

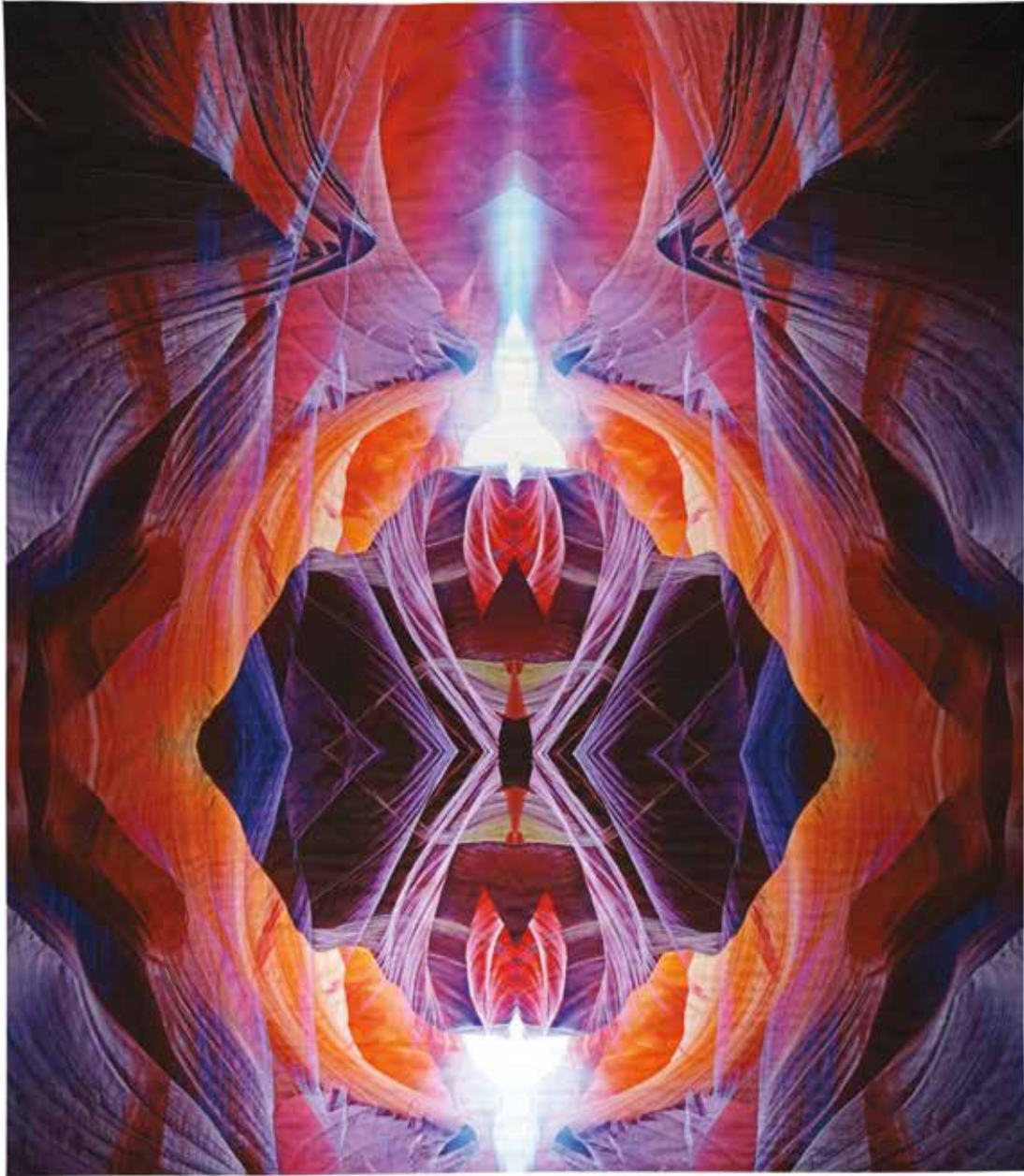
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Image: Lily Hope, *Memorial Beats*, 2021, thigh-spun merino and cedar bark with copper, headphones, and audio files, The Hope Family Trust. Photo by Sydney Akagi





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# Collect

Piece by Piece

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**ON THE COVER:** A detail of Jiha Moon's stoneware and porcelain *Yellow Hare*, 2023, 21.5 x 12 x 10 in. Read Moon's essay about working in her studio on **page 56**. Photo courtesy of the artist and Derek Eller Gallery.

**THIS PAGE:** Amy Denet Deal founded 4KINSHIP, an Indigenous-owned retail space on Santa Fe's Canyon Road that features Native craft and hand-dyed clothing. Learn more about 4KINSHIP and its community focus on **page 20**.





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ABOVE: MAX turntable and record stand by Symbol Audio, just one of the makers featured in Daniel Waite Penny's article about record storage on **page 62**. LEFT: Fabric woven by Black Mountain College student Mimi French, ca. 1941–43. Get a sneak peek of an upcoming exhibition about the college's groundbreaking weaving program on **page 10**.





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**Collect.** Just before we started working on this issue on the theme *collect*, I visited a friend in Santa Fe. My first stop while wandering down gallery-filled Canyon Road was Hecho a Mano, which features prints from young Oaxacan artists. Inside, I was delighted to unexpectedly meet textile artist Nika Feldman, who appeared on the August/September 2016 cover of *American Craft*. My next stop was 4KINSHIP, a Native-owned retail business I'd been following online. I was moved by its collection of upcycled and dyed clothing—as well as jewelry, ceramics, blankets, and other craft by several Native artists—and by my conversation with founder Amy Denet Deal, who is committed to supporting not only artists whose work is in the store, but also Indigenous communities and future generations. We're pleased to share a story about 4KINSHIP in this issue.

In these pages, you'll also learn about 97-year-old craft collector Dorothy Saxe, who lives in San Francisco, and self-taught mosaic sculptor Chris Malone, who lives in Maryland. You'll go behind the scenes at Benning Violins, a shop run by a family of luthiers in Los Angeles and favored by virtuoso violinist and social justice advocate Vijay Gupta. And you'll take a look inside Claire Oliver Gallery in Harlem, which is forging new relationships around collecting, and the studio of sculptural ceramist, painter, and printmaker Jiha Moon.



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A ceramic sculpture by Chris Malone. Learn more on page 36.

After a long pause on travel due to the pandemic, we're pleased to be out and about, discovering craft and meeting makers. Assistant Editor Shivaun Watchorn recently attended West Coast Craft in San Francisco. Senior Editor Jen Vogel visited New Orleans to present at the Furniture Society conference and report on the New Orleans craft scene for a story that will appear in our Winter 2024 issue.

