hamer and of the sharecroppers she organized throughout the South. Batiste practices a rich color theory in managing the different post-kiln hues of the “plum black” clay she used—clay that points both to the earth Hamer toiled upon and the richness of her skin. The sculpture's title comes from Hamer herself: “But if I fall, I'll fall five feet four inches forward in the fight for freedom.”

Five feet four inches forward forges a material connection between Batiste's and Hamer's laboring bodies while underscoring the pervasive risk that shapes Black life and clay processes. The vulnerability required to work in clay is further underscored by *tesselatum* (2019), a hanging piece that is made of four lines of warped clay tablets strung together with leather. It is unclear whether the small cracks in each tablet are environmental or technical mistakes, but they are held together by the artist's intervention: copper bindings. The seemingly fragile pieces are pulled ever downward by gravity yet held up by one another.

Batiste's rising star is due in part to her refreshing take on minimalism, given how Western art worlds tacitly expect Black artists to work within figurative and text-based traditions in order to directly and literally reflect on sociopolitical issues. Minimalism has historically been perceived as the absence of politics, if not flight from it. The great minimalist artists often worked to harness “pure” qualities of experience, aesthetics, and materials. For Batiste, meaning can never be contained within the art object nor within the bounds of experiencing it.

TOP: Batiste with her abstract stoneware portrait *five feet four inches forward*, 5 ft. 4 in. x 17 in. x 5 in., which pays homage to Fannie Lou Hamer. RIGHT: *General Order Volume II: the sharing bowl*, 2023, is part of a 10-year distributed sculpture project celebrating Juneteenth, porcelain, iron wash, 5 x 16 in. diameter.





LEFT: Batiste's *tesselatum*, 2019, clay, hemlock, leather, copper, gravity. ABOVE: Batiste assembles *tesselatum*. BOTTOM LEFT: The markings on *General Order Volume II: the sharing bowl* commemorate the date the Emancipation Proclamation reached Galveston, Texas.

The simplicity of her work invites reflection and affords profoundly collaborative moments of co-thinking that are only intensified by her medium of choice. “When there is a lot going on, it’s really hard to come out with a clear idea or a clear purpose,” she says. “And I think that taking away extraneous stuff to reveal what is essential—like, this is what is absolutely essential and needed for this—I find it very calming.”

Her minimalist approach can also be productively high stakes, however. “When there’s a single line or shape or absence, every decision around that element matters more—the weight and shape and color and texture and orientation,” Batiste says. “Of course, all those things matter in a maximalist or realist composition, but because that single line doesn’t have anything else to share the load with, it has to carry everything. I like how deliberate that makes the work. There’s no hiding.”

♦
juniper-clay.com | @juniperclay

Arts writer and editor Kemi Adeyemi is an associate professor of gender, women, and sexuality studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. She is the author of *Feels Right: Black Queer Women and the Politics of Partying in Chicago* and directs The Black Embodiments Studio, an arts writing incubator, public programming initiative, and publishing platform that builds discourse on contemporary Black art.



A Good Place to Sit

A well-designed bench offers us a moment of rest and reflection—and a beauty all its own.

BY PAOLA SINGER

Is there any furniture simpler than a bench? It's so simple, in fact, that it can seem to have been added as an afterthought. Yet most of us have spent plenty of time sitting on benches, and perhaps even have a treasured memory related to them.

One of the most enjoyable afternoons of my life took place on a bench in the garden of the Musée Rodin in Paris. It was a luminous day with a clear blue sky that made the master's sculptures seem sharper, and as I looked around at the blooming roses and perfectly pruned boxwoods, life felt uncomplicated and filled with beauty—if only for a little while.

Although simplicity may be the whole point of benches—a structure so pared down it invites us to admire the world around us—they can also be the product of deep thought and meticulous craftsmanship. Here, we rounded up five designs that can stand up to the most inspiring surroundings.

Matthias Pliessnig

Sinuo

Even though Rhode Island–based artist Matthias Pliessnig draws inspiration from “myriad things,” including the shape of a woman’s body, his distinctly curvaceous benches can all be traced back to a sailboat. After completing the furniture design program at Rhode Island School of Design, he wanted more time to hone his craft and enrolled at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where one of his projects was to make a boat. “I learned how to steam bend wood, and it’s not really an accurate way to bend wood, but I realized you can build intuitively and still very accurately,” he says. After that, he began making seats that are structurally rigid yet utterly comfortable. Pliessnig starts with a computer-drawn design, then improvises while making each bench—such as this 2018 *Sinuo* (right, 3.5 x 15 x 7 ft.), made of locally sourced white oak—so no two are alike.

matthias-studio.com | [@matthiaspliessnig](https://www.instagram.com/matthiaspliessnig)



Yuko Nishikawa

Squish

Brooklyn-based ceramic artist Yuko Nishikawa created these snuggled-up clay stools to soothe the isolation she was experiencing during the pandemic. “It was a reaction to the restriction on touching other people,” she says. “I was thinking about being squished on the subway—I never liked that, but the pandemic made me miss it.” Nishikawa, who makes lamps, vases, tableware, and sculptures in off-beat shapes that seem to come from the depths of the sea or from another universe altogether, imbued this 2020 *Squish* bench (17 x 96 x 36 in.) with a sort of childlike innocence. To make the piece, she pushed together separate clay vessels during the leather-hard stage, when the material is firm but still malleable, and then fired them in her studio’s kiln. While each stool can stand on its own, their shapes and colors become truly meaningful when placed next to their companions.

yukonishikawa.com | [@yuko_nishikawa](https://www.instagram.com/yuko_nishikawa)





Refractory Studio *Scimitar*

Much like leather, this bronze bench is meant to get better with age. In fact, leather was part of the inspiration behind its design. Refractory founders Angie West and Alberto Vélez used a bison hide to make the mold that would translate into the piece's uniquely textured surface. "It reflects the ruggedness and creatures of the [American] frontier, of folks who came before us and endured so much," says West. "The textured areas wear like a saddle; the bronze will become more beautiful the more it is worn, so we want people to sit on it and not be precious." *Scimitar* (16.5 x 66 x 17.75 in.) was fabricated across the hall at Refractory's sister company, West Supply, a highly regarded Chicago foundry and glassworks atelier; it is a single continuous cast bronze form that starts out with a rigid base pattern—a CNC'd hard pattern cut from a 3D file—that is then sanded and manipulated.

refractory.studio | @refractory.studio



Hun Chung Lee
Untitled

Korean artist Hun Chung Lee is known for his oversized ceramic pieces made with the ancient glazing techniques used in *buncheong*, a traditional form of Korean stoneware. Clay pieces are coated in white slip to maintain the brightness of the celadon glazes added on top. Once in the kiln, the alchemy of celadon can be unpredictable, resulting in varying shades of blue-green, but sometimes also blues and browns. “I follow my intuition,” says Lee. “I cannot control the glaze.” Yet given his long experience with the technique, there’s probably some foretelling involved. While making this 2022 untitled 19-by-21.5-by-36-inch work (“It can be a bench or sculpture,” he says, “I don’t think about the function too much. The user can decide.”), Lee was influenced by his surroundings in Los Angeles, where he has a studio and spends part of the year. “I use more color in California,” says the lifelong Seoul resident. “The sunshine is different.”

hunchunglee.com | [@hunchunglee.la](https://www.instagram.com/hunchunglee.la)



Photo by Joe Kramm, courtesy of R & Company. OPPOSITE: Photo by Federico Florianini.

Kate Greenberg

Milk Bench

This piece, made for a solo exhibition at the 2023 Alcova design show in Milan, Italy, reflects Kate Greenberg's fascination with the past and imagined future of domestic objects (she marvels at the way humans have replicated the sun by creating lighting, for example). "I brought this idea of how we could live in the future to the basement of an old slaughterhouse in Milan," she says. "The bench itself is a reflection bench, and it's referencing milk stools because they are some of the earliest pieces of furniture, and my work explores the history of domestication." Draped over the 18-by-60-by-20-inch bench is a blanket made of pure natural latex, whose outline can recall the slab of a milled tree or a large milk spill, purposely eliciting a parallel between the vital liquid inside both trees and mammals. Greenberg crafted this piece using aluminum and sheets of stainless steel at her studio in Alameda, California.

kategreenberg.studio | [@kate.hands.co](https://www.instagram.com/kate.hands.co)

◆ Paola Singer, a freelance writer in New York City, is a frequent contributor to *American Craft*.



THE SCENE: CRAFT IN THE TWIN

The Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul straddle the Mississippi River near Minnesota's eastern border. And while there is an air of competition between the two communities—one was built on milling, the other on the whiskey trade—culturally they function as one place that happens to have two downtowns and two city governments. What most people know about the Twin Cities is that they're hot in the summer and frigid in the winter, though this is becoming less the case due to climate change.

Fewer people are aware that the metro is home to a large, vibrant Native American community and growing populations of Hmong, Latin American, and East African people. This evolution has brought its own challenges, but it's made the Twin Cities a richer, more interesting, and more creative place to live and work.

Bastions of nonprofit organizations, Minneapolis and Saint Paul value and support the arts, including virtually all forms of craft. These are places where a diverse array of artists and makers thrive.

"We have multiple funding sources, both regional and statewide, that support artists across genres and across levels of career development," says Sičánġu Lakota visual artist and curator Dyani White Hawk, who works out of a studio in Minneapolis and recently won a MacArthur Fellowship. "We have multiple beautiful museums that address a wide range of missions, dedicated curatorial and administrative staff, nonprofits that often support artists in focused areas of

support and development, galleries and rotating cycles of open studios, festivals, and markets that all contribute to a beautiful and evolving art ecosystem."

The Twin Cities offer a wealth of support for craft arts via private funders such as the McKnight and Jerome Foundations and organizations dedicated to craft, such as the Northern Clay Center and the Textile Center, as well as the Indigenous Roots Cultural Arts Center, where makers are supported through "Culture Bearer" opportunities.

Saint Paul-based fashion designer and clothing maker Rammy Mohamed creates custom dresses and gowns that incorporate the needs of the Muslim community while expressing elegant flair. "The silhouettes of some of my garments are inspired by different regions within Oromia that I get inspired by," says Mohamed, who has enjoyed steadfast community

support and whose work has been featured in *InStyle*. "I'm influenced by what's around me, and I'm also taking what's traditional and making it more modern."

In the spring and summer months, Minneapolis and Saint Paul burst with craft fairs. In June, for example, the American Craft Council will host American Craft Fest at the historic Union Depot in Saint Paul. But you'll also find artisans vending in a robust farmers market landscape, art studio tours like Northeast Minneapolis's Art-A-Whirl and the Saint Paul Art Crawl, art fairs, and, of course, the Minnesota State Fair, home of the Creative Activities Building. That's where thousands of visitors enjoy everything from delicate woodwork to elaborate needlepoint and quilting. The Fair also boasts the beloved seed art competition, where agriculture becomes the medium for ingenious mosaics.

Winter, too, is filled with craft markets and events like No Coast Craft-o-Rama, as well as marketplaces housed at local breweries. Snowy weather poses no burden to Minnesota artisans, who simply take their talents outdoors, creating monumental ice and snow sculptures and designing interactive fiber creations inside the ice house galleries that populate the Art Shanty Projects on Lake Harriet in Minneapolis.

The scene is buoyed by funds flowing into the arts, thanks to the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. Passed by voters in 2008, this state constitutional amendment ensures that tax dollars pass through entities like the Minnesota State Arts Board and various regional arts councils.

Twin Cities businesses also show up for craft. Snow sculptor, metal worker, and filmmaker Dusty Thune often taps into collaborations with local businesspeople on projects, whether he's creating sculptural works for Can Can Wonderland's mini-golf course—designed and built by artists—or finding sponsorships for other crafty endeavors. In turn, he lends a hand to fellow artists who may need his skills, exhibiting the good neighbor policy. "They call in favors back and forth and help grow the industry, grow the scene, and raise the bar on talent," Thune says. —Sheila Regan

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

A craft-loving crowd enjoys the Pdraigs Brewing patio in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District during the annual Art-A-Whirl gallery crawl.

STORY BY SHEILA REGAN
AND JENNIFER VOGEL /
CONTRIBUTOR PORTRAITS
BY DINA KANTOR

CITIES

Six local artists share the people and spaces that define Minneapolis and Saint Paul, cities built on the handmade.





Photo courtesy of Dyani White Hawk and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. OPPOSITE: Photos courtesy of Dyani White Hawk.

CONTRIBUTORS

DYANI WHITE HAWK

Visual artist and curator

dyaniwhitehawk.com | @dwhitehawk

White Hawk was born in Madison, Wisconsin, and moved with her husband and oldest daughter to the Twin Cities in 2011. Her mother had moved earlier, “so the Twin Cities have been home base for over two decades.” The Sičánǵu Lakota artist believes Minnesota’s Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund gives local artists an edge. “I am really proud to share that Minnesota has funding for the arts written into legislation,” White Hawk says. “The statewide buy-in for the arts is really apparent here, especially once you’ve had the opportunity to speak with artists and those in the field who live in states that don’t have such integral support. The fact that we have many available studio

ABOVE: Dyani White Hawk in her studio in Northeast Minneapolis. OPPOSITE LEFT: White Hawk’s *Carry I*, 2019, buckskin, synthetic sinew, antique glass beads, brass sequins, canvas, acrylic, and dyed feathers, approx. 110 x 15 in. OPPOSITE RIGHT: The artist works on *She Gives (Quiet Strength VII)*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 84 x 120 in. In the foreground is her *Untitled (All the Colors)*, 2020, acrylic, bugle beads, thread, and synthetic sinew on canvas, 48 x 48 in.

buildings and that these are often full demonstrates our collective commitment to creation and the commitment to artists and makers.” In addition, she sees “a wave of growth” in the arts “toward increased equity, inclusiveness, the celebration of diversity, and the dismantling of unhealthy racial, economic, and societal hierarchies. The strength of generations of activism that has culminated in the Twin Cities and tribal nations of Mni Sota is significant and continues to contribute to our world in profoundly important and influential ways.”

Even so, there are challenges to working out of a studio in Minneapolis. “First, I want to acknowledge, there are



challenges in life no matter where you are or what you're pursuing or dreaming toward," White Hawk says. "I love our community, the land, the connection and proximity to family, my studio, and those who work with me. The greatest challenges are that our field is still very coast-centric and most people still have very little understanding of and exposure to Native history, communities, and people."

ARTISTS WHITE HAWK ADMIRES: Textile and beadwork artist **Jennie Kappenman**; textile artist and designer **Maggie Thompson** of Makwa Studio; beadwork artist **Jessica Gokey**; multidisciplinary artist **Cole Redhorse Taylor**; fashion designer and beadwork artist **Delina White**; quillwork and beadwork artist **Melvin Losh**; birch bark and quillwork artist **Pat Kruse**; and photographer and beadwork artist **Jaida Grey Eagle** (see her portrait of Maggie Thompson on page 54).

@kryptonitecreations
makwastudio.com
jessicaleighgokey.weebly.com/#/
coleredhorsetaylor.com
lamanishinaabe.com
makwastudio.com/pat-kruse
jaidagreyeagle.com



DOM VENZANT

Potter and educator

symcopotteryworks.com | @domvenzant

Venzant was born in Menomonie, Wisconsin, spending time on his grandfather's dairy farm in Symco, but his family moved to the Twin Cities before he began kindergarten, so he considers himself to have been "strongly formed" by the local people and culture. "Believe it or not, I have found the support for the arts and crafts in Minnesota to be among the most robust in the country," says Venzant, who has a studio in Minneapolis and teaches classes all over. "I never thought I would become an artist and crafts-person, but I've found a great deal of support for makers of various backgrounds, ethnicities, and identities. The Twin Cities are, and have been for some time, an inclusive cultural community," embracing a large Hmong population, a growing community of Karen (from Myanmar), and "new residents from across South America and Africa."

While Venzant notes that some support networks have been slow to establish and that "finding suitable and culturally appropriate mental health services has been a challenge in the Twin Cities," overall, he says, "I am grateful, not just for the exposure to various foods and languages, but also the stories, music, and broadening of culture that has occurred."

ARTISTS VENZANT ADMIRES:

Potter and educator **Lee Persell**, "who specializes in wood fired ceramics"; **Pratibha Gupta**, a multidisciplinary artist and potter who is "the progenitor and guiding light for the kiln Tandava" in Glencoe, Minnesota; the "dynamic duo" of potter **Mike Egan** and metalsmith and jewelry maker **Wendy Egan**; composer, performer, musician, and instrument maker **Martin Dosh**, "who is constantly innovating"; and **Laura Andrews**, "an exquisite painter and educator who has helped to make my creative life possible."

@lee.persell

@pratibha_gupta_art_

@originalmartindosh

laurandrews.com

OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT and BOTTOM RIGHT: Photos by Dom Venzant. ALL OTHER IMAGES: Photos by Dina Kantor.



THIS PAGE: Dom Venzant in the doorway to his studio holding one of his cups. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *Large Jar*, 2017, gas-fired stoneware, 26 x 15 in. A shelf of Venzant's works in progress. Bowls in the kiln. *Two-Tone Vases*, 2020, black mountain clay and porcelain, wood fired, 10.25 in. tall (left) and 10 in. tall (right). Venzant at the wheel making a new clay piece.



FRED KAEMMER

Glass artist

fredsglass.com | [@fredsglass](https://www.instagram.com/fredsglass)

Though born in Milwaukee, Kaemmer moved to Saint Paul when he was 3 and considers himself to be “basically a Twin Cities native.” What inspires him? “Apart from the amount of art being made around here, there is a certain humility among the artists I run into. This allows for open sharing of ideas and information that can be helpful as you run up against various obstacles. While not unique to the craft community, this Midwestern, understated attitude is refreshing, especially in glass, where you can run into a fair amount of bravado and ego.” On the flip side, says Kaemmer, “A challenging thing for me as a glassblower is that we are a very ceramics-friendly region and people’s appreciation of, or appetite for, glass is less enthusiastic than in other regions of the US. We are a very practical group of people up here in Minnesota, and sometimes glass is a bit too impractical, flashy, or spendy, as we like to say.”

Kaemmer sees an evolution happening in the Twin Cities craft scene. “One big change for me is the aging of the craftspeople in my world. My mentors are all retiring, either by choice or necessity. We are losing a lot of knowledge and experience as these people step away from the making process. There are a lot of young people bringing new energy and new techniques into the craft/art scene, but there are a lot of people who paved the way, carved out a living, and cultivated markets who are no longer active and have a lot of wisdom to share.”

ARTISTS KAEMMER ADMIRES:

Judith Kinghorn is an “amazing jewelry designer and maker”; **Jim and Renee Engebretson** “are my mentors and makers of beautiful glass bowls—they live just over the border in Wisconsin, but don’t hold that against them”; furniture maker and designer **Scott McGlasson** of Woodsport in Saint Paul “expresses a cool aesthetic in wood”; **Dean Lucker** and **Ann Wood** “make great sculptures in wood and paper”; and mixed-media artist **Joan Cox** “is a fantastic painter.”

judithkinghorn.com
[facebook.com/Engebretsonart](https://www.facebook.com/Engebretsonart)
woodsport.net
woodlucker.com
joangcox.wordpress.com



TOP: Photo by Dina Kantor. BOTTOM: Photo by Benjamin Gilbertson.

LEFT TOP, MIDDLE, and BOTTOM: Photos by Dina Kantor. RIGHT: Photo by Benjamin Gilbertson.



LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM: Fred Kaemmer shapes a piece of hot glass in his Saint Paul studio. A collection of multicolored glass rods. Kaemmer uses a torch to make a new work. BELOW: Kaemmer's *Moon Vessel*, 2019, glass and silver leaf, 13 x 6 in.

OPPOSITE TOP: The artist stands before a shelf of finished work in his studio. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: The three pieces of the *Blue Cane Group*, 2021, various sizes, are made of blown glass and represent "a balance between control and serendipity."





AMARA HARK-WEBER

Shoemaker

harkweberstudio.com | [@harkweberstudio](https://www.instagram.com/harkweberstudio)

Hark-Weber describes herself as “mostly from the Twin Cities,” though she spent her 20s and early 30s living in other parts of the country. She returned to Saint Paul 10 years ago when she launched her business as a shoemaker. “The Twin Cities is the perfect size to support professional craftspeople—big enough to be big enough, but small enough that folks get to know each other,” she says. “I don’t advertise, so most of my local customers find out about me by word of mouth. There are amazing museums and craft centers here, and this is possible because of community support for the arts. Minnesota has a thriving pottery scene, and loads of printers and artists/craftspeople in the literary and book arts. I think it’s just a special place that attracts really creative people.”

Hark-Weber thinks the local craft community has grown younger. “There seem to be a lot of upstarts, which is wonderful and exciting!” However, she says, “There aren’t many footwear makers, and that means that there isn’t much of an inter-craft community. But that would be

ABOVE: Amara Hark-Weber in her Saint Paul studio. LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM: The artist holds *Butterfly Sweet*, 2024, a calf and rubber loafer. Hark-Weber hand sews her footwear. *Master’s Calling*, a pair of harness leather and rubber pull-on boots.



TOP: Hark-Weber's *Cash Is Green*, 2023, calf and wood cap-toe oxfords, shown with lasts. BOTTOM: Keeping knives sharp is integral to good shoemaking.

true anywhere. People just don't know that there are shoemakers tucked away, so they don't think of looking us up."

ARTISTS HARK-WEBER ADMIRES:

Toolmaker and bookbinder **Brien Beidler**, "because he is on a similar track as myself, working independently with small children, trying to make ends meet while producing extremely beautiful and well-made items"; paper maker and textile artist **Mary Hark**, because "she has constructed a career in the arts, building a workshop and studio from scratch and figuring it out as she goes"; **Katrina Kubeczko**, "textile artist and DIY diva, because she is always working, learning, and trying something new, and is one of the most intuitively creative people I have had the pleasure of knowing"; **Sister Black Press**, "because they are working hard and making beautiful, funny, and delightful work"; and **Tony Santoyo**, whom "I admire because he is fearless and his effervescent personality is present in all that he does."

beidlermade.com
maryhark.com
@katrinakmade
sisterblackpress.com
tonysantoyo.com

GER XIONG / NTXAWG XYOOJ

Metalsmith, jewelry maker, textile artist
gerxiong.com | @gerxiong55

Xiong grew up in Appleton, Wisconsin, and moved to the Twin Cities three years ago, after finishing graduate school at New Mexico State University. "While I was in school, I saw a lot of great artworks and heard a lot of conversations within the Hmong arts community about the Twin Cities," he says. "That was one of the major reasons why I decided to move back to the Midwest, specifically the Twin Cities. There is a really strong arts community here, and you can find that almost everywhere you go, whether it's the street art, public sculptures, murals, or craft-based work within various communities.

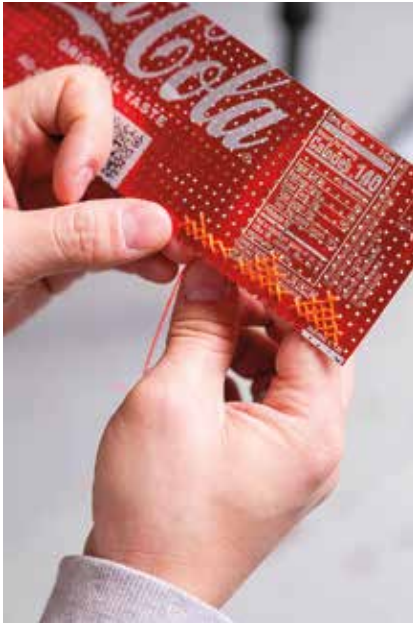


ABOVE LEFT: Ger Xiong's *Re/claim*, 2023, replicated French Indochinese coins, embroidery thread, and fabric, 20 x 8 x 0.25 in. ABOVE RIGHT: The artist in his studio. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Xiong embroiders a flattened Coca-Cola can. "I wanted to learn about our cultural history through embroidery," he says. The artist cuts metal pieces for jewelry. Xiong made these pieces ahead of the 2022 American Craft Made marketplace in Saint Paul. A fully embroidered can.



I think the most challenging thing here is that, although there are a lot of grants and support for the arts, the process of applying for them is labor intensive, yet you may or may not get the support."

Overall, Xiong finds the local craft community to be energized and energizing. "I really love the changes in the various art scenes from BIPOC artists within the craft field," he says. "I've seen more workshops, especially within the Hmong community, that teach craft-based processes that many young generations may not know of. These community-based events have really helped bridge together the generations."



Artists Xiong admires:

Interdisciplinary artist and cultural producer **Ka Oskar Ly**; interdisciplinary artist **Tshab Her**, who emphasizes textiles and embroidery; jewelry artist, metalsmith, and teaching artist **Amy Wilderson**; sculptor and beadwork artist **Erin Peña**; and jewelry artist and metalsmith **Jason Thomson**.

- kaonwards.com
- tshabher.com
- amyajewelry.com
- erinpenaart.com
- jj-jasonthomson.com



MARVIN FREITAS

Woodworker, furniture maker,
designer

marvinfreitas.com | @marvinfreitas

Freitas was raised in Galicia, Spain, by his grandparents and moved to the Twin Cities from the East Coast with his wife in 2007. “I was inspired by my grandfather, who had tools and was always making and fixing the house. He was a mason as an immigrant in America. He was always working on anything—motors, cabinets, and so on. I just hung around and watched, asked questions, and learned. I love tools. Working with them is an amazing thing for me.”

Of the Twin Cities, Freitas says, “There are a lot of super-talented people here and it’s great to meet some of them when I am out.” When he first arrived, he worked as a maintenance manager for apartment buildings. Then he bought tools and began working out of his garage. Finally, after suffering rising rents and a few expensive moves, he purchased his own workshop in Minneapolis. It was tough finding a niche in custom work, says Freitas, who has built interiors for upscale hotels and restaurants around town, such as Argentinian steakhouse Porzana and Japanese restaurant Kado no Mise. “That’s why we do woodwork, welding, glasswork, and machining. I try to keep as much as possible in-house to keep busy. We can adapt to any changes as needed in the project to save time and money.”

ARTISTS FREITAS ADMIRES:

Interior and fashion designer **Talin Spring** of Spring Finn and Co., who designed Alma hotel and restaurant in Minneapolis and is now working in Paris; clothing designers **Emily Freitas** and **Susan Kim**, who founded Estella; chef and restaurateur **Daniel del Prado**; clothing designer and maker **Benjamin Kelly** of Dinosaur Hampton; and visual artist and sign painter **Forrest Wozniak**.

springfinnandco.com
estella.nyc
dinosaurhampton.com
forrestwozniak.com



ABOVE: Marvin Freitas in his Minneapolis workshop. OPPOSITE TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: Freitas sources wood from several Twin Cities lumberyards, as well as local loggers. Tools and an anvil in Freitas's studio. Here, the artist shapes a piece of metal. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Freitas built the interior of Porzana restaurant in Minneapolis, including the elegant wood bar.

SPOTLIGHT

Maggie Thompson of Makwa Studio

Indigenous textile artist and designer Maggie Thompson's knitwear business, Makwa Studio, is expanding with the help of a new industrial knitting machine, for which she just completed certification. Now the Minneapolis-based artist is building inventory with an eye toward baby blankets, leggings, and five panel hats. "The phase we're in right now is creating the ability to do more and then expanding and building," Thompson says. makwastudio.com



TWIN CITIES PLACES AND SPACES

Artists' Spaces and Events

Short-lived last winter due to warm weather and melting ice, the **Art Shanty Projects** is a village of ingenious vernacular ice houses built on Lake Harriet in Minneapolis by musicians and artists working in various disciplines. artshantyprojects.org

Minneapolis's **Barebones Puppet Theater** is known for its Annual Halloween Outdoor Puppet Extravaganza, a spectacle that includes giant puppets and aerialists. barebonespuppets.org

Can Can Wonderland in Saint Paul, which features an 18-hole miniature golf course designed and created by local artists and an arts retail shop, promises "the most experiential art experience you've ever had, all while sinking putts." cancanwonderland.com

Hmong Cultural Center on University Avenue in Saint Paul "has a good collection of Hmong craft-based work and shows a good amount of Hmong culture and history," says Ger Xiong. hmongcc.org

In Saint Paul, **Indigenous Roots** provides accessible space "to promote and practice holistic well being through indigenous arts, culture, and tradition" and is working with artists, cultural groups, neighbors, and others to develop the 7th Street Cultural Corridor. indigenous-roots.org

Established in 1977, the **Minnesota Lace Society** was formed to educate the public on "all aspects of lace." They do this through programs, classes, demonstrations, and other events. minnlacesociety.org

Northeast Minneapolis is considered the city's arts district, and no wonder. It's home to the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association's annual **Art-A-Whirl** open studio tour, a gazillion studio spaces, and the **American Craft Council**, which is located in the renovated Grain Belt brewery near the Mississippi River. Another high point is the **Flux Arts Building** on the corner of Lowry Avenue and Howard Street, which houses Clay Squared to Infinity and Potek Glass. Fans can also visit artists across Northeast through **First Thursdays in the District**. nema.org/art-a-whirl/ craftcouncil.org fluxartsbuilding.com claysquared.com potekglass.com northeastminneapolisartsdistrict.org

Spread across dozens of galleries, shared spaces, and artist lofts, **Saint Paul Art Crawl**—organized since 1991 by the Saint Paul Art Collective—takes place every spring and fall. stpaulartcollective.org/ Spring-2024-Art-Crawl/

Schools, Workshops, and Resources

Founded in New York in 1943 and based in Minneapolis since 2010, the nonprofit **American Craft Council** offers a range of support to craft artists in all parts of the country, including professional mentoring, a virtual marketplace, in-person events, online forums, and the quarterly magazine *American Craft*. Says Dom Venzant, "I have found that the American Craft Council, **Springboard for the Arts**, and the **Metropolitan Regional Arts Council** are three tremendous organizations that support and provide opportunities for creative projects at both the group and individual level." craftcouncil.org springboardforthearts.org mrac.org

"They do cool stuff!" says Marvin Freitas of the **Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center** in Minneapolis. Offering studio space and classes in blacksmithing, enamel work, encaustic painting, glasswork, metal casting, jewelry and small sculpture making, and metal fabrication, this organization is in fact pretty cool. cafac.org

Founded in 1981, **CLUES**, or Comunitades Latinas Unidas en Servicio, works toward social and economic equality and well-being for Latinos in Minnesota. Their efforts include arts programming, such as vibrant Día de los Muertos events featuring traditional craft and a Saint Paul gallery that spotlights the work of Latino/a/x artists. clues.org

LEFT: Photo courtesy of the artist. RIGHT: Photo by Jaida Grey Eagle, courtesy of the artist.

Offering classes in everything from furniture making to bowl turning, **Fireweed Community Woodshop** in Minneapolis aims to “empower women and nonbinary makers through the art of woodcraft.”

fireweedwoodshop.org

“I don’t really hang out in the art world too much, which is probably a character flaw I should work on,” says Fred Kaemmer. “But as for art hubs in the Twin Cities, I’m thankful that **Foci Minnesota Center for Glass Arts** is now well established. It gives people the opportunity to gain an appreciation for all facets of the glassmaking process through hands-on learning, demonstrations, and exhibitions.” Amara Hark-Weber concurs, adding that Foci is part of an “unusual concentration of craft centers here.”

mnglassart.org

Forecast, a national public art organization based in Saint Paul, offers Making It Public workshops for artists interested in taking their work into the public realm.

forecastpublicart.org

Hark-Weber points to **Highpoint Center for Printmaking** in Minneapolis, which offers cooperative studio space, exhibitions, equipment, and classes. “That is really special about the Twin Cities,” she says.

highpointprintmaking.org

The Saint Paul-based **Metropolitan Regional Arts Council**, with funding from the Minnesota State Arts Board, awards grants and support to a wide range of artists and gets the thumbs up from Venzant.

mrac.org

Hark-Weber recommends **Minnesota Center for Book Arts** in Minneapolis. Founded in 1983, this nonprofit visual arts center “celebrates the art of the book” by offering exhibitions and classes in letterpress printing, bookbinding, hand papermaking, paper marbling, and more.

mnbookarts.org



Instructor Edson Rosas prepares screens for a workshop at Highpoint Center for Printmaking in Minneapolis.

With a dedicated, tax-based funding stream passed by voters in 2008, the **Minnesota State Arts Board** is a major supporter of the arts and, through a series of granting programs, spreads dollars to many craft organizations in the Twin Cities, including the American Craft Council.

arts.state.mn.us

Launched by Ini Iyamba, vice president of product design and development at Faribault Mill, **MN4MN** promotes and fosters “Minnesota’s diverse and burgeoning community of emerging artists, designers, and businesses.”

mn4mn.org

Mudluk pottery studio is a “Black/queer/woman owned ceramics sanctuary” in Minneapolis that provides classes in wheel throwing, hand-building, sculpture, and glaze application to students at all levels.

mudlukpottery.com



SPOTLIGHT

Rammy Mohamed of Ramadan Designs

Oromo fashion designer and clothing maker Rammy Mohamed often looks to fine art painting for inspiration. She admires Claude Monet and Jean-Michel Basquiat, and most recently became obsessed with Los Angeles-based painter Ferrari Sheppard. Mohamed, who works out of her boutique in Saint Paul, draws on Oromian traditions as well as Indian culture when making her dresses and gowns. “We have a kindred spirit,” she says. “I love using their beadwork and their techniques to incorporate into some of my bridal wear.”

ramandhandesigns.com



TWIN CITIES PLACES AND SPACES

Schools, Workshops, and Resources (continued)

Hark-Weber recommends **Northern Clay Center** in Minneapolis, which offers exhibitions, classes, studio space, artist talks, and grants. northernclaycenter.org



Founded in 1991, **Springboard for the Arts** aims to “support artists with the tools to make a living and a life, and to build just and equitable communities full of meaning, joy, and connection.” Venzant recommends this organization, which has offices in Saint Paul and Fergus Falls, Minnesota, and provides grants as well as career consultations. springboardforthearts.org

Run by ceramic artists Mitch Iburg and Zoë Powell, **Studio Alluvium** in Saint Paul offers workshops on working with local clay, making various types of vessels, and more. studioalluvium.com

Through classes, exhibitions, and events, the goal of the **Textile Center** in Minneapolis is to “honor textile traditions, promote excellence and innovation, nurture appreciation, and inspire widespread participation in fiber art.” Hark-Weber gives this organization the thumbs up. textilecentermn.org

Galleries, Studios, Markets

A program of the Native American Community Development Institute, the gallery **All My Relations Arts** on East Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis highlights contemporary Native art and is integral to advancing the careers of Native artists. allmyrelationsarts.org

“You can find beautiful jewelry, crafts, and so much fabulous literature at **Birchbark Books** in the Kenwood neighborhood of Minneapolis,” says Dyani White Hawk. birchbarkbooks.com

Bockley Gallery is a “contemporary art venue and curatorial practice based in Minneapolis,” focused on artists from the Great Lakes region and “Indigenous artists across Turtle Island.” bockleygallery.com

LEFT: Part of a Northern Clay Center fundraiser, this installation features the work of Donna DeSoto in the foreground. RIGHT: Works by artists nouf saleh and Delaney Keshena on display at Public Functionary.

Founded in 1972 by Peter and Mary Deneen in their two-car garage in Saint Paul, **Deneen Pottery** has grown to employ 50 craftspeople who make custom, hand-thrown ceramic mugs, tankards, and tableware. deneenpottery.com

“Of course, there are also the huge events like Art-A-Whirl, and different ‘culture districts,’ but I get a bit overwhelmed at large, intense gatherings,” says Hark-Weber. “I prefer to visit little galleries like **The Grand Hand**,” which specializes in fine American craft. thegrandhandgallery.com

Founded by artists in 2001, **Midway Contemporary Art** is a “nonprofit, non-collecting visual arts organization in Minneapolis that presents temporary exhibitions, maintains a public research library, and presents regular public programs.” midwayart.org



With its studios, galleries, and performance spaces, **Public Functionary** in Minneapolis supports the expression of arts and culture and empowers young artists, especially those who identify as BIPOC, queer, trans, or gender fluid. publicfunctionary.org



TOP LEFT: Photo courtesy of Northern Clay Center. TOP RIGHT: Photo by Rik Sferna. BOTTOM RIGHT: Photo by Jason Arney-O'Neil.

SPOTLIGHT
**Nathan Patrick White
 of NPWoodWorks**

Sourcing wood from a local arborist friend as well as through connections in Northern Minnesota and spots around the Twin Cities, Nathan Patrick White makes chairs, bowls, spoons, and boxes, “using my lathe as much as possible,” he says. Recently, White expanded his knowledge base at the North House Folk School in Grand Marais—where he also sometimes teaches—and is bringing those skills to his new studio located in the Purity Bakery Building in Minneapolis.

npwoodworks.com



Rogue Buddha Gallery in Minneapolis celebrates “hauntingly beautiful . . . works of art with an emphasis on magical realism, pop-surrealism, and the wondrously dark.”

roguebuddha.com

Founded in 2001 by artist Suzy Greenberg, **Soo Visual Arts Center** in Minneapolis is a nonprofit art space that features artist talks, exhibitions, and workshops, and focuses on provocative art and that of underrepresented artists.

soovac.org

“I have shopped at **Woodland Crafts Gift Shop** located in the Minneapolis American Indian Center and **Northland Visions** in Northeast Minneapolis for many years,” says White Hawk. “They are both wonderful hubs for Native-made jewelry, art, crafts, home goods, foods, and beyond.”

maicnet.org/woodland-crafts-gift-shop/
northlandvisions.com

“I recommend the **XIA Gallery** on University Avenue in Saint Paul,” says Xiong. “It has a great variety of Asian American and other BIPOC artworks and a rotating gallery space. They do a lot of great community-based work such as hand-based workshops.”

xiagallerycafe.com

A guest at XIA Gallery & Cafe enjoys a macrame hanger made by Na Vang, owner of Macradolls. The hanger is Vang’s take on the *xauv* traditional Hmong necklace.



TOP LEFT: Photo by Sadie Sigford. TOP RIGHT: Photo by Nathan White. BOTTOM: Photo by Leanghouth Prom.

SPOTLIGHT
Dusty Thune of House of Thune

A special education teacher in Saint Paul, Dusty Thune is a sculptor working primarily with metal, but he’s also a champion snow carver. Thune’s interest in snow art goes way back to his youth, when he’d create sculptures in an urban park near his parents’ home. One year, his sister enticed him to enter a contest, and they won a prize. “It was really fun and I got the bug to do it again,” he says.

houseofthune.com

◆ This story was written and edited by *American Craft* Senior Editor Jennifer Vogel and Minneapolis-based freelance writer Sheila Regan. For additional listings related to supply shops and museums, plus more photos of Twin Cities contributing artists, visit our website at craftcouncil.org/SceneTwinCities. To see the work of some of these artists in person—plus many more—visit ACC’s American Craft Fest on June 8–9, at the historic Union Depot in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Details at craftcouncil.org/StPaulCraftFest.

THE CRAFTED LIFE



The Simple Pleasures of Problem Solving

Eric Meyer's modest, nonmechanical workshop is maximized to design ingenious, handcrafted tools for his fellow woodworkers.

BY ERIC MEYER

When I'm working on projects in my home studio in Chatham, Illinois, it's about the experience, not the object. "Focus on the making" is the philosophy that drives me. I find this approach enables exploration, experimentation, and the freedom to start over (again and again, if need be). If the thing I set out to make is less than perfect, it's okay. Starting over doesn't sting too much. It's an opportunity, in fact, to both reexperience the parts of the building process I enjoy and discover something new along the way.

I'm a maker of furniture (for myself), décor (for charity auctions), and hand tools, which I make primarily for woodworkers. My studio, where everything is done, from design to production, is relatively tiny: 140 square feet to house a workbench, tools, and materials, including a stash of wood, steel, and brass; space to create and move around; and a camera to document what I'm making (I routinely upload my visual journal entries to YouTube).

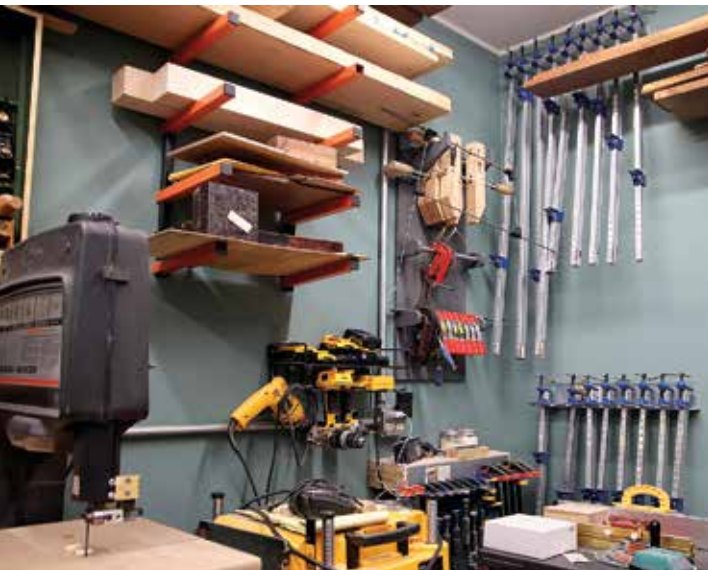
I'm guessing if anyone else had to navigate my shop, they'd find the setup inefficient, at least from a production standpoint. My tools are stored in front of other tools, and materials are buried in corners and under machines. I also have a habit of bouncing from station to station, leaving bits and pieces strewn in my wake, which allows me the flexibility to make things in whatever way I'm feeling in the moment.

Even in a small space, though, it's incredibly easy to lose stuff, so I make sure everything *does* have a place to live. That said, any device with a permanent home in the studio needs to facilitate a particular experience. Sometimes that involves learning a new skill or trying a new technique; sometimes it is re-creating a specific way of working. And while I do have some larger power tools (including a band saw, the most hand tool-like of all the power tools), the bulk of what I produce day-to-day is generally done with a few hand files, chisels, and hand planes. Nothing is particularly exotic or rare, which is part of the pleasure. I find you can use common tools to make almost anything.

Having a compact space also pushes me to work at a smaller scale, which has led to exploring new terrain. Tables and chairs

Woodworker and toolmaker Eric Meyer stands next to a band saw in his 140-square-foot home studio in Chatham, Illinois.

Photo by Eric Meyer.



TOP: Meyer made these tools, including steel hand planes, a pair of *Dancing Master* calipers, and brass-head hammers. FAR LEFT: His space features assorted drills, clamps, and wood pieces. LEFT: To create a hand plane component, Meyer shaves down a hunk of curly maple. OPPOSITE: The decorative top of Meyer's Fish Head Hammer, used for plane setting, is made from a combination of 1095 and 15N20 steel.

I find immense satisfaction in trying to outcompete a machine. It teaches self-sufficiency and inevitably forces me to develop new skill sets.

are fun to make, for instance, but quickly take up space many times their size during the building process. Seeming limitations like these illuminated my current creative path: making tools for others, which requires fewer materials and is less space intensive.

My first toolmaking project involved making a small hammer from brass and maple. The process proved so fun, I made a few more, with the simple goal of improving upon the last. Then a few people asked me to make them one. Then a few more, and so on. With each iteration, I pushed myself to try something new—to do better. From hammers, I branched out into other tools, including calipers and various styles of hand planes.

There is a lot of flexibility when working by hand. One tool allows for multiple operations, where often the only change needed when moving from one operation to the next is altering how the body is positioned in relation to the work. Something as simple as a chisel can turn wood into any shape you may want. Often all that's needed to bend brass and steel to your needs is a file. As a result, I find it particularly satisfying to figure out how an object would have been made pre-mechanization.

The benefit to machinery, of course, is speed and repeatability. But the downside is expense and the space requirements, especially when one device is required to do operation A, another is needed for operation B, and so on. That's why, even when I come up short, I find immense satisfaction in trying to outcompete a machine. It teaches self-sufficiency and inevitably forces me to develop new skill sets.

I approach each tool as a manifestation of artistic expression, similar to sculpture. But instead of using clay or stone as the medium for creating, I use metal and wood. The way the object feels in the hands and how it performs is all part of the experience; it should be pleasant to touch and be able to do the work that it was created to do. Even the packaging of the tools that I send to other woodworkers is part of



my overall approach and aesthetic, as that will be their first impression of what I've made.

Ultimately, I just find great enjoyment in making, and I try to imbue that into the objects I design, so others can share that enjoyment. This all circles back to my studio. If it wasn't a pleasurable place to be, I would not be doing what I'm doing. My hope is that what I make in my space inspires someone else to make something of their own.

•
ericmeyermaker.com | [@eric.meyer.maker](https://twitter.com/eric.meyer.maker)

Eric Meyer spends his spare time crafting hand tools and decorative pieces. He lives in central Illinois with his wife and is the spare human to two spoiled cats. The items he makes are documented and shared on YouTube and EricMeyerMaker.com.

Take a Virtual Tour

Eric Meyer created a virtual tour of his studio for *American Craft*. Check it out at craftcouncil.org/EricMeyerStudio.

On Board

The ancient game of backgammon is thriving, thanks to legions of die-hard players and a handful of craftspeople who create elegant, intricate sets.

BY ELIZABETH FOY LARSEN

Jeff Caruso loves that his family history is integral to the ethos of Crisloid, the Providence, Rhode Island–based luxury board game maker that got its start in the 1940s, when Caruso’s great uncles—Alphonse and Lucky Lodato—founded A & L Manufacturing in Brooklyn, New York. A & L was a family business through and through, with aunts, uncles, and cousins living and working in one building. Each person was responsible for a different aspect of the production and distribution. Today, with its in-house woodshop and staff of 14 dedicated to case making, silk-screening, resin casting, and design, Crisloid is the premier maker of handcrafted backgammon sets in the US. They can be found at tournaments across the country.

A & L was purchased by a nonfamily member in 1970 and moved to Providence. The company changed hands and names several times before Caruso bought it in 2008, after having worked in every aspect of production for 20 years. He has personally trained each of the company’s current employees in skills ranging from printing the points on cork sourced from Portugal to wrapping the dice cups in leather.

While Caruso spends most of his time nowadays on the business side, he feels a particular affinity for pouring,

pigmentizing, casting, cutting, and polishing the resin checkers. “It is very satisfying, because you are taking something from a clear liquid state and turning it into something that three days later is heirloom quality.”

Caruso believes his game boards enhance people’s lives. “They are bringing families together,” he says. “I get a lot of satisfaction from that.”

An ancient game whose origins are believed to stretch back 5,000 years, backgammon involves a board with 24 triangle-shaped points. It is for two players, who each have 15 playing pieces that look like checkers. The object of the game is to move those pieces to your home corner of the board, where you “bear them off,” or remove them from play. It involves strategy and, because your options are determined by a roll of the dice, a lot of luck.


Early versions of backgammon were played by ancient civilizations in Greece, Rome, and Persia, as well as other parts of the Middle East. In the US, the game became chic in the 1970s and 1980s, when it was a staple of fancy bars and private clubs. Backgammon even had a high-stakes role in the 1983 James Bond film *Octopussy*.



LEFT: Crisloid’s tournament attaché-style *BackCountry* backgammon set, complete with Yeti, features a cork playing surface.

OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT: These handcrafted resin checkers, Jeff Caruso’s specialty, are known for their heft and strong hand feel. TOP RIGHT: This set, *True x Crisloid*, reflects the history of now-defunct *True* magazine. BOTTOM: The contrasting colors of the handmade *True x Crisloid* checkers represent battles “between art and science, discipline and instinct, method and whimsy.” Crisloid employees wrap dice cups in leather.





“A bespoke client puts so much trust in my hands to translate their passions and vision into the different materials. That’s a rather magical moment.”

—Alexandra Llewellyn

Currently, the game is having a resurgence in America. The US Backgammon Federation was founded in 2009, and between that organization and the American Backgammon Tour, there are sanctioned tournaments every month across the country. Caruso says that backgammon clubs from New York City to Bozeman, Montana, are so flush with players, they have to hunt for restaurants and bars that can handle the extra capacity. Club Instagram accounts show players of all ages savoring the fun of contemplating their next moves.

Different cultures have different preferences for the boards themselves, which are often linked to the craft traditions of the region. In the Middle East, the game is usually played on a wood surface and the experience is intimately tied to the clatter of the dice hitting the wood. Other cultures prefer the quieter experience of a leather or cork surface. The game sets are often works of art, with artisans who love the game using marquetry, leatherwork, and woodworking to create sets that are passed down through generations.

Bringing People Together

The communal nature of the game resonates deeply with Alexandra Llewellyn, whose eponymous company is known internationally for bespoke backgammon sets. When she was 9 years old, Llewellyn visited her step-grandfather in Cairo and learned to play the game from an elderly local. They didn't speak the same language but could still enjoy each other's company because the rules of the game transcended words. "When you're playing a game with someone, it's such an incredible interaction," she says, speaking over Zoom from her company's London studio. "It's a sort of different kind of conversation that you have."

Llewellyn employs artisans across England, in disciplines that include leather making, cabinetry, silversmithing, stone cutting, and engraving. Her boards are especially known for



ABOVE: A detail of Alexandra Llewellyn's *Midnight* backgammon set, which features intricate marquetrie and stars made from mother of pearl. LEFT: *Midnight* was inspired by the beaches of Miami and Los Angeles. OPPOSITE: Llewellyn's *Butterfly* set, with semi-precious playing pieces and a fumed eucalyptus box.

their intricate marquetrie—designs of inlaid wood of different colors and textures—made by British artist Joe Geoghegan. The only game pieces the company doesn't make are the dice, which are precision-cut casino quality and have to be perfectly weighted.

The company sells sets on their website, each designed by Llewellyn. One is a midnight scene inspired by the beaches of Miami and Los Angeles, with marquetrie made from sustainable sycamore, bird's-eye maple, and satin walnut. The points are in the shape of palm trees, and the playing surface is dotted with stars made from mother of pearl. The playing pieces are malachite and tiger's eye and encased in gunmetal brass.

Alexandra Llewellyn also produces custom sets, each taking approximately four months to complete. Llewellyn estimates that she has made more than 400 commissioned sets since starting the company in 2010. "A bespoke client puts so much trust in my hands to translate their passions and vision into the different materials," she says. "That's a rather magical moment."



Inspirations in Wood and Leather

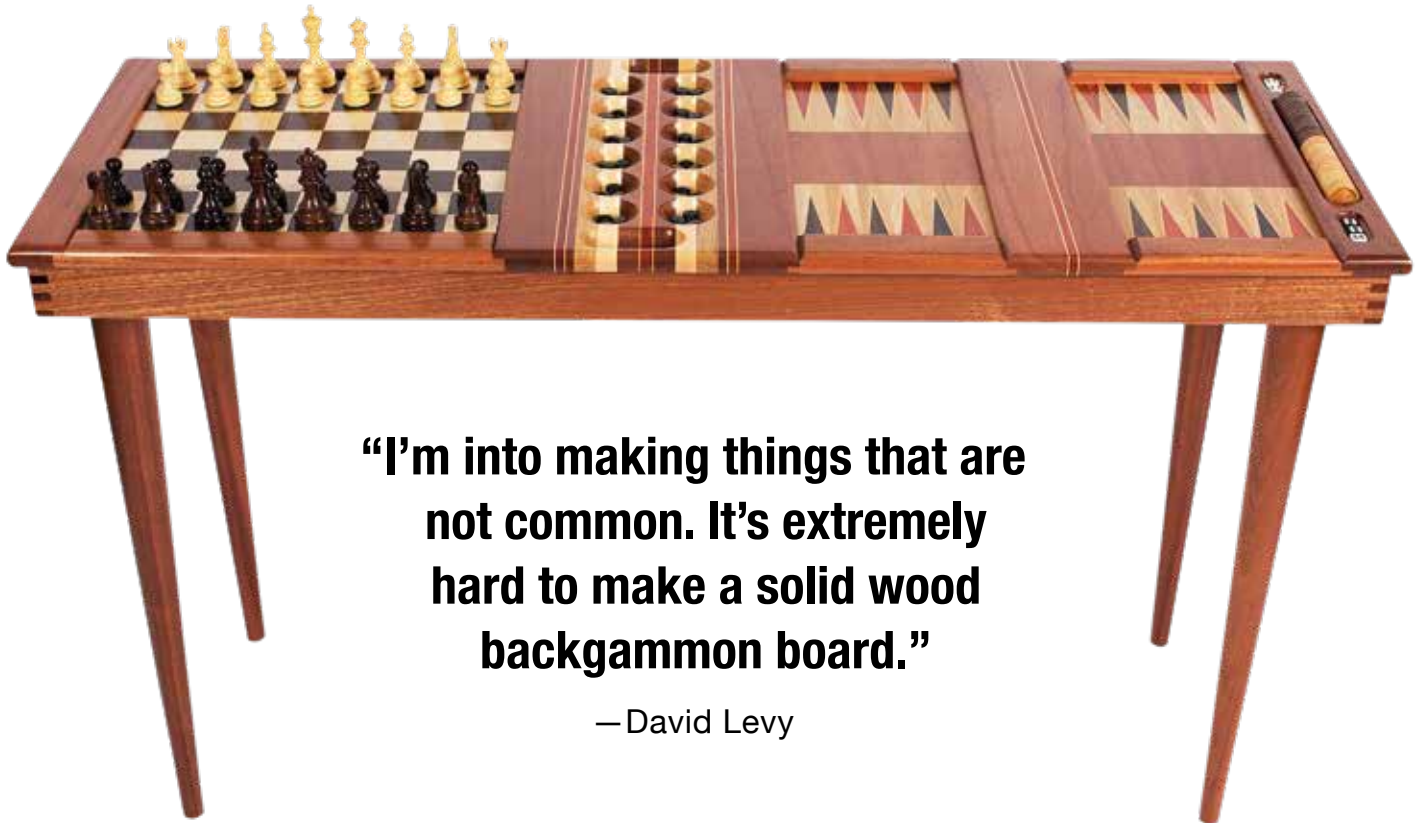
California artist and woodworker David Levy wasn't drawn to the game itself when he started making backgammon sets. Rather it was the creative challenge of building the boards out of solid wood that appealed to him. Levy grew up in the pine forests of New Mexico, where he worked at a logging camp during the summer. He says those early experiences with wood became more formalized when he studied design at University of California, Davis. He started his woodworking career in the 1970s making kitchen products, including cutting boards and knife blocks. In the 1980s, he ventured into games.

Under the name Hardwood Creations, Levy estimates that he makes between 20 and 30 backgammon sets per year. His boards are made out of African sapele, African padauk, maple, white oak, and walnut. He uses tongue-and-groove joinery to insert the points into the panels that make up the playing surface. Each set weighs roughly 10 pounds and is finished with lacquer to add luster and make it more durable.

"I'm into making things that are not common," he says. "It's extremely hard to make a solid wood backgammon board."

Los Angeles-based Brian Roedel's interest in working with leather—and eventually backgammon boards—started with an *aha* moment. In 2018, he was working as a film unit still photographer, a job that required him to carry two cameras at once. There was no shortage of dual holsters he could have purchased, but he decided to make one himself. Working with leather was a revelation, even though it wasn't easy. "I try not to drink coffee on days when I am working with it," says Roedel, who creates leather goods for his company, Upstate Handmade. "It is a very unforgiving format, where all your flaws are exposed. So you have to slow down."

In 2023, he and a woodworker named Joe Lepp—who works as a grip in the film industry—launched a line of backgammon boards called Heirloom Boards, which feature playing surfaces crafted mostly from luxury Italian leather sustainably sourced from the meat industry. Everything is done by hand, from the cutting to the stitching to the creation of the wet molds used to shape the leather. While Lepp initially made the solid wood cases by hand, he switched to a CNC



"I'm into making things that are not common. It's extremely hard to make a solid wood backgammon board."

—David Levy



ABOVE: Brian Roedel makes this wet-molded board from Badalassi Carlo vegetable-tanned Italian leather. RIGHT MIDDLE: Available at Upstate Handmade, *The Shesh Besh* comes with handmade black walnut and birch checkers. RIGHT BOTTOM: *The Shesh Besh's* mahogany case. OPPOSITE: The backgammon board in David Levy's *Hardwood Game Table* is made of Peruvian walnut, padauk, sapele, white oak, and maple.

machine to increase precision. Wood options for boards and checkers include mahogany, cherry, purpleheart, alder, maple, African padauk, and teak. Each backgammon set takes a day and a half of sanding, finishing, and polishing to complete.

To gain design insights, Lepp and Roedel regularly visit backgammon clubs and meetups in Los Angeles. “Backgammon is back!” says Roedel. “It’s getting people together, getting strangers together to talk and meet in real life.”

- ◆ crisloid.com
- alexandrallengellyn.com
- americanmadewoodart.com
- upstatehandmade.com

Frequent *American Craft* contributor Elizabeth Foy Larsen plays backgammon weekly on a Crisloid board with her 90-year-old father, who lives in a memory care unit in Minnesota. She says it can be hard to connect on most topics. “Details get repeated, sometimes within minutes. The events of his life feel like sand slipping through fingers.” However, her father’s mind has “retained the rules of, and enthusiasm for, backgammon. It’s a gift to be able to connect with him this way—he’ll critique my moves and laugh when I groan at his aggravating ability to roll doubles at the precise moment when I’m convinced I am going to win. We have been playing together for over 50 years and even now he regularly beats me. Given the circumstances, I am happy to lose.”



Photos by Brian Roedel. OPPOSITE: Photo by David Levy.



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Sculpture of Frida Kahlo
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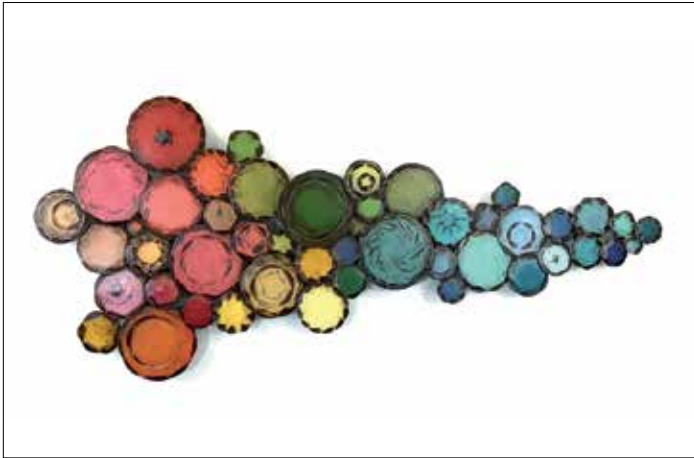
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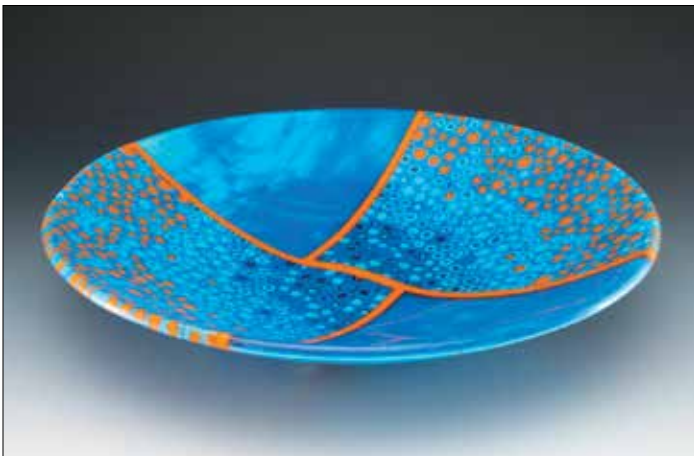
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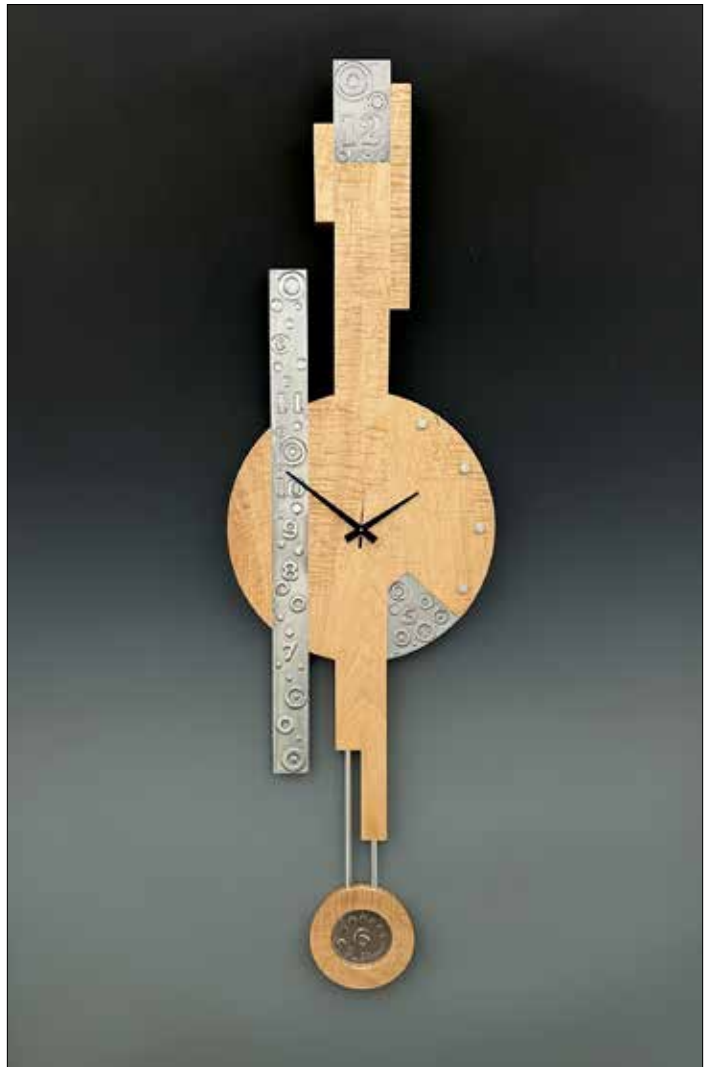
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Dear friends
and supporters,

The American Craft Council's 47th Baltimore Marketplace is nearly three weeks behind us as I write this message, but I'm still thinking about the crowds, the energy, and the joy that pervaded this flagship event. On behalf of our staff and board of trustees, I extend heartfelt thanks to the 390+ exhibiting artists, numerous local community partners and School-to-Market participants, and some 9,100 attendees who gathered to celebrate craft and the spirit of community it fosters.



In-person marketplaces are great vehicles for advancing both parts of our organization's mission: they foster the livelihoods of craftspeople and expand the community of people who appreciate the handcrafted. For this reason, ACC is committed to deepening and developing partnerships that will take our Baltimore event to the next level and help us redevelop marketplace-centered events in the Twin Cities and another to-be-announced city within the next two to three years. To learn about the new event we are producing in the Twin Cities this June, please see page 75 or visit craftcouncil.org.

Collaborating with regional and local partners to produce marketplaces and other kinds of in-person events is a high priority for us over the next five years, along with integrating

in-person events, e-commerce, and *American Craft* publishing and storytelling.

ACC is best known for our magazine and events, but we also offer professional development programs that foster craft artists' livelihoods through education and peer support. With generous backing from the Windgate and Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundations, our Emerging Artists Cohort program will soon enter its fourth year. We received a record 835 applications for the EAC in 2024—up 41 percent from last year. It is rewarding to see the interest in this and other ACC programs and to hear that they are making a meaningful impact for craft artists and a growing community of appreciators.

In whatever ways you connect to ACC and support our mission, thank you for being part of what we do.

ANDREA SPECHT / American Craft Council Executive Director



Exhibitors at the 2024 American Craft Made Baltimore Marketplace (left to right): Ashley Benton of Ashley Benton Fine Art, Jonah Song of Saint Joan Jewelry, Tom Poirier of Tom Poirier Handwovens.



Lois Moran Award for Craft Writing

ANNOUNCEMENT

For the past three years, ACC was pleased to recognize the best writing in craft with the Lois Moran Award for Craft Writing. Lois was the highly respected editor in chief of *American Craft* from 1980 to 2006. Since her death in 2020, a group of generous donors have contributed funds to the award named in her memory. We are now sunsetting this award and working to develop new ways to honor Lois's legacy.

We offer a deep thank you to everyone who has been involved in the Lois Moran Award for Craft Writing—donors, submitters, nominators, jurors, and finalists—and a hearty congratulations to all the award winners.

—Andrea Specht, ACC executive director, and Karen Olson, editor in chief of *American Craft*





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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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Workshops

BLACKBERRY HILL ART CENTER, Orford, NH

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Michelle Gregor, Improvisation in Figurative Clay Sculpture, June 17–21.

Sarah Anderson, Sgraffito Designs, July 12–14.

Ben Lambert, Slab Happy Swimmers, July 22–26.

Lakyn Bowman, Mono-Printing on Clay, August 2–4.

Ariel Bowman, Animals in Clay, August 12–16.

For more information:

BlackberryHillArtCenter.com,

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Upcoming Issues

Fall 2024:
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Winter 2025:
Interior

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Emerge

Summer 2025:
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Deb Fanelli Jewelry

Southern Vermont Arts Center Call for Entries

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Market dates:
November 9–10, 2024

Application deadline:
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Entry fee: \$250

svac.org/holiday-market



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Chartres Anemone by Martha Collins

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December 7, 2024 –
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March 10–September 10

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Botanicals with Bite. One evening in January, toward the end of sculptor and installation artist Sagarika Sundaram’s *Source* exhibition at Palo Gallery in New York City, a patron snuggled up to one of her enormous, psychedelic fiber sculptures and declared, “It’s cozy. You can feel its love.” Sundaram, who happened to be standing in another part of the gallery, described her pieces in less comforting terms. “I think of them more as fierce and a little grotesque,” she said. “I like to think these pieces have a life force, that they are fully awake.”

The artist creates her hand-dyed felted wool sculptures backward, by layering the wool from front to back, creating extravagant patterns and color combinations along the way. As she builds, she embeds eruptive pockets into the work, strategically placing “resists” to maintain the separation of layers when applying hot water to the wool. Later, she slashes the pockets open with scissors, making eyes or mouths or seed pods or flowers

or fruits. These vivid apertures are subject to interpretation. The effect is “beyond language,” said Sundaram, a visiting assistant professor at Pratt Institute who grew up between India and Dubai.

Sundaram’s goal is to explore the psychological tension between inside and outside, surface and structure, suggesting “the intertwined nature of reality.” She wants viewers to think about gravity and physics and even Spanish filmmaker Luis Buñuel. By the time she sliced open the pockets embedded in *Kosha*, 2023, made of hand-dyed felted wool, 102 x 102 x 8 inches, she’d forgotten what was hidden between the layers of felt. It wasn’t until the piece was flipped over, dried, cut, and hanging on a wall that she knew exactly what it would look like. Sundaram describes “walking into the unknown” as the thrill that propels her forward. —Jennifer Vogel

♦
sagarikasundaram.com | @ohsagarika

CONTEMPORARY CRAFT



Ceramic and metal sculptures
by Robin and John Gumaelius
at White Bird Gallery.
Story Bird with Suspenders (left),
8.5 x 3.25 x 2.5 in. deep, and
Story Bird with Doublet (right)
9.5 x 3 x 3.5 in.



Marsh in the Round
by Jaana Mattson
at The Grand Hand Gallery.
Needle felted wool, wood.
14 x 16 in.



Slot
by George Peterson
at Signature.
Recycled skateboard decks,
mixed media.
31 x 31 x 5 in.

Ruby Throated Hummingbird Cuff
by Seth Michael Carlson
at Gravers Lane Gallery. 2023.
18k yellow, green, red, and
palladium white gold,
emerald, white diamonds.



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Emma Amos, *Winning*, 1982, acrylic on linen with hand-woven fabric, Smithsonian American Art Museum