

AMERICAN
craft
CONNECTS

ACC CONFERENCE & AWARDS

SEPTEMBER 4–6, 2026
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
EVENT GUIDE

Welcome to American Craft Connects Conference & Awards 2026

Explore the ideas, trends, and movements shaping the future of craft.

American Craft Connects is presented by the American Craft Council, a national nonprofit based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Our mission is to foster livelihoods and ways of living grounded in the artful work of the human hand, creating a more joyful, humane, and regenerative world.

We envision a world where objects matter, makers thrive, and craft connects.



WHAT WE DO:

Craft storytelling.

We tell stories that illuminate the many ways that craft connects people and shapes culture.

Unique events.

We create engaging in-person and virtual events that bring makers and appreciators together.

Artist development.

We offer innovative programs that support craft-centered livelihoods and celebrate the past, present, and future of the handcrafted.

craftcouncil.org

Dear friends and colleagues,

What do Lake Geneva, NY; Omaha, NE; Seattle, WA; Albuquerque, NM; and Winston-Salem NC have in common? Along with numerous other cities, all have hosted national American Craft Council conferences, contributing to a programmatic legacy nearly 70 years in the making.

We are honored to build on this legacy with American Craft Connects, ACC's 14th national conference, in September 2026. Producing an event of this scale requires hard work, generosity, gumption, and goodwill from hundreds of people. To our staff, trustees, volunteers, members and donors, sponsors, organizational partners, and especially, to our speakers and panelists, I am grateful beyond expression. And to the 2026 ACC Award recipients we will honor during this conference, congratulations on your remarkable achievements, and thank you for your contributions to American craft.

This is our first conference since the pandemic and our second in Minneapolis. No other city has hosted a national ACC conference more than once, and the distinction is well deserved given the courage, solidarity, and compassion that the people of Minneapolis demonstrated to our nation and world over the past year. It's not a coincidence that craft thrives here.

Craft is a constellation of values and practices that has never been more instructive in our pursuit of a better world. Let's use our time together over the next few days to renew and deepen our nationwide craft community. Let's forge new connections, learn from each other, and have fun. And above all, let's commit to keep connecting, learning, and finding the joy in our shared work in the years to come.

In solidarity and gratitude,



Andrea Specht

Andrea Specht, Executive Director
American Craft Council

Table of Contents

- 1 **Welcome**
- 4 **Early Career Artist Program**
- 5 **ACC Membership**
- 7 **Craft Happenings + Opportunities Board**
- 8 **Upcoming Events**
- 10 **Discover Minnesota's Craft Scene**
- 11 **ACC Biennial Awards**
- 12 **Meet the Honorees**
- 16 **Panels and Conversations**
- 37 **Creative Commons**
- 42 **Map**
- 44 **Schedule**



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— Walter C. Rasmussen —
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FOUNDATION

Thank you to our Foundational Sponsors for
making our ACC programs and events possible:

Bob Lynch and Dianne Brace

Lynn Pollard

Gary J. Smith and Jamienne Studley

To support future ACC programs, consider giving at
craftcouncil.org/donate

To see a list of all of our supporters, see our Year in Review.

Transformative support.



The American Craft Council's Early Career Artist Program helps professionalize your passion, offering exclusive access to \$100,000 in grants, steeply discounted booth fees to showcase your work at ACC craft fairs nationwide, and more—on top of the full benefits of American Craft Council membership.

Visit craftcouncil.org to learn more.

“The ACC Early Career Artist Program mentorship has been truly phenomenal, especially for someone like me without a formal art background, a midlife career shift, and a million questions.”

—Kolika Chatterjee

With generous support from the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation, ACC has established three grant opportunities available to Early Career Artist Program participants.

Grant Deadlines:

October 1, 2026
December 15, 2026
March 31, 2027



Photo by Max Franz.

AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL Membership

Your passport to craft.

Whether you're an artist, educator, student, collector, or passionate supporter of craft, an American Craft Council membership connects you to the people, ideas, and opportunities shaping the field today.

As an ACC member, you'll enjoy:

- Exclusive discounts with more than 40 craft organizations across the country.
- Savings on ACC events and reduced application fees for artist opportunities.
- Inspiring stories, news, and perspectives from across the craft community.
- Access to professional opportunities and educational resources.
- A chance to support the future of craft, helping ACC champion makers, strengthen creative communities, and expand access to craft nationwide.

JOIN TODAY!

Visit craftcouncil.org/membership to become a member.

Together, we're building a stronger, more connected future for American craft.

Membership benefits

Join ACC and receive benefits and access to more than 40 organizations around the country, along with access to resources, networking opportunities, discounts, and programs designed to build the craft community and help artists build sustainable careers.



Join today at craftcouncil.org

Want to see your organization listed here?
Email Jane Cazzorla at jcazzorla@craftcouncil.org
to explore becoming a benefit partner today.



CRAFT HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES BOARD

Discover Opportunities. Connect with Craft.

The American Craft Council is building the tools that help makers, organizations, educators, and craft enthusiasts stay connected to opportunities and events across the craft community.

2000+ visitors each month. New listings added regularly!

Opportunities Board

- Calls for artists and exhibitions
- Grants, fellowships, and residency opportunities
- Jobs and internships in the field
- Professional development and career resources
- and more!