I want to share another story about collection and connection with you. Longtime ACC member Galen Erickson recently wrote to let us know how he passes down craft knowledge to the next generation. He and his wife, Linda, have a wonderful collection, which lives on the hand-built "Craft Wall" in their Plymouth, Minnesota, family room. Every few weeks, as part of a *News from Grandpa* email newsletter, Galen includes an image or two of pieces from their collection and explains why they bought them and what makes them unique. "It's very gratifying to hear the older grandkids (some in their twenties) explaining our various treasures to the younger ones," he wrote. What a beautiful way to share the love of craft.

We hope this issue inspires you to think differently about craft and collection—about how and why you purchase the hand-made, seek out meaningful works in galleries and museums, or collect yourself before you begin making something new.

*Karen*

KAREN OLSON / Editor in Chief

Visit [craftcouncil.org/Blog](https://craftcouncil.org/Blog) for more stories about American craft.



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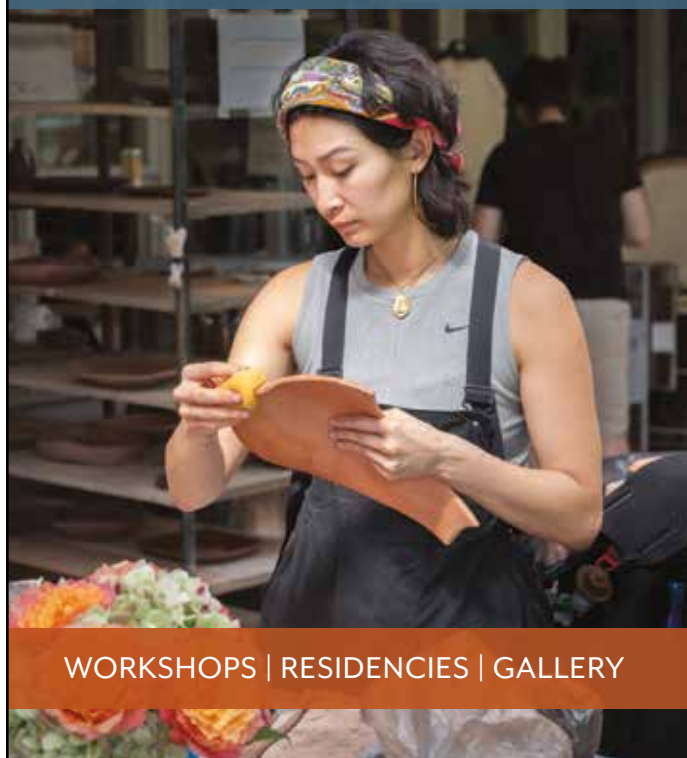


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## CONTRIBUTORS

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



San Francisco-based **Deborah Bishop** has written at least 40 articles for *American Craft* over the years. Here she writes about Dorothy Saxe, who does not shy away from controversial imagery in the craft she collects. Bishop visited Saxe several times in her San Francisco and Menlo Park, California, homes while writing this article. **page 26.**

Washington, DC-based writer and art critic **Aruna D'Souza** previews an upcoming exhibition about the weaving program at Black Mountain College in Asheville, North Carolina, in this issue. "It was great talking to the curators and hearing their excitement about the show. The project is the result of some serious and crucial archival research, and the result will be quite beautiful, I think." **page 10.**



A city planner in Rogers, Arkansas, **Amber Long** is also a writing intern at the Smithsonian's *Folklife Magazine*. Here she writes about mosaic sculptor Chris Malone, who lives in Maryland, in an article *American Craft* co-produced with *Folklife Magazine* and the Smithsonian's African American Craft Initiative. **page 36.**

We asked ceramist and painter **Jiha Moon** to write about her Atlanta studio after hearing her speak at a Renwick Gallery symposium in March. Moon had the audience in stitches when she explained that sometimes she pulls a piece from the kiln and thinks it's ugly. Then she reconsiders: "Maybe the way I understand the beauty is wrong." **page 56.**



Just as we were brainstorming a story about record storage furniture for this issue, journalist **Daniel Waite Penny** pitched an idea on the same topic. We love synchronicity! Penny, who writes about culture and climate for the *New Yorker*, *GQ*, and other publications, is also the host of the new podcast *Non-toxic*. **page 62.**





## Letters from Readers

The Summer issue was great. I grew up in Detroit and was delighted to read about the craft movement and galleries that have arisen there (“Craft in Detroit”). I’m planning a trip to visit the galleries and artists this summer.

—Ilene Zweig, Miami, Florida

So beautifully done. I’m as endlessly impressed with both the elegant production details (fabulous photos, interesting layouts, etc.) as I am with the sophistication and exquisite objects you present. The magazine is like a rich, delicious, and even nourishing dessert. Bravo to you and to the incredibly skilled artists you bring to us. I’m excited, too, by the diversity of the artists represented. Happy to see people of color, women in craftwork typically associated with men, and throughout—the astonishing creations!

—Marjory Levitt, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I didn’t find this issue to be as interesting or compelling as many have been. I initially paged through it and set it down. Then I picked it up again. These articles are interesting to me on second look: “Adventure Craft,” some of “The Glass Alchemist,” and I will read more thoroughly about craft and artists in Detroit. After reading many issues, I feel more motivated as an artist, but not with this issue.

One of the sections I regularly read first is Craft Happenings. It seemed very thin for July and August, with not as many openings or exhibits listed as I’d expect, and quite focused on the east side of the US.

—Heather Myers, Loveland, Colorado

*Editors respond: We aim to inform readers about events and exhibitions taking place across the US. While we only have a few pages for Craft Happenings in print, we post a more expansive list online each season at [craftcouncil.org/CraftHappenings](http://craftcouncil.org/CraftHappenings).*

I’m really enjoying the Summer 2023 issue I received today. It is so beautifully arranged and photographed. However, some feedback to pass along regarding quality control at your printer: the black ink was smeared across eight of the pages in my copy. I don’t recall ever seeing this before.

—Arlene Wellemeyer, Hastings, Minnesota

*Editors respond: Some of you may have noticed black smudges across a few of the pages of your copies of the Summer issue. We apologize. Our printer experienced ink flow issues during the printing process. We are working to ensure this doesn’t happen again.*

### Talk to Us

We welcome your letters and comments at [letters@craftcouncil.org](mailto:letters@craftcouncil.org).

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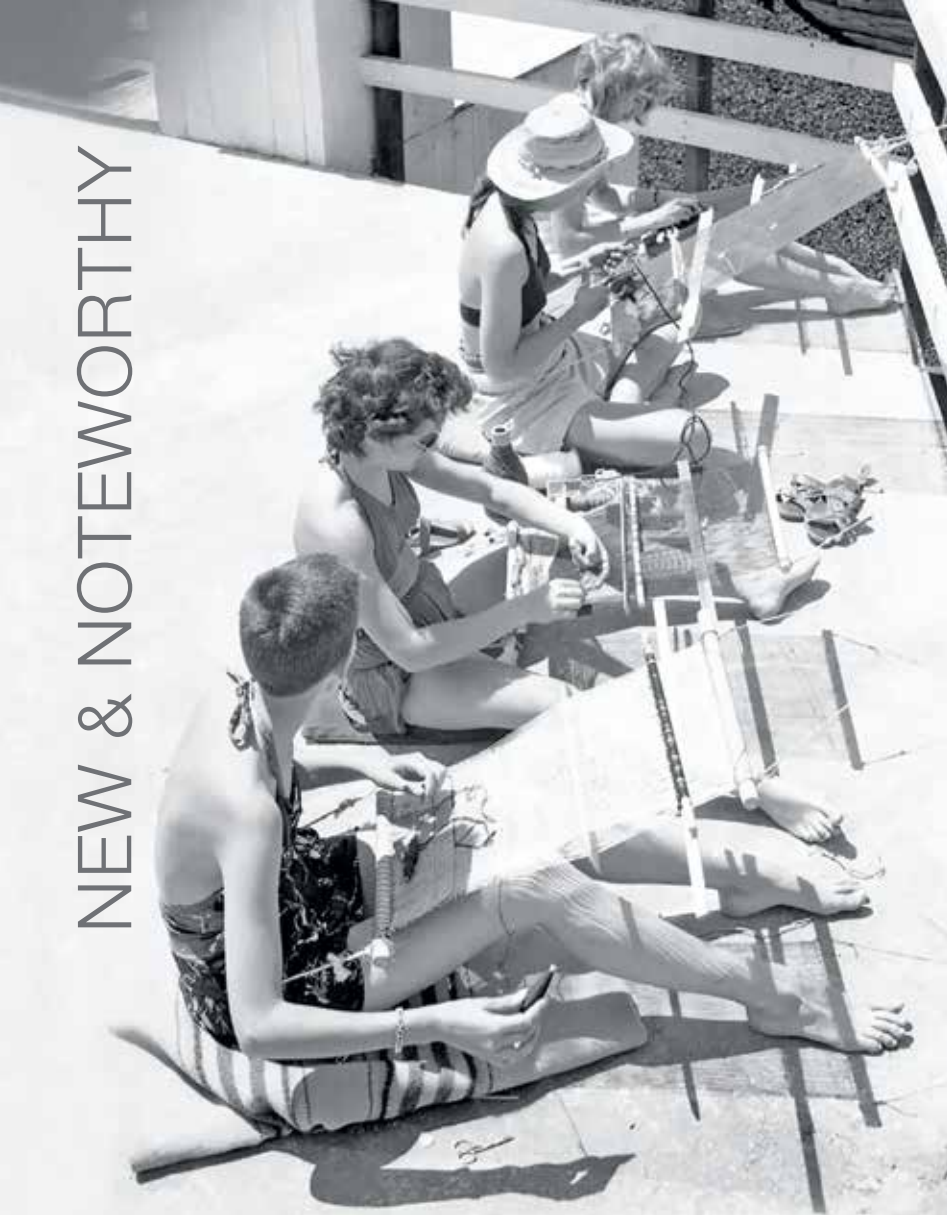
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LEFT: Students weaving on backstrap looms at Black Mountain College, 1945. ABOVE: Student Joan Potter Loveless's *Bay Area*, ca. 1960–70, wool, 56 x 37 in.

## Weaving by Design

*An upcoming show at the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center explores the legacies of Anni Albers and Trude Guermonprez, and the importance of weaving at the legendary college.*

BY ARUNA D'SOUZA

**Curators Julie J. Thomson and Michael Beggs** hope their upcoming exhibition, *Weaving at Black Mountain College*, will shine a new light on the legendary Asheville, North Carolina, experiment in higher education. “There are famous people who went to Black Mountain College—Robert Rauschenberg, Ray Johnson, and Ruth Asawa are probably the most famous among the artists—but when you focus on weaving, a whole different college emerges,” Beggs told me.

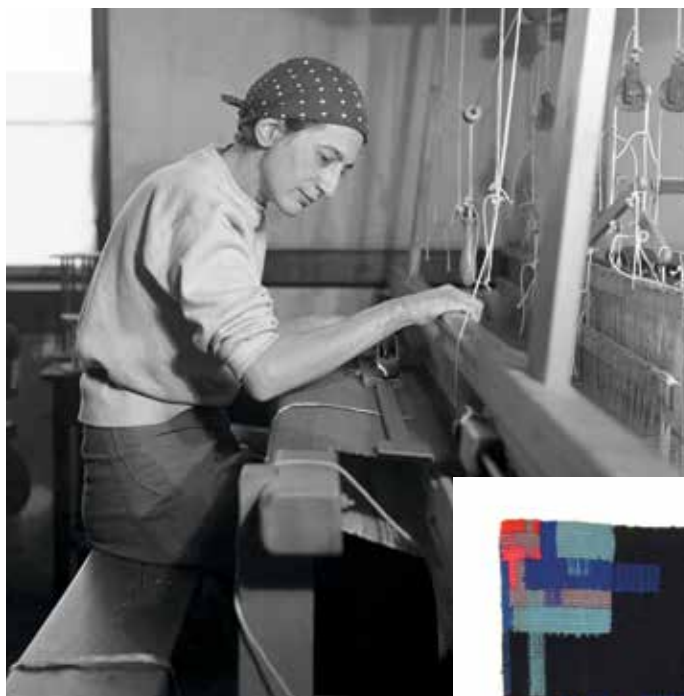
Consisting of more than 100 objects—including textiles, material studies, and photographs—the show promises to demonstrate that weaving was an integral part of Black

Mountain’s educational mission and its culture, becoming one of its most successful design programs and shaping thinking about textile and design nationwide.

Just before influential designers Josef and Anni Albers left Germany in 1933—when the Bauhaus, where they taught, closed under pressure from the Nazis—Josef wrote to inform one of his future colleagues at the new Black Mountain College, “My wife will bring her loom.” Despite the fact that this new college was not an art school per se, he continued, “She thinks she can give students an understanding of weaving materials and practices and perhaps some lessons.”

LEFT: Photo by John Harvey Campbell. RIGHT: Photo by Alice Sebrell.





LEFT: Don Page, Black Mountain's first student to graduate in weaving, is depicted in Faith Murray Britton's painting on a campus door, ca. 1941–1942. ABOVE: Anni Albers weaving at Black Mountain College, 1937. RIGHT: College student-turned-instructor Elizabeth Schmitt Jennerjahn's *Cross*, 1949, wool, 12.5 x 10 in.

Those modest aims developed into a program where students learned both theory and practice under the guidance of faculty members including Trude Guermonprez, Marli Ehrman, and Tony Landreau. Weaving was a serious course of study: almost 10 percent of all the students to ever come through Black Mountain until it ceased teaching classes in 1956 took at least one course in the discipline—including Rauschenberg and Johnson. (Surprisingly, Asawa did not study weaving at the college, though a few of her works are included in the show; among them is a swatch of mattress ticking based on a drawing made using a laundry stamp.)

Photographs of students at their looms give a sense of the vibe of Black Mountain's weaving program: serious, imaginative, experimental—and co-ed. While the discipline was treated as an exclusively feminine one at the Bauhaus, at Black Mountain it was for everyone. (Perhaps to underline that point, one of the objects in the show—a painting Faith Murray Britton made on the wooden door to the weaving studio—depicts a young man seen from the back, hard at work at a loom.)

The work that came out of Black Mountain ranged from utilitarian to deeply experimental, always with an eye to both artistic and industrial goals. One photograph depicts Anni Albers weaving with a set of cards, or tablets; a photograph of a material study using wood shavings and twigs will also be on view. Thomson pointed out a wall hanging made by Guermonprez, inspired by hummingbirds she saw in her yard and

at the San Diego Zoo: “It’s amazing how she pulls the warp threads out from the supportive role and over the wild birds to create the cages.”

In addition to objects directly connected to Black Mountain, the exhibition—a result of serious archival research—will include work by contemporary weavers who are building on the legacy of this tiny college in the hills: Kay Sekimachi, Jen Bervin, Porfirio Gutiérrez, Susie Taylor, and Bana Haffar. A handsome catalog accompanies the show, and an international conference October 13–15, open to the public, will focus on material and structure—two of the core principles of Black Mountain College's weaving program.

♦ Aruna D'Souza is a critic and curator based in New York whose writings appear regularly in the *New York Times* and *4Columns*, among other publications.



**Weaving at  
Black Mountain College:  
Anni Albers, Trude Guermonprez,  
and Their Students**

Black Mountain College  
Museum + Arts Center  
Asheville, North Carolina  
September 29, 2023–January 6, 2024

[blackmountaincollege.org/weaving](http://blackmountaincollege.org/weaving)



LEFT: Weaver Sarah Zapata was commissioned to install the 2023 Atrium Project at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art. BELOW: Included in Contemporary Craft's *Climate Awakening* exhibition is Courtney Mattison's *Gas Can*, 2015, glazed stoneware, porcelain, 14 x 16 x 12 in. OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT: Sharif Bey's earthenware, vitreous china, and mixed media *Louie Bones*, 2020, 35.5 x 35.5 x 4 in, is part of *Sightlines on Peace, Power, and Prestige: Metal Arts in Africa*. OPPOSITE LEFT: Ruth Duckworth, named an ACC Fellow in 1983, is the subject of an upcoming exhibition at the Smart Museum of Art. It includes *Untitled (Mama Pot)*, 1975, 18 x 21 x 23 in.

## Craft Happenings

### AUGUST OPENINGS

**Sarah Zapata: So the roots be known**  
Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art  
Kansas City, Missouri  
August 18, 2023–July 28, 2024

For this year's Atrium Project—presenting work of emerging and mid-career Hispanic and Latinx artists—Peruvian American artist Sarah Zapata literally weaves together the multiple strands of her background in fiber works that ask questions about gender, labor, and identity. The pieces allow the viewer to go deeper into the inquiry too, by incorporating performance and elements that can be touched.

### SEPTEMBER OPENINGS

**Climate Awakening:  
Crafting A Sustainable Future**  
Contemporary Craft  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
September 8, 2023–January 13, 2024

Accompanying this assemblage of craft-based artworks addressing climate change and its multiple effects on ecosystems and human beings will be a series of what the organizers call “action events.” These community-outreach gatherings are intended to translate the works’ messages into concrete efforts to help mitigate the effects of the climate crisis.



TOP: Photo by Ignacio Torres. BOTTOM: Photo by Courtney Mattison.



**Chiffon Thomas: The Cavernous**

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum  
Ridgefield, Connecticut  
September 15, 2023–March 3, 2024

Thomas's wide-ranging work in collage, sculpture, and installation interrogates gender, identity, and colonialism in the context of America's Black diaspora. The artist typically combines fragmentary castings of their own body with reclaimed architectural elements and Biblical quotations; this show presents new work featuring the human body fused with that icon of 1960s futurism, the geodesic dome.

**Woven Histories:****Textiles and Modern Abstraction**

Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
Los Angeles, California  
September 17, 2023–January 21, 2024

The birth and growth of abstract painting is one of the key themes of artistic modernism. Less well known is the parallel development of abstraction in woven textiles and pre-loom processes such as basketry, knotting, and netting. Here, more than 150 works demonstrate the complex dialogue between these kindred abstractions during the past 100 years.

**Ruth Duckworth: Life as a Unity**

Smart Museum of Art  
Chicago, Illinois  
September 21, 2023–February 4, 2024

Duckworth, known primarily as a "British studio potter," actually spent the latter half of her life—nearly 50 years—living and working in Chicago, identifying herself as a "sculptor with clay," and being deeply influenced by currents in American art. The Smart presents a comprehensive view of her environmentally focused work, including tile installations and murals, wall works, and sculptures.

**Sightlines on Peace, Power, and Prestige: Metal Arts in Africa**

Bard Graduate Center  
New York, New York  
September 29–December 31, 2023

The Bard Center hosts a traveling exhibition of traditional African iron, brass, bronze, gold, copper, silver, and alloy objects organized by the University of Florida's Harn Museum of Art, including body adornments, scepters, weapons, currency, and amulets, and adds a powerful update: a set of metal pieces by contemporary artists from Africa and the African diaspora.

**OCTOBER OPENINGS****Traditional Cowboy Arts Exhibition & Sale**

National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
October 6, 2023–January 2, 2024

Fine examples of saddlemaking, bit and spur crafting, silversmithing, and rawhide braiding will be on display in this show of the arts associated with the ultimate Western icon. The exhibition is mounted—no pun intended—by the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association, all of whose members, besides being artists, are real working cowhands.

