Leadership and Legacy

American Craft Council
Leadership and Legacy

The American Craft Council’s work in 2016 was focused on our strategic goal to provide thought leadership in the craft field. This goal is deeply rooted in the historic work of the Council and the programs that we deliver to our members, artists, scholars, and collectors.

Just as the contemporary craft field has evolved, so has the way we provide thought leadership. No longer does it suffice to stand and deliver proclamations; we need to create a space where conversation and an exchange of important ideas can occur to advance the field.

“Present Tense,” the Council’s 2016 conference in Omaha, Nebraska, was designed to provide that platform. The conference brought together students, artists, critics, educators, and collectors to discuss key issues in the field that the broad spectrum of thought leaders need to understand. Moderated discussions and common-interest conversations allowed participants to hear from innovators and discuss their own views on the topics. This direct approach to thought leadership places us firmly in the vanguard, and it was a smashing success.

ACC’s conference program, started in 1957, is just one of the Council’s legacy programs. American Craft magazine, ACC’s College of Fellows, and the modern craft fair are other significant programs initiated by the Council and founder Aileen Osborn Webb. These programs have adapted to changes in the field, as well as in the marketplace and public tastes. As a membership organization with a global reach, our relevance and value to the community are more important than ever.

Beginning in 2017, ACC is celebrating its 75th anniversary with heritage-printed posters, each commemorating a decade of craft. Iconic images and a timeline of significant events will be presented in nine issues of American Craft. This limited-edition poster series is produced in partnership with Mohawk Fine Papers and Shapco Printing and is our way of saying thank you. We look forward to the next 75 years of celebrating American craft.

Thank you for your continued support and for being our partner in championing craft!
Thought Leadership: Head, Hand, and Heart

One of the key ways ACC advances thought leadership is by convening members of the craft field for an open exchange of ideas about the most significant issues we face. In October, a remarkable group of artists, students, scholars, curators, and craft enthusiasts gathered at Kaneko in Omaha, Nebraska, for “Present Tense,” our 12th national conference. In addition to three days of inspiring speakers and thought-provoking sessions, we also celebrated the 2016 American Craft Council Awards, our biennial recognition of the people and organizations that have made an extraordinary impact on the field.

“I was most taken by the overall excitement of the craft field at large. To me, it feels like the perfect time to be really investigating craft. It was inspiring to be surrounded by people who have the same dedication and belief that craft is an integral part of our contemporary times and possesses a unique potential to shape the world.”

— Peter Scheidt, artist and conference attendee

“Now that I have been able to engage on a very real level with the contemporary formation of craft history, a different sense of urgency and responsibility is provoked within me as a scholar – one that was not present prior to the conference.”

— Aleesa Pitchamarn Alexander, MA/PhD candidate and conference scholarship recipient

“The ACC Awards ceremony simply made me cry. The craftspeople who are the best in the field, standing on stage, so venerable in their accomplishments, filled me with love and energy. However, it was the caring community who stood up to applaud that overwhelmed me. It was the first time I realized what a great group of people I’m with, [and] I am, almost surprisingly, one of them.”

— Yushan Cassie Sun, artist and conference scholarship recipient
Connections That Matter

Making matters, and we are proud to work with partners on important initiatives that support that principle. Since 2014, the American Craft Council has been fortunate to champion the Rare Craft Fellowship Award in association with The Balvenie. With The Balvenie’s support, each year we’ve celebrated a remarkable group of artists dedicated to the revival and perpetuation of rare crafts. In 2016, we honored paper artists Erik and Martin Demaine with this annual fellowship.

Another highlight this year was offering scholarships to 65 students and emerging professionals to attend our national conference, thanks to the tremendous support of the Windgate Charitable Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska, and the Richard Brooke Foundation. Connecting communities has always been at the heart of what ACC does, and we couldn’t complete this important work without the help of our generous partners.