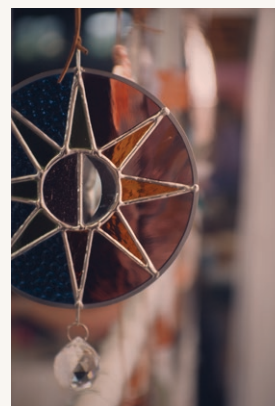
Craft Happenings Calendar

- Exhibitions and gallery openings
- Craft fairs and festivals
- Workshops, classes, and demonstrations
- Artist talks and lectures
- Studio tours, open studios, and community events

Have a listing to share?

Submit today at craftcouncil.org to be seen by thousands of artists, makers, educators, and craft professionals nationwide.

Upcoming American Craft Council Events



Craft Objects & Design Atlanta

Call for artists:

Apply October 12–December 7, 2026

From beautifully crafted objects to forward-thinking design, discover the creative energy shaping today's handmade culture at Craft Objects & Design Atlanta, taking place November 2027 in Atlanta, Georgia. This vibrant, all-ages event brings together around 100 makers, designers, and creative studios from across the country alongside Atlanta-based and regional arts organizations.

Artists and makers from around the country are encouraged to apply to participate in this event.

To learn more and apply, visit craftcouncil.org.



American Craft Forum

For the Record:

Craft Archives as Creative Infrastructure

Wednesday, October 14, 2026

6–7 p.m. ET / 5–6 p.m. CT /

4–5 p.m. MT / 3–4 p.m. PT

Presented in partnership with the Center for Craft (CfC), this free virtual forum celebrates recent steps by ACC and CfC to preserve and expand access to the history of American craft. Following ACC's landmark gift of its nationally significant Library & Archives Collections to the CfC, the conversation will explore the vision for these extraordinary resources as they become part of the new Center for Craft Community Library and Archives. The program will also introduce CfC's new archivist/librarian and highlight other innovative projects advancing craft scholarship, archives, and research.

Learn more and register at craftcouncil.org



Object Stories: San Francisco

Thursday, November 12, 2026

7–9 p.m.

KQED commons, 2601 Mariposa Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

ACC heads to the West Coast for our next iteration of this live storytelling series. Presented in partnership with KQED, this event features artists and cultural leaders personal tales about objects that shape and influence their lives. Each story reveals how objects carry memory, meaning, and the ability to bring people together.

[Learn more and register at craftcouncil.org](https://craftcouncil.org)



American Craft Made Baltimore 2027

February 19–21, 2027

Baltimore Convention Center, Maryland

Join ACC for the 50th year of American Craft Made Baltimore. The East Coast's largest juried craft fair will welcome nearly 400 artists, 10,000 craft enthusiasts, and dozens of local partner organizations from across the East Coast for shopping, demonstrations, hands-on experiences, and connection through craft.

Tickets go on sale November 30, 2026.

[Learn more and register at craftcouncil.org](https://craftcouncil.org)



Photo courtesy of Minnesota Center for Book Arts

American Craft Connects Discover Minnesota's Craft Scene

Minneapolis and St. Paul have a rich cultural and creative ecosystem. The American Craft Council arranged a number of opportunities for conference attendees to build community across the Twin Cities and with some of our longstanding partners.

Thank you to our local partners:

Northern Clay Center
Clay Squared to Infinity
Minnesota Center for Book Arts
Textile Center





American Craft Connects ACC Biennial Awards Celebration

Friday, September 4

Weisman Art Museum
333 East River Road,
University of Minnesota,
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Kick off American Craft Connects and celebrate the legacy and future of American craft at this awards reception honoring the 2026 American Craft Council Biennial Award recipients.

Held at the iconic Weisman Art Museum, designed by Frank Gehry, this special evening offers after-hours access to the museum, an awards ceremony, the opportunity to meet the honorees, and a reception with light hors d'oeuvres and refreshments. Since 1975, the ACC Awards have recognized individuals and organizations whose work as artists, educators, mentors, curators, scholars, and advocates has shaped and strengthened the field of craft. Reception and program at the iconic riverside Weisman Art Museum, designed by Frank Gehry.

5 p.m. Galleries Open
to Attendees

5:45 p.m. Program begins

Reception to follow

9 p.m. Event ends

**This event is ticketed and
requires a separate ticket
from Conference registration.**

To get tickets or for
more information, visit
craftcouncil.org.

ACC Biennial Awards Meet the 2026 Honorees

The ACC Biennial Awards represent the pinnacle of recognition in the craft field. Since 1975, ACC has celebrated artists, scholars, teachers, and advocates whose legacy, commitment, and contributions to craft are exceptional. ACC presents four awards biennially to recognize standout achievements and inspire future generations of makers and artists.

These awards and profiles were made possible with support from Homo Faber, the Windgate Foundation, and the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation.

Read extended bios and learn more about each recipient at craftcouncil.org.

Gold Medal for Consummate Craftsmanship



Consuelo Jimenez Underwood

Consuelo Jimenez Underwood is a celebrated California-born fiber artist whose Chicana and Huichol heritage and upbringing as the daughter of migrant agricultural workers inform her powerful tapestries and mixed-media installations exploring borders, migration, identity, and the interconnectedness of people and place.



Sonya Clark

Sonya Clark is an internationally recognized artist, and educator, whose work uses hair, textiles, found objects, and other materials to explore history, identity, and belonging. Rooted in craft traditions and acts of making, her work invites dialogue about memory, community, and human connection.

College of Fellows



Clifton Monteith

Clifton Monteith is a furniture maker and master craftsman whose willow furniture, lanterns, and sculptural works are inspired by traditional techniques and the natural world.



Cristina Córdova

Cristina Córdova is a revered sculptor whose figurative works in ceramics explore cultural identity, belonging, personal narratives, and the complexities of the human experience.



Donald Friedlich

Donald Friedlich is a celebrated jewelry artist, and educator, whose technical mastery and materiality have helped shape contemporary American jewelry in America.



DY Begay

DY Begay is a fifth-generation Diné weaver whose internationally exhibited tapestries draw on Navajo traditions, identity, and the landscapes of the Navajo Nation to create innovative explorations of memory, place, and color.



Jean McLaughlin

HONORARY FELLOW

Jean McLaughlin is a longtime arts leader and former executive director of Penland School of Craft whose decades of nonprofit leadership have strengthened craft education, countless creative careers, and the broader American craft community.



Mildred Howard

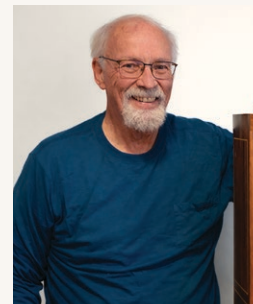
Mildred Howard is an acclaimed multidisciplinary artist whose decades-long practice and public art exploring history, memory, family, accessibility and community has earned major national honors.



Namita Gupta Wiggers

HONORARY FELLOW

Namita Gupta Wiggers is a curator, educator, writer, and artist whose work focuses on contemporary craft, material culture, and critical craft studies. Through scholarship, teaching, and leadership, she has helped expand conversations about craft and its role in society.



Silas Kopf

Kopf is a renowned furniture artist and marquetry craftsman whose practice combines extraordinary technical skill with a playful imagination and deep respect for historical techniques.

College of Fellows (Cont.)



Susan Stinsmuehlen-Amend

Susan Stinsmuehlen-Amend is a pioneering glass artist, educator, and leader whose innovative practice and decades of service have helped shape contemporary glass through studio work, teaching, and arts advocacy.



Vivian Beer

Vivian Beer is an award-winning designer, sculptor, and furniture maker whose contemporary metal works merge craft, design, and sculpture to challenge perceptions of furniture, domestic environments, and public spaces.



Winnie Owens-Hart

Winnie Owens-Hart is an acclaimed ceramic artist and educator whose work celebrates cultural continuity, resilience, and the experiences of women, incorporating Nigerian and Ghanaian pottery traditions into contemporary forms.

Aileen Osborn Webb Award for Philanthropy



Gary Smith and Jamienne Studley

Gary Smith and Jamienne Studley are distinguished craft collectors, advocates, and philanthropists whose leadership, service, and support have strengthened the American Craft Council and advanced appreciation for contemporary craft nationwide.

AMERICAN craft CONNECTS

Panels & Conversations

For deeper panel descriptions, speaker bios, and more information, visit craftcouncil.org

A quick guide can be found inside the back cover.

Opening Remarks with Dr. Anton Treuer

Saturday, September 5, 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

Memorial Hall



Dr. Anton Treuer

Professor of Ojibwe at Bemidji State University and acclaimed author Dr. Anton Treuer will open this year's conference with remarks on Saturday, September 5. Named in 2018 as Guardian of Culture and Lifeways by the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums, Dr. Treuer's presentation will consider how craft is shaped by place, history, identity, and community, offering a foundation for meaningful conversations throughout the conference.

Closing Remarks with Carla Canales

Sunday, September 6, 4–5 p.m.

Memorial Hall



Carla Canales

Acclaimed singer, cultural leader, and former Senior Advisor and Envoy for Cultural Exchange Carla Canales will close this year's conference with remarks on Sunday, September 6, reflecting on the connections forged throughout the event and exploring the relationship between craft and community. Canales will also perform during her presentation, leaving attendees with an inspiring reminder of the power of craft to bring people together.

Between Friends: A Conversation on Queer Craft, Justice, and Resistance

Sunday, September 6, 1–2 p.m.

Johnson Great Room

Between Friends: A Conversation on Queer Craft, Justice, and Resistance explores the role of craft in queer visibility and social justice advocacy. Drawing on their own practices and the work of six additional craft artists, the speakers will examine how material-based art carries memory, demands witness, and builds community in times of political urgency. This session is designed for makers, educators, collectors, and anyone who believes that how we make things is inseparable from why.

SPEAKERS



Tim Tate,
Glass Artist,
Co-Director of the
Washington Glass Studio



Michael Sylvan Robinson,
fiber artist and activist
with Gays Against Guns



Emmett Winship Ramstad,
Artist and Educator
(moderator)

Beyond the Collection: Journey From the Studio Minneapolis Institute of Art

Sunday, September 6, 3–4 p.m.

Johnson Great Room

Inspired by Tamara and Michael Root's transformative gifts to the Minneapolis Institute of Art and the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University, this panel explores the evolving role of private collections as catalysts for public engagement, education, and artistic exchange. Through a conversation with collectors, educators, artists, and museum professionals, the panel examines the importance of stewardship, access, and curatorial context in bringing craft into new spaces and communities. Speakers will reflect on how thoughtful collecting practices can support artists, enrich classrooms, and expand the reach and impact of craft collections. Moderated by Jaimianne Jacobin, this discussion explores what happens when innovative thinking and dedicated stewardship move artwork from the studio, beyond the collection, and into the public sphere.

SPEAKERS



Jaimianne Jacobin,
Development Director,
American Craft Council
(Moderator)



Jennifer Komar Olivarez,
Head of Exhibition Planning
and Strategy, Interim
Curator of the Purcell-
Cutts House, Minneapolis
Institute of Art



Tamara and Michael
Root, Collectors of Studio
Ceramics



Samuel Johnson, Professor
of Art at College of St.
Benedict and St. John's
University

Beyond Our Walls: Building Community Through Accessible Arts Programming

Sunday, September 6, 2–3 p.m.

Johnson Great Room

The Twin Cities is home to a vibrant network of community-based arts organizations that demonstrate how creativity can thrive through connection, collaboration, and shared experiences. Bringing together leaders across craft disciplines—including glass, clay, printmaking, book arts, and more—this panel explores how partnerships with schools, libraries, neighborhoods, and cultural institutions expand access to creative opportunities and strengthen communities. Panelists will discuss the opportunities and challenges of sustaining community-centered programming, fostering lifelong engagement with the arts, and building collaborative models that amplify collective impact.

SPEAKERS



Kagen Dunn, Interim Executive Director & Education and Partnerships Manager, Foci Minnesota Center for Glass Arts



Rebecca "Jo" Johannsen, Education Programs Manager at Highpoint Printmaking



Julia Rodman, Community Engagement Manager at Northern Clay Center



Laura Brown, Partnership Coordinator and Resident Instructor at Minnesota Center for Book Arts

Blurred Lines: Illuminating Craft at the College of Design

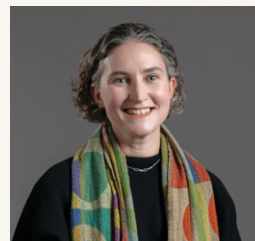
Presented by the Goldstein Museum of Design

Saturday, September 5, 1–2 p.m.

Johnson Great Room

What is the role of craft at an R1 university amidst the digital transformation of higher education? This session is convened by the Goldstein Museum of Design, an academic museum at the University of Minnesota that embraces the handmade in its collecting, interpretation, and exhibiting of designed objects. College of Design faculty from Landscape Architecture, Graphic Design, and Product Design will present craft-driven approaches to teaching, research, and professional practice. With diverse experiences including rammed-earth fabrication, letterpress printing, hand-drawn *kamon* (Japanese family crests), and handmade glass production, the panel will reveal shared values around thinking with materials, modeling/prototyping, and slow manufacturing.

SPEAKERS



Aidan O'Connor, Director, Goldstein Museum of Design, University of Minnesota (Moderator)



Quynh Akers, Adjunct, Product Design, University of Minnesota



Zenas Seiji Ikeda, Associate Professor, Graphic Design, University of Minnesota



Bill Moran, Teaching Specialist, Graphic Design, University of Minnesota



Jessica Rossi-Mastracci, Assistant Professor, Landscape Architecture, University of Minnesota

Connecting Through Craft: Deepening our Relationship to Communities

Saturday, September 5, 1–2 p.m.

Memorial Hall

This session examines how residency programs, craft schools, and curatorial practices can advance visibility, representation, and career development for artists of color. Featuring leaders from Indigo Arts Alliance, Peters Valley School of Craft, and the African American Craft Alliance, the conversation highlights how intentional gatherings, workshops, and studio opportunities strengthen creative communities and expand opportunities for Black and Brown makers. Presenters will explore what is lost when familial craft legacies are inaccessible, what established craft communities gain by embracing new generations of makers, and how arts organizations and funders can build more equitable partnerships with BIPOC artists and organizations.

SPEAKERS



Ashley Page, Studio and Programs Manager, Indigo Arts Alliance



Kristin Müller, Executive Director, Peters Valley School of Craft



Diana Baird N'Diaye, PhD, Multidisciplinary artist, folklife researcher, and curator



Karen Hampton, fiber artist

America House / House Beautiful: Following the Paper Trail of Fiber Artist Mariska Karasz

Saturday, September 5, 1–2 p.m.

Swain Room

Mariska Karasz (1898–1960) occupied a unique position at the intersection of the postwar craft movement and American interior design. Through her work with America House, *Craft Horizons*, and her influential 1953 essay, "Abstract Stitches," she helped redefine the possibilities of textile art. As Guest Needlework Editor at House Beautiful (1951–53), she also brought modern craft aesthetics to a national audience, arguing that embroidery should be an expressive element of contemporary interiors rather than nostalgic decoration. Her career reveals the often-overlooked relationship between the studio craft movement and the making of the postwar American home.

SPEAKER



Sarah Archer, Author

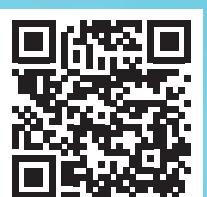


Love Story, an automaton by Oliver Pett

AUTOMATA

MAGAZINE

Automata Magazine offers in-depth coverage of the artistry and craftsmanship embodied in this unique branch of kinetic art.



Scan the QR code to learn more about this bimonthly online publication and see automata in action.

AUTOMATAMAGAZINE.COM

Craft Education: Why It Matters and How to Protect It

Presented by Appalachian Center for Craft, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, and Berea College

Saturday, September 5, 3–4 p.m.

Memorial Hall

We exist at a moment of rapidly decreasing institutional support for arts-based education, whether through academic administrations eliminating craft educators and programs through “restructuring,” the historical paucity of federal support for the creative humanities, or the precarious budgets of seasonal craft schools that, in the majority, exist without buffering endowments.

This presentation will frame the fundamental importance of experiential education gained through exposure to craft, which provides exactly the skills organizations like the National Association of Colleges and Employers tell us are essential for success: critical thinking, communication, professionalism, self-development, equity and inclusion, leadership, teamwork and technology) as well as resilience and the skills needed to respond to setbacks and failure. It will then explore the current crisis of craft education, and strategies for reasserting the importance of these pedagogies to the academy and society at large.

SPEAKERS



Aaron Beale, Berea College Associate Vice President of Student Craft, Berea College



Michelle Millar Fisher, Chief Curator, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum



Kimberly Winkle, Director, School of Art, Craft and Design and the Appalachian Center for Craft at Tennessee Tech University

Craft For a Greater Good: Making a Difference Through Collaboration and Community

Presented by The Furniture Society

Sunday, September 6, 3–4 p.m.

Memorial Hall

Craft For a Greater Good demonstrates how craft can move beyond the studio to actively shape stronger, more connected communities. Through a case study of an ongoing partnership in Syracuse, this presentation/conversation brings together voices from community, academia, and philanthropy to explore how shared knowledge, design, and making can address real-world needs. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of how collaborative, community-based craft models can be adapted and sustained in their own contexts.

SPEAKERS



Monica Hampton, Executive Director, The Furniture Society



Zeke Leonard, Professor of Design, Syracuse University, and Furniture Society Board member



Dorothy Dunn, Special Trustee, The Sara Little Turnbull Foundation



Sarah Mason, Volunteer and Community Outreach Coordinator at A Tiny Home for Good

Curating in the Craftscape: How Craft Museums Make History

Sunday, September 6, 1-2 p.m.

Swain Room

How have exhibitions at craft museums shaped craft in the 21st Century? Who was curating and which craft were they showing? Drawing on interviews with dozens of curators, site and archive visits to eleven craft museums and personal experience, this talk shows how exhibition-making made craft history in the US. Time for questions and conversation to follow.

SPEAKER



Namita Gupta Wiggers,
Writer, Educator, and Artist

A Fieldwide Look at Craft Nonprofits

Presented by the American Craft Council

Sunday, September 6, 2-3 p.m.

Memorial Hall

What happens when you ask craft nonprofits, guilds, and museums across the country the same questions? You get a rare, behind-the-scenes, fieldwide look at craft nonprofits across the United States. In this session, we'll unpack findings from a national survey designed to better understand the needs, challenges, and opportunities shaping craft organizations today. From funding realities to program priorities, we'll share insights gathered this spring and reflect on what they mean for all of us, artists, nonprofits, and supporters alike. Grounded in a spirit of openness and collaboration, this talk explores how shared data can strengthen our collective voice, inform smarter outreach, and help build a more resilient craft ecosystem.

SPEAKERS



Andrea Specht, Executive
Director, American Craft
Council



Jaimianne Jacobin,
Director of Development,
American Craft Council



Bob Lynch, Board Chair,
American Craft Council

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The Language of Fiber: To Speak of Memory, Justice, and Belonging

Presented by Textile Center

Saturday, September 5, 3-4 p.m.

Johnson Great Room

Artists across disciplines are turning to the language of fiber to speak of memory, justice, and belonging, threading together histories and futures with fiber as scaffolding. No longer "soft" in the pejorative sense, these materials are used to build, challenge, and occupy both physical and conceptual space. Artists are shaping new terrain—and fiber is a foundation. Two long-standing fiber art organizations, Surface Design Association (SDA) and Textile Center of Minnesota, both dedicated to amplifying historically underrepresented voices, shine a light on contemporary fiber artists helping to make this new terrain possible.

SPEAKERS



Tracy Krumm, Director for
Artistic Advancement,
Textile Center of MN



Astrid Hilger Bennett,
Surface Design Association
Board Co-Chair



Bryana Bibbs, Textile Artist
& Educator



Joey Quiñones, Head
of Fiber & Artist-in-
Residence, Cranbrook
Academy of Art

Making Change: Artists, Resistance, and Community

Sunday, September 6, 11 a.m.–12 p.m.

Memorial Hall

The Twin Cities have long been home to artists whose work responds to moments of social transformation and helps shape conversations about identity, justice, and belonging. This panel explores how Minnesota artists have used craft and creative practice to engage their communities, challenge dominant narratives, and build spaces for dialogue and healing. Through stories and examples rooted in the region, panelists will examine the enduring role of artists as cultural leaders and community builders and consider what these lessons can teach us about the power of craft to strengthen civic life everywhere.

SPEAKER



Heather Shirey, Professor of Art History and Visual Culture, University of St. Thomas, Saint Paul, Minnesota



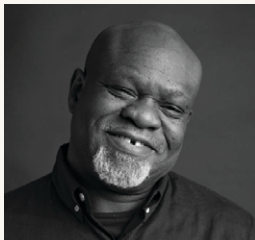
Angela Two Star, (Sisseton Wahpeton, Dakota) multidisciplinary artist and curator



Heather Sona Lasair, Founder and Artistic Director, Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center



Daniela Bianchini, Public Artist



Christopharaaron Deanes, Artist, Educator, and Community Connector

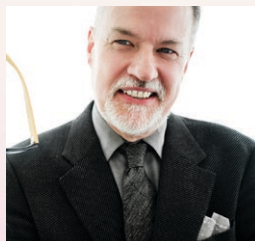
5 Lessons from 50 Years

Saturday, September 5, 3–4 p.m.

Swain Room

Bruce Pepich will reflect on his 50-plus-year career in the craft field and share some of the most important things he has learned from his decades of service to artists and the public. And possibly some gossip and stories of interest! Don't miss this opportunity to witness Bruce's transformation from museum leader to sage on the stage in real time.

SPEAKER



Bruce W. Pepich, Founding Director Emeritus, Racine Art Museum

Making a Living: Handwork and Workforce Development in the Digital Age

Saturday, September 5, 2–3 p.m.

Memorial Hall

How might new ways of thinking and new alliances enable more people to build making-centered lives and careers in the 21st century? As a growing number of Americans seek work that is tangible, creative, and human-centered, the boundaries between art, skilled trades, entrepreneurship, and manufacturing are becoming increasingly fluid. Drawing on perspectives from the nonprofit craft sector, community maker spaces, craft manufacturing, and technical education, this panel explores the cultural, educational, and economic forces behind this shift and the opportunities it presents to redefine the value of the human hand in an increasingly digital world.

SPEAKERS



Andrea Specht, Executive Director at the American Craft Council (Moderator)



Michael Manes, Arts Leader, Curator, and Gallery Director



Wendy Downs, Senior Manager at US Manufacturing and designer



Libby O'Bryan, Owner of Sew Co.

Meet the CAT: The First Four Years of the Cafesjian Art Trust Museum

Presented by The Cafesjian Art Trust Museum

Sunday, September 6, 2–3 p.m.

Swain Room

Why start an art museum? How do you start an art museum? Meet the Cafesjian Art Trust Museum (the CAT), the Twin Cities' newest contemporary art museum. Curators Jill Ahlberg Yohe and Linnea Seidling will speak about the founding of the museum by Kathie Cafesjian Baradaran, the President and CEO of the CAT, and daughter of Gerard Cafesjian, the collector of the museum's founding collection. Hear about the museum's first four years and current exhibition Meet Me in the Forest. Ahlberg Yohe and Seidling will also share about the museum's curatorial methods that bring artwork of all media into the same gallery—a practice rarely seen in American museums beyond permanent installation galleries.

SPEAKERS



Jill Ahlberg Yohe PhD,
Curator of Modern and
Contemporary Art at
the Cafesjian Art Trust
Museum



Linnea Seidling, Assistant
Curator of Glass at
the Cafesjian Art Trust
Museum

PechaKucha/Short Presentations

Sat, September 5, 4–5 p.m. / Johnson Great Room

Sun, September 6, 9–10 a.m. / Memorial Hall

Inspired by the PechaKucha model of 20 images shown for 20 seconds each, these dynamic **3–5-minute presentations** offer conference attendees the opportunity to share ideas, projects, research, and creative practices in a concise and engaging format. Each presentation offers a unique perspective on the many ways craft shapes our world today. Join us for a fast-paced session celebrating the creativity, curiosity, and diversity of the craft community.

Rising Voices in Craft: Maxwell/Hanrahan Awardees

Presented by the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation

Sunday, September 6, 1–2 p.m.

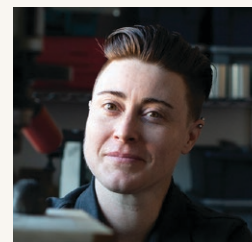
Memorial Hall

This panel will feature three craftspeople who received a significant unrestricted award in recognition of their creative work in the field of craft, the Maxwell/Hanrahan Award in Craft. The conversation will emphasize their individual stories, their contributions to their respective material practices and how the award impacted their practice. This panel provides a rare opportunity for a craft-centered audience to engage with the awardees and ask questions about what receiving this kind of support does to a creative practice.

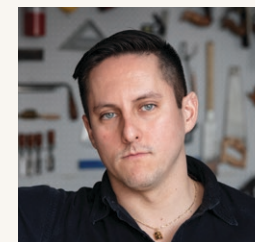
SPEAKER



Tess Haratonik, United
States Artists, Program
Director, Initiatives



Rebekah Frank, Maxwell/
Hanrahan Foundation,
Program Officer
(Moderator)



Raul de Lara, 2024
Maxwell/Hanrahan
Award in Craft, wood
sculptor



Leo Tecosky, 2023
Maxwell/Hanrahan
Award in Craft, glass
blower



Christine (Chris) Lee,
2022 Maxwell/Hanrahan
Award in Craft, multi-
disciplinary

So You Want to Write a Craft Book?

Presented by Schiffer Craft Publishing

Saturday, September 5, 3–4 p.m.
Swain Room

If you're a creative person with a unique vision, the idea of publishing a book may have crossed your mind—but you may not know where to start. In this presentation, we'll cover how to craft a compelling proposal to submit to a publisher, from positioning your concept to preparing sample materials and anticipating questions.

SPEAKER



Kaylee Schofield, Imprint Lead for Schiffer Craft

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State Fairs: Growing American Craft

Presented by Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum

Sunday, September 6, 10–11 a.m.
Memorial Hall

This talk offers insight into the exhibition *State Fairs: Growing American Craft*, the first survey of the extraordinary, virtuoso art found across American fairgrounds. Inspired by the Minnesota State Fair—known as the Great Minnesota Get Together—the presentation explores personal stories from across the fairgrounds, from art exhibits and heritage villages to parades, dairy barns, and rodeos. Through these examples, the exhibition highlights the many ways fairs have served as powerful platforms for artists to express their identities while inviting collective reflection on American life and culture.

SPEAKER



Mary Savig, Fleur and Charles Bresler Curator-in-Charge for the Renwick Gallery

For Minnesota State Fair hours, visit mnstatefair.org/about/hours

Teaching Artists as Time Benders

Presented by Center for Craft

Saturday, September 5, 2–3 p.m.
Johnson Great Room

Craft teaching artists are “time benders” who carry memory, material knowledge, and cultural imagination into the spaces where they make and teach. This session explores archetypes as a framework to explore how teaching artists collapse boundaries between past, present, and future, clearing pathways for what craft can become. This panel features regional craft teaching artists, including alumni of the Center for Craft’s Teaching Artist Cohort program, whose creative practices and career pathways reflect the four archetypes outlined in our framework. Teaching Artists as Time Benders panel is moderated by Leia Lewis, Craft Education Fellow, a two-year position that seeks to increase the impact of craft education in community spaces nationwide.

SPEAKERS



Leia Lewis, Craft Education Fellow at the Center for Craft, Artist and Educator (Moderator)



Ursula Hargens, Artist and Educator



Nicole Havekost, Artist and Educator



Elnaz Javani, Artist and Educator



David King, Artist and Educator



Juliane Shibata, Artist and Educator

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PODCAST



E-LEARNING



1-1 COACHING



EVENTS

Turning Inward: Toward a Framework for Craft Criticism

Sun, September 6, 3–4 p.m.
Swain Room

With the Art vs. Craft debate behind us—and with established models of using craft as a lens for broader cultural inquiry continuing to evolve—this panel discussion is an opportunity to turn our attention inward. Criticality keeps our field vibrant and engaged, but it also requires specificity, discernment, and care. This interactive conversation invites the craft community into a dialogue led by independent scholar Sarah Archer, Metalsmith magazine editor Adriane Dalton, and Namita Gupta Wiggers, director and co-founder of Critical Craft Forum. Together, we will explore questions about what the contemporary craft field's many disciplines uniquely require for thoughtful critique and review of artworks, artists, exhibitions, and publications. This conversation aims to deepen and expand the ways we write, talk, and think about craft.

SPEAKERS



Adriane Dalton, Editor-in-chief of Metalsmith magazine (Moderator)



Namita Gupta Wiggers, Writer, Educator, and Artist



Sarah Archer, Author

What Supports Craft Artists? Readiness, Relief, and Community Response

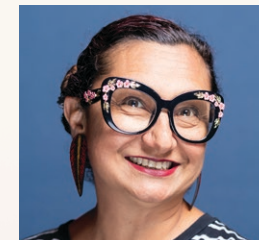
Presented by The Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+) and Springboard for the Arts

Sat, September 5, 2–3 p.m.
Swain Room

Disruptions in the craft field rarely arrive with a clear label. They often appear as illness, studio loss, leadership transitions, financial strain, natural disasters, caregiving responsibilities, or other unexpected events that interrupt artists' ability to work and organizations' ability to respond.

This conversation brings together perspectives from Springboard for the Arts and the Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+) to explore how the craft ecosystem can better support artists and organizations before, during, and after disruption. Participants will examine practical approaches to preparedness, emergency response, communication, and resource networks while considering what the field owes artists and creative communities—and how readiness can strengthen both people and practice.

SPEAKERS



Ruby Lopez Harper, Executive Director, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)



Wone Vang, Economic Opportunity Director, Springboard for the Arts

Creative Commons

Daily, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
University Hall

The Creative Commons is the conference's central gathering place, where attendees can discover resources, ideas, and organizations that support makers and creative professionals. Throughout the conference, this welcoming, high-traffic space will feature hands-on activities, opportunities to relax and recharge, tables hosted by partner organizations, and informal networking with colleagues from across the craft field.

Whether you're looking to make new connections, explore professional resources, participate in a creative activity, or simply take a break between sessions, the Creative Commons offers a welcoming place to gather, learn, and engage with the broader craft community.

PARTNERS AND ACTIVITIES

Schiffer Publishing

Schiffer Craft creates heritage craft books and kits for modern makers. Join them in the Creative Commons as they sell books & kits, demonstrate their latest crochet and watercolor kits at a try-before-you-buy table, and offer a fun craft giveaway open to all conference attendees!

Springboard for the Arts

Springboard for the Arts will be tabling and offering resources, as well as providing hands-on activities.

CERF+

Stop by the Craft Emergency Relief Fund table to learn more about studio and work area safety and readiness measures for your artistic practice. You can explore resources and response measures that CERF+ has provided over the last 40 years.

CourseStorm

CourseStorm is the class registration software of choice for 100s of arts and craft organizations across the U.S. Stop by to "claim your craft", enter a raffle to win some treats for your team, and learn more about how we help craft education teams save 20+ hours each week and grow enrollments.

Record an Object Story

Tell us about an object that's meaningful to you! Record a short story in 3 minutes.

Pinspiration Station

Get creative at the Pinspiration Station! Use our button maker to design custom pins that celebrate your love of craft, encourage creativity, or spread a little kindness. Keep one for yourself, make one to share, or create something that sparks a conversation with a fellow attendee.

Your Fortune Awaits

Unlock a little creative inspiration with your craft fortune! Insert a quarter and turn the dial to receive a mystery capsule filled with a craft-inspired fortune. It's your own pocket-sized reminder to explore, create, and connect.

Creative Collective

Pick a prompt, grab the matching colored paper, and share your thoughts! Your anonymous response will become part of our colorful community display, a growing collection of ideas, stories, and surprises for everyone to discover throughout the conference.

Handwork: Celebrating American Craft 2026

Handwork: Celebrating American Craft 2026, a nationwide Semiquincentennial initiative to showcase the importance of the handmade, is a year-long collaboration among organizations, educators, and makers to celebrate the diversity of the crafts that define America, bringing compelling stories and underrepresented art and artists into the spotlight. Come by for information about this initiative and to learn how to oragami fold an envelope with a lovely fan shape feature.



QuiltCon 2027 at the Atlanta Convention Center at AmericasMart in midtown Atlanta, Georgia, features the world's largest juried modern quilt show, lectures & classes from world-class instructors, special exhibits from across the globe, a huge vendor hall with over 100 unique vendors, and so much more. Registration opens this fall!

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CRAFT IN AMERICA PRESENTS



HANDWORK 2026 is Craft in America's year-long semiquincentennial collaboration among organizations, educators, and makers to showcase the importance of the handmade and celebrate the diversity of the crafts that define America.



- Nationwide Exhibitions & Community Events
- Core Exhibition
- Craft in America on PBS
- Book—*Handwork: Handcrafted Objects That Made America*
- Educational programs

Learn more at www.handwork2026.org

FOUR SPECIAL EPISODES ON PBS

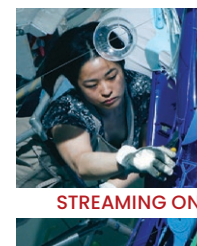
EAST



WEST



NORTH



SOUTH



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Left to right: Ceramic artist Robert Lugo; photo: Denise Kang. Bootmaker Graham Ebner; photo: Denise Kang. Artist Sayaka Ganz; photo: Adam Parsons. Big Chief Shaka Zulu; photo: Denise Kang

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AMERICAN
craft
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WASHINGTON AVENUE

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FROM HOTEL
& PLAZA

GUEST ARRIVAL
FROM RAMP

UNIVERSITY
HALL

THOMAS SWAIN
ROOM

REGISTRATION

JOHNSON GREAT ROOM

SKI U MAH

MINNESOTA
ROOM

MEMORIAL HALL

HERITAGE GALLERY

UNIVERSITY AVENUE

OAK STREET

MAP

Saturday, September 5

9:30 AM	p.45	Birds of a Feather Networking	Memorial Hall
10:30 AM	p.16	Opening Remarks	Memorial Hall
1:00 PM	p.21	Connecting Through Craft: Deepening our Relationship to Communities	Memorial Hall
1:00 PM	p.20	Blurred Lines: Illuminating Craft at the College of Design	Johnson Great Room
1:00 PM	p.22	America House / House Beautiful: Following the Paper Trail of Fiber Artist Mariska Karasz	Swain Room
2:00 PM	p.30	Making a Living: Handwork and Workforce Development in the Digital Age	Memorial Hall
2:00 PM	p.34	Teaching Artists as Time Benders	Johnson Great Room
2:00 PM	p.36	What Supports Craft Artists? Readiness, Relief, and Community Response	Swain Room
3:00 PM	p.23	Craft Education: Why It Matters and How to Protect It	Memorial Hall
3:00 PM	p.28	The Language of Fiber: To Speak of Memory, Justice, and Belonging	Johnson Great Room
3:00 PM	p.29	5 Lessons from 50 years	Swain Room
4:00 PM	p.33	So You Want to Write a Craft Book?	Swain Room
4:00 PM	p.31	PechaKucha/Short presentations	Johnson Great Room

Birds of a Feather Networking

Saturday, September 5, 9:30–10:30 a.m.

Memorial Hall

Connect with others who share your interests during this informal, participant-driven networking session. “Birds of a Feather” brings together attendees around common topics, professional roles, creative practices, or areas of curiosity, making it easy to meet new people, exchange ideas, and build lasting connections. Whether you’re looking to discuss a specific issue, expand your professional network, or simply find your community, this is a welcoming space for meaningful conversation.

Sunday, September 6

9:00 AM	p.31	PechaKucha/Short presentations	Memorial Hall
10:00 AM	p.33	State Fairs: Growing American Craft	Memorial Hall
11:00 AM	p.29	Making Change: Artists, Resistance, and Community	Memorial Hall
1:00 PM	p.32	Rising Voices in Craft: Maxwell/Hanrahan Awardees	Memorial Hall
1:00 PM	p.17	Between Friends: A Conversation on Queer Craft, Justice, and Resistance	Johnson Great Room
1:00 PM	p.25	Curating in the Craftscape: How Craft Museums Make History	Swain Room
2:00 PM	p.25	A Fieldwide Look at Nonprofits	Memorial Hall
2:00 PM	p.19	Beyond Our Walls: Building Community Through Accessible Arts Programming	Johnson Great Room
2:00 PM	p.31	Meet the CAT: The First Four Years of the Cafesjian Art Trust Museum	Swain Room
3:00 PM	p.24	Craft For a Greater Good: Making a Difference Through Collaboration and Community	Memorial Hall
3:00 PM	p.18	Beyond the Collection: Journey From the Studio	Johnson Great Room
3:00 PM	p.36	Turning Inward: Toward a Framework for Craft Criticism	Swain Room
4:00 PM	p.16	Closing Speaker	Memorial Hall

AMERICAN
craft SCHEDULE
CONNECTS