**Rick Dillingham:****To Make, Unmake, and Make Again**

New Mexico Museum of Art  
Santa Fe, New Mexico  
October 6, 2023–June 16, 2024

After renowned Santa Fe scholar, author, collector, curator, dealer, and ceramic artist Dillingham died in 1994, his works were distributed far and wide—from New Mexico to London. The New Mexico Museum of Art has gathered the largest collection of his pieces ever assembled and shows them with select artworks and Indigenous ceramics from Dillingham's personal collection.

**Between Horizons:****Korean Ceramic Artists in the US**

The Clay Studio  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
October 12–December 31, 2023

The 12 makers featured here all came to the United States and Canada from South Korea to pursue graduate degrees in the ceramic arts. At a time when immigration is a hot-button issue in the US, the show highlights the effects of this major geographical and cultural dislocation on their work and their thinking about art and identity.

**Toshiko Takaezu and Lenore Tawney**

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art  
Bentonville, Arkansas

October 14, 2023–March 25, 2024

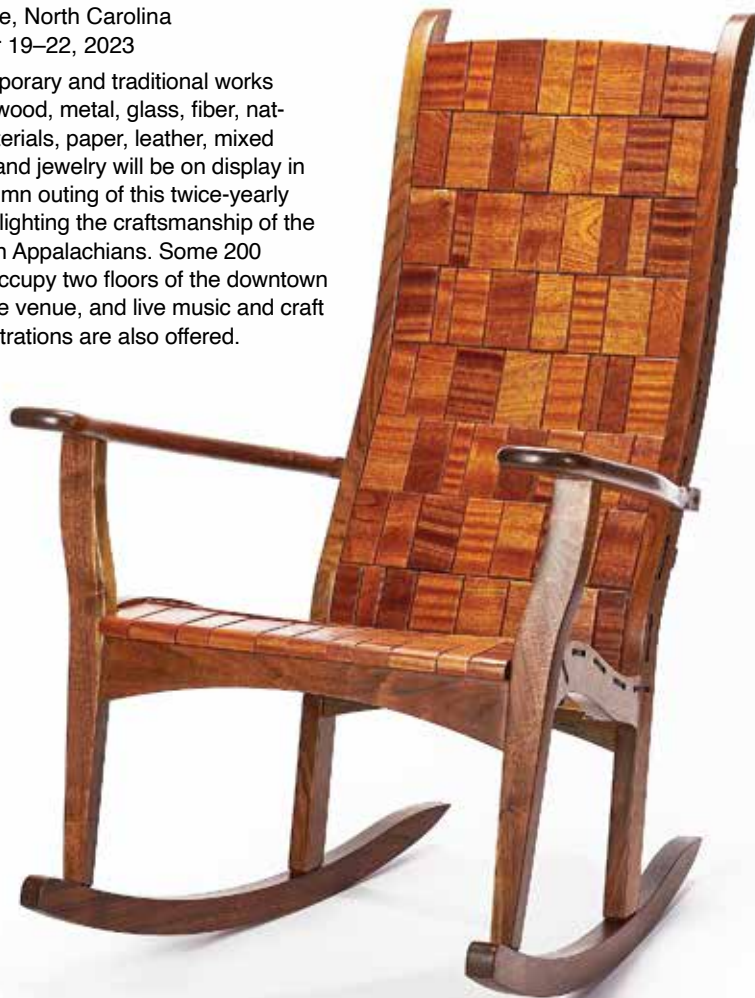
Ceramist Takaezu and fiber artist Tawney forged a close friendship for half a century until Tawney's death in 2007, living together and sharing studio space between 1977 and 1981. Crystal Bridges reunites the friends by bringing together seven of Takaezu's dynamically glazed ceramic sculptures along with two dramatic, large-scale weavings, two drawings, and an assemblage by Tawney.

**76th annual Craft Fair of the Southern Highlands**

Harrah's Cherokee Center  
Asheville, North Carolina

October 19–22, 2023

Contemporary and traditional works in clay, wood, metal, glass, fiber, natural materials, paper, leather, mixed media, and jewelry will be on display in the autumn outing of this twice-yearly fair highlighting the craftsmanship of the southern Appalachians. Some 200 artists occupy two floors of the downtown Asheville venue, and live music and craft demonstrations are also offered.



Made of wooden blocks strung onto ropes, this 45-by-30-by-36 in. rocking chair by Alan Daigre Designs of Tennessee will be available at the 76th annual Craft Fair of the Southern Highlands.

**A Two-Way Mirror: Double Consciousness in Contemporary Glass by Black Artists**

Museum of Glass  
Tacoma, Washington

Opens October 21

Taking its cue from W.E.B. DuBois's definition of *double consciousness*—the sense Black people have of being both self-aware and aware of being seen through a racist lens—*A Two-Way Mirror* brings together a multinational group of Black artists who work in a notably “reflective” and lens-like medium ideal for interrogating ideas of identity.



Nigerian artist Layo Bright's *Adebisi VII*, 2020, kiln-formed glass, 11.5 x 11.5 x 3 in., will be shown in *A Two-Way Mirror: Double Consciousness in Contemporary Glass by Black Artists* at the Museum of Glass.

**NOVEMBER OPENINGS**

**Stephen Talasnik: FLOE**

Museum for Art in Wood  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

November 3, 2023–February 18, 2024

Philly-born artist Talasnik presents a collection of “archaeological artifacts,” constructed of wood, bamboo, and composite materials, testifying to a vanished future Philadelphia, buried by a natural disaster brought on by climate change. Many of the objects evoke the fate of the most vulnerable: the impoverished, the unhoused, and the stateless.

**Fooling the Eye: Optics of Vasarely and Kuhn**

Cafesjian Art Trust  
Shoreview, Minnesota

November 9, 2023–May 5, 2024

Along with paintings by Victor Vasarely, the Hungarian-born godfather of Op Art, this exhibition highlights the complex glass pieces of North Carolina–based John Kuhn, who works with cold glass pieces that he cuts, polishes, assembles, and fuses. The resulting sculpture reflects and refracts surrounding light in the manner of an outsized diamond. The Cafesjian was recently established by Gerard Cafesjian to share his collection of contemporary and modern art with a focus on glass.

**More Craft Happenings!**

Discover additional exhibitions, shows, and other events in the online version of this article at [craftcouncil.org/CraftHappenings](https://craftcouncil.org/CraftHappenings).





## In Kelly Reichardt's new film

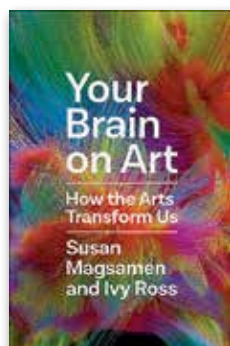
*Showing Up*, sculptor Lizzy (Michelle Williams, left) prepares for an upcoming show while balancing interruptions from her job, her negligent landlord, and her difficult family. Reichardt grounded her film in the local craft scene in Portland, Oregon, incorporating Cynthia Lahti's richly textured figurative sculptures as Lizzy's work. Lahti tutored Williams in ceramics during production and created greenware duplicates of her work for Williams to work on during filming.

### SHOWING UP

Movie directed by Kelly Reichardt

A24, 2022

Available via streaming services



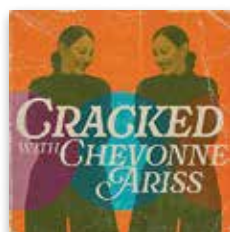
### YOUR BRAIN ON ART

By Susan Magsamen  
and Ivy Ross

Random House, 2023

\$30

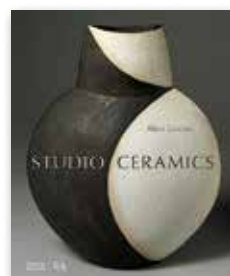
This book's bold assertion is that, beyond inspiring thought, enhancing sensibilities, and building community, the arts "can . . . fundamentally change your day-to-day life. They can help address serious physical and mental health issues, with remarkable results. And they can both help you learn and flourish." The art-brain nexus that does these things is termed *neuroaesthetics*, and Magsamen and Ross introduce the reader to it with loads of scientific evidence.



### CRACKED WITH CHEVONNE ARISS

Podcast available on  
standard platforms  
15 episodes available as  
videos on YouTube

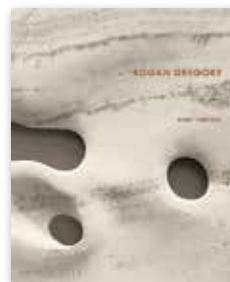
A stained-glass podcast? Absolutely. Ariss, proprietor of Rüna Glassworks in Austin, Texas, holds animated, informal conversations with artists who use colored glass in many ways, from windows to multimedia works. She and her guests talk style and influences as well as the nitty gritty of setting up and running an arts business. Mindful of the wide reach of her art form, she welcomes conservators and hobbyists to the show too.



### STUDIO CERAMICS: BRITISH STUDIO POTTERY 1900 TO NOW

By Alun Graves,  
foreword by Tanya Harrod  
Thames & Hudson, 2023  
\$85

This book, by a Victoria and Albert Museum curator, is both a history and a definitive reference work on how British ceramics made their radical contribution to modern art. Text that sums up the movement succinctly is followed by excellent color photos of major works, 1909–2019, in chronological order. The second half of this 400-page tome presents accounts of major makers alphabetically, from Jerome Abbo to A. and J. Young.



### ROGAN GREGORY: EVENT HORIZON

By Rogan Gregory  
Monacelli, 2023  
\$60

The curvy, blobby, bio- and geomorphic forms of design-consultant-turned-artist Gregory reflect his passion for geology, ecological systems, and evolutionary biology. His furniture and sculptural works, executed in materials ranging from wood, stone, and bronze to innovative aggregates, receive deluxe treatment here: page after lush page of images are interrupted only occasionally by short essays by experts, including his father, social historian Stanford W. Gregory, and his sister, biologist Tremaine Gregory.

## Come On In

*In Harlem, Claire Oliver Gallery seeks a more inclusive and equitable approach to cultivating collectors.*

**The Harlem-based dealer Claire Oliver** builds her business on moments of connection. “If, when I look at an artist’s work to show, I don’t immediately feel possessed to own everything I’m seeing, I don’t show the work,” she says. “There’s a visceral reaction that I have to the work that I show. I have to believe in it personally.”

The approach has proven to work well. Over more than three decades, Claire Oliver Gallery has built and sustained a reputation for championing historically under-represented artists, many of whom are today recognized as significant voices within American art history. The majority of names on its roster have always been of women, and the gallery has facilitated the acquisition of more than 300 works by Black and brown artists by major museums throughout the United States. These include the exuberant, intricate quilted portraits of Bisa Butler; the cut-paper and illuminated works of Barbara Earl Thomas; and the sewn and layered textiles of Gio Swaby that celebrate Black women. “The work, conceptually, has to be rigorous, and it has to have a message that’s important, that is going to elicit conversations,” Oliver says. “But then equally important is I want to see the hand of the artist on the craft.”

Amid an art market suddenly hungry for the kinds of artists the gallery has long represented, Oliver is also carefully considering where the gallery places work long-term. In 2020, after 17 years in New York’s Chelsea neighborhood—and before that, with chapters in Philadelphia and in Florida—the gallery relocated to a four-story brownstone in Harlem that Oliver purchased. The move to Oliver’s own neighborhood (she gets to walk to work now) has allowed her to focus on expanding her collector base with greater intention, especially toward equity and inclusion. It’s been her lifelong passion: the Southern California native’s childhood dream was to be chief curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but she grew to realize she wanted to engage directly with artists and promote their careers, rather than occupy herself with research.

That work today involves seeking out not only well-known art collectors but locals who are curious about starting their own collections. “We take great care that maybe a third of a show goes to people trying to establish a legacy for their children and their children’s children,” Oliver says. “We’re interested in that first-generation college grad who



ABOVE: Claire Oliver (left) with artist Simone Elizabeth Saunders, whose *Unearthing Unicorns* exhibition was held recently at Claire Oliver Gallery. OPPOSITE: In 2020 the gallery moved from Chelsea to Harlem (pictured).

has his first job and has a little money put aside, who lives here in Harlem and has bought his first house. That person will get equal priority, because we want to see more Black collectors getting a seat at the table.”

Many of those relationships get built through word of mouth, often referrals from museums the gallery works with and from collectors to whom it has previously sold art. But Oliver—who despite her veteran status says she often feels like an art-world outsider herself—also hopes to cultivate a space that is inviting, where a passerby may step in without feeling the intimidation often associated with contemporary art galleries, and discover work that excites them. “We don’t want anyone standing outside looking through the glass,” she says. “It’s very important, not just from the standpoint of creating new collectors. As a representative of some of the most powerful Black and brown voices speaking in the art world today, I need to have their work seen by their own community. So being in Harlem, to me, just rings true.”

She recalls seeing mothers and their children flock to Gio Swaby’s first solo exhibition in 2021, and seeing girls strike poses in front of the life-size, patterned portraits of Black women. There’s a strong sense of camaraderie—not only among her neighbors but also among other Harlem art spaces—that she never felt when in Chelsea, where business always trumped community. “People look out for and care about each other, and it’s just a nicer way to do business that, I think, rubs off on the collectors as well,” Oliver says. “We’ve lived here a long time, and we want to be able to create a legacy here.” —Claire Voon

♦

[claireoliver.com](http://claireoliver.com) | [@claireolivergallery](https://www.instagram.com/claireolivergallery)





STERS.

ATL



2288 ADAM CLAYTON POWELL JR. BLVD

EXIT 2



**To Have and to Hold.** When you want to protect and honor special items—and keep track of them—handmade keepsake boxes are a beautiful solution. These four options, in ceramic and wood, offer a variety of styles and sizes for holding some of your most cherished possessions.



A military brat, Vaughan Nelson of **One Blue Marble** moved frequently throughout his childhood, observing and absorbing the artistic traditions of his diverse surroundings. Now living in Tucson, Arizona, he incorporates dots, swirls, spirals, and squiggles into his whimsical ceramics. This slab-built stone-ware pillow box, measuring 6.5 x 5.5 x 7.5 in., is topped with a radiant, colorful handle. / \$160

[onebluemarbleceramics.com](http://onebluemarbleceramics.com) | [@onebluemarble](https://twitter.com/onebluemarble)

To create her kurinuki trinket box, Salem, Massachusetts-based Kimberly Allison hollows out a block of solid porcelain in accordance with the Japanese technique of the same name. Decorated with elegant black mirror glaze and gold luster, the boxes from **K. Allison Ceramics** measure approximately 1.25 x 1.5 in., perfect for holding rings or small earrings. / \$65

[kallisonceramics.com](http://kallisonceramics.com) | [@kallisonceramics](https://twitter.com/kallisonceramics)



Furniture maker **Sophie Glenn** of Reading, Pennsylvania, made this 3-by-4-by-7-in. band-saw box from a block of poplar. With ridges cut into the perimeter and amoebic patterns painted on the top with milk paint, it's part of her series of germ boxes, available in a number of colors and shapes from Contemporary Craft. / \$100

[sophieglenn.com](http://sophieglenn.com) | [contemporarycraftstore.com](http://contemporarycraftstore.com)  
[@arcburn\\_furniture](https://twitter.com/arcburn_furniture)



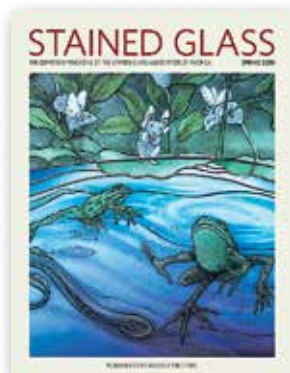
Formed from bent cherry, secured with copper tacks, and topped with a wood veneer sunburst star quilt pattern, at 3.5 x 8.5 x 6 in. this oval box is perfect for storing sewing notions—and so much more. It was made by **Jeff Neil** of Gray, Tennessee, who unites two storied American craft traditions in his quilt-top Shaker boxes. / \$105

[southernhighlandguild.org/artist/jeffreynail](http://southernhighlandguild.org/artist/jeffreynail)

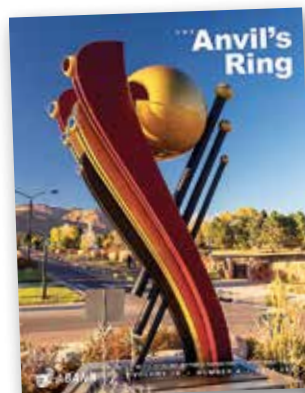
TOP LEFT: Photo by Vaughan Nelson. BOTTOM LEFT: Photo by Kimberly Allison. TOP RIGHT: Photo courtesy of Sophie Glenn. BOTTOM RIGHT: Photo by Jeff Neil.



**Niche Magazines.** Professional associations in the field of craft cover specific types of media and technique, and a good number of them produce magazines. The American Craft Council Library, which can be visited by appointment, holds nearly 100 periodical subscriptions, as well as myriad issues of publications no longer in print, most of them catering to specific areas of the craft field. ACC librarian Beth Goodrich highlights five such publications here, with a longer list (not exhaustive) of niche magazines below.



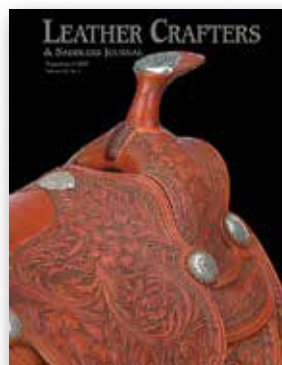
**Stained Glass**, published by the Stained Glass Association of America, is a quarterly publication featuring articles on the history of architectural stained glass, artist spotlights, and noteworthy projects, as well as resource pages listing suppliers, books, and opportunities of interest to stained glass artists.



The Artist-Blacksmith's Association of North America (ABANA) issues two publications. **The Anvil's Ring** is its primary publication and contains feature articles, historical notes, member spotlights, and book reviews. Its educational counterpart, **Hammer's Blow**, provides how-to articles, tricks of the trade, notices, and classified ads for the blacksmithing community.



**Leather Crafters & Saddlers Journal** will provide you with plenty of inspiration for your next project. Each issue features several projects with step-by-step instructions, as well as a large pullout section with cutting and carving templates. The journal also provides industry news and event listings for leather craft.



Hand Papermaking, Inc., publishes **Hand Papermaking** to promote "the scholarship and production of handmade paper and paper art." Each issue features artist interviews, exhibition reviews, and articles about historical and regional practices, and includes tipped-in samples of handmade paper.



#### Other niche magazines to explore:

*American Woodturner* (American Association of Woodturners)  
*Book Arts arts du livre Canada* (Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild)  
*Chip Chats* (National Wood Carvers Association)  
*Guild of Book Workers Journal*  
*Metalsmith* (Society of North American Goldsmiths)  
*Needle Arts* (Embroiderers' Guild of America)  
*SAQA Journal* (Studio Art Quilt Associates)  
*Shuttle Spindle & Dyepot* (Handweavers Guild of America, Inc.)  
*Surface Design Journal* (Surface Design Association)  
*Tile Heritage: A Review of American Tile History* (Tile Heritage Foundation)

#### About the ACC Library

The American Craft Council Library & Archives in Minneapolis contains the country's most comprehensive archive of contemporary American craft history, with more than 20,000 print publications, files on nearly 4,000 craft artists, four major archival collections, and a robust digital collection. To explore the ACC Digital Archives, visit [digital.craftcouncil.org](http://digital.craftcouncil.org). Sign up for librarian Beth Goodrich's quarterly newsletter at [craftcouncil.org/CraftyLibrarian](http://craftcouncil.org/CraftyLibrarian). For more information about joining the Friends of the ACC Library & Archives, contact Judy Hawkinson, ACC's associate executive director, at [jhawkinson@craftcouncil.org](mailto:jhawkinson@craftcouncil.org) or 651-434-3951.



**UPCYCLED**

*ONE-OF-A-KIND*

**TEXTILES**

**INDIGENOUS OWNED**



# For the Future

*An Indigenous-owned retail space on Santa Fe's famous Canyon Road, 4KINSHIP supports Native makers—and communities.*

BY CLAIRE VOON

Two months after opening 4KINSHIP, her retail space on Santa Fe's historic Canyon Road, Amy Denet Deal invited artists to paint a message on the adobe building: *we belong here*. She chose the phrase as a variation on “We are still here,” the assertion of Indigenous groups around the world; the three words are 4KINSHIP's claim to homeland, but also a call to its broader community, including Santa Fe. “It's mostly a town built on the back of Native artists and cultures, but there's a lot of non-Native people selling Native goods,” Denet Deal, an enrolled member of the Navajo (Diné) Nation, says. “We're a big beautiful community and 4KINSHIP is grateful to have a space that can be of support.”

The interior of the store is a swirl of sunlight and color: one-of-a-kind garments, most of them made from upcycled textiles and many hand-dyed by Denet Deal herself to evoke desert landscapes, fill racks from end to end. There are eye-catching accessories, home goods, and other objects designed and handcrafted by local Native artists, some sourced and others commissioned.

Amy Denet Deal stands at the entrance to 4KINSHIP, which she opened in Santa Fe in 2022.







Visitors may encounter bold, oversized hair clips with traditional beadwork by Diné artist Raymond Anderson, or earrings and necklaces hand-strung by Diné artist Mary Rose Yazzie that feature dried juniper berries, also known as ghost beads—powerful objects with protective properties. Mary Jane Garcia, also Diné, has created jewelry pieces exclusive to 4KINSHIP that combine traditional designs with a modern perspective, such as geometric cuffs that frame Kingman turquoise gems, or jumbo rings set with bumblebee jasper or pyritized ammonite.

“We honor everyone that does traditional art. And my store embraces some of the younger, more contemporary artists,” Denet Deal said. “That juxtaposition between the past and the future is really where we want to be, because there are beautiful, beautiful things from our traditional side that get passed down, and we’re loving to see and nurture points of view from young trailblazing artists who are working with traditional arts in exciting new ways.”

### The Years Everything Changed

It was thinking about her own legacy that led Denet Deal to create a sustainable brand in the first place. After working as an executive in the fashion industry for 40 years, she realized she wanted to take an active role in preserving the planet for her daughter and future generations. In 2015, she launched an

LEFT: Denet Deal's hands after dyeing clothing outside the store.  
ABOVE: A view of upcycled and dyed clothing inside 4KINSHIP.





**“That juxtaposition between the past and the future is really where we want to be, because there are beautiful, beautiful things from our traditional side that get passed down.” —Amy Denet Deal**

online business called Orenda Tribe that initially focused on selling repurposed vintage pieces. Four years later, she moved from Los Angeles to Albuquerque to connect more deeply with her indigeneity and with a commitment to be of service.

Born to a Diné mother, Denet Deal had been adopted by a non-Native family and was raised in Indiana, distant from her culture. In 2007 she reconnected with her birth mother and began visiting New Mexico to learn about what it means to be Diné. The move to Albuquerque in 2019 allowed her to increasingly collaborate with Native artists and open a storefront that included their work.

But six months later she was forced to close the store when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Due to lack of infrastructure, including limited access to running water, food, and WiFi, the Navajo Nation was hit especially hard. With the help of women volunteers, Denet Deal transitioned her space into the Dził Asdzáán (Mountain Woman) Command Center. She called on connections at companies such as Patagonia and Outdoor Voices for fabric, and they went to work making masks. Having experience running large corporations and raising funds, she also solicited donations and held fundraisers, including a concert with singer-songwriter Jewel that raised enough to fund 42,000 care boxes for the children of the Diné community and their families. In 2020 the Dził Asdzáán Command Center raised more than

\$835,000 and distributed more than a million PPE (personal protective equipment) units and more than a million servings of food. WebMD named Denet Deal one of its 2021 Health Heroes, along with infectious disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci. He received its Lifetime Achievement Award, and Denet Deal its Trailblazer of the Year Award.

The year 2021 brought more transformation for Denet Deal and her company. In addition to handling a business during a health and economic crisis, she learned there was concern in Native communities about her use of the word *orenda*. Roughly translated, *orenda* refers to a certain spiritual energy in people and their environment. The original form of this anglicized Oneida word has deep meaning for the Haudenosaunee or Six Nations Iroquois people; the Oneida are one of the six nations. So Denet Deal began learning about intertribal appropriation and how to address it “with integrity and care.” Understanding the importance of being open to learning, she traveled east to meet with many Haudenosaunee tribal leaders and linguists to offer, she says, her respect and humility. “Together we undertook a three-month process of relationship building, intentionality,

TOP LEFT: Constellation Cuff by Diné silversmith Thomas Coriz. TOP RIGHT: Painted on the outside of 4KINSHIP are the words “we belong here.” ABOVE RIGHT: Jewelry and accessories, including oversized hair clips with traditional beadwork by Diné artist Raymond Anderson.





TOP LEFT: Josh Tafoya's architectural garments are sold at 4KINSHIP. Pictured here is *Patched Identity*, which is handwoven and handsewn. ABOVE: Diné artist Peyton Alex, a painter, illustrator, and silversmith whose work at 4KINSHIP has raised funds for Diné Skate Garden Project. LEFT: Handmade sheep figurines by Emily Jacket. OPPOSITE: Shawn Harrison, host of Masa TV, skates at the Diné Skate Garden Project in Two Grey Hills, New Mexico.



and healing,” she says, noting that cultural protocol is essential to reclaiming one’s indigeneity and to intertribal relationships.

“Through that beautiful learning, the brand evolved into its forever name of 4KINSHIP,” says Denet Deal. “Orenda was the beacon that brought me home and 4KINSHIP is really the vessel and purpose for my life’s journey. When you say you’re Native, that comes with responsibility, and I’m here to do that work. This learning process has been such a gift. Considering the impact of 4KINSHIP’s work through an Indigenous lens—thinking beyond the now and me to always offer a creative way to be in service to community and in harmony with all relations for future generations—the organization is working to put cultural wisdom