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1. 2016 “Present Tense” scholarship recipients, Photo: Ben Semisch Photography
2. Lead juror Anthony Bourdain with 2016 Rare Craft Fellowship Award recipient Erik Demaine; Photo: Courtesy of Magrino
3. Erik and Martin Demaine printed paper for Folding Error I (2014). If you were to scan the unlinked QR code with your phone, Erik says, you’d get the title of the sculpture. Photo: Courtesy of Erik and Martin Demaine

A Legacy Built to Last

This year we celebrated a milestone in ACC history – 75 years of championing craft. The Council has led the field since the inception of Craft Horizons in 1941 (now American Craft) and garnered many firsts along the way, from hosting the first contemporary craft fair to holding the first national craft conference to opening the first museum of contemporary craft. As we look to the future, we’re more committed than ever to bringing you meaningful, award-winning content – in the magazine and online – as well as inspiration, resources, and opportunities for artists. Throughout our journey, we seek to honor founder Aileen Osborn Webb’s vision and legacy, while continuing to evolve and remain as relevant now as we were when we stepped onto this path.

Here’s to the next 75 years!

—

“Longevity is not about finding an approach and holding on for dear life. It’s about active, continual, committed renewal.”

— Monica Moses, editor in chief, American Craft

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The Balvenie
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32

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Revenue/Expenses

FY2016 Operating Revenue

$5.44 million

- Craft shows: 52%
- Publishing and advertising: 10%
- Membership: 13%
- Contributions and special events: 5%
- Strategic investment and endowment draw: 20%

FY2016 Operating Expenses

$5.43 million

- Program expenses: 84%
- Fundraising: 7%
- Management and general: 9%

The Impact of Giving

ACC supports professional makers and engages both individuals and communities, connecting them to the measurable benefits of craft. And we’re not alone. We’re grateful for the incredible supporters who share our vision. This past year, individual donors to ACC’s annual fund increased by 4 percent, resulting in a 19 percent overall increase in unrestricted funds raised. Every dollar has an impact. Here are some examples of donations at work:

1,913 new books, catalogues, and periodicals were added to the American Craft Council Library.

8,164 people participated in ACC educational events, including lectures, demonstrations, maker fairs, and hands-on projects around the country.

1,552 artists had access to a vibrant marketplace and economic opportunities through exhibiting at ACC’s annual juried craft shows.

8,498 additional images were added to the American Craft Council Library’s Digital Collections, accessible to anyone, anywhere.

117 emerging artists received professional development assistance through Hip Pop, ACC’s emerging artists program that helps new makers enter the high-end craft show market.

Awards - 2016

American Craft magazine:
- 2016 Minnesota Magazine & Publishing Association Awards - 14, including six golds

FOLIO:
- American Craft magazine: Folio's 2016 Eddie and Ozzie national awards, best in category - plus two honorable mentions

AVA Digital Awards:
- craftcouncil.org in partnership with Four Kitchens: 2015 Emerging Voices Awards book in partnership with Mohawk Fine Papers - HP Inkspiration Award

The American Craft Council’s financial statements are audited annually by certified public accountants CliftonLarsonAllen. Audited financial statements are available upon request.
The American Craft Council is fortunate to have a growing network of donors. The people and organizations on these pages have been generous partners during the past fiscal year. We thank them for their commitment to the continued vitality and growth of the craft field.

This annual report recognizes those who made donations to ACC between October 1, 2015, and September 30, 2016. Because of space limitations, this list includes donors with cumulative giving of $100 or more for all purposes, including annual giving, project support, and event sponsorship. Every gift is important, and all our supporters have our heartfelt thanks. Together, we are making a difference.

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Lewis Cabot
Partnering with ACC

Jackson Schwartz, glass artist and co-founder, Hennepin Made and The Balvenie

that is engaged in modern craft. We look forward to future collaborations and sharing our work with ACC.

“Partnering with ACC has been wonderful in connecting the meaning and purpose of our work to an expanding audience that is engaged in modern craft. We look forward to future collaborations and sharing our work with the ACC community.”

— Jackson Schwartz, glass artist and co-founder, Hennepin Made

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Our philanthropic community always has room for more supporters. If you are interested in supporting ACC with a tax-deductible gift, you can give securely online at craftcouncil.org/giving.

ACC has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this listing. If you have any questions, please contact Elissa Chaffee, director of development, at (612) 206-3125 or echaffee@craftcouncil.org.

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In 2016, ACC created a new distinction to honor the work of past trustees. It is with deep gratitude that we recognize Life Trustees for their extraordinary service, inspirational leadership, and commitment to the American Craft Council.

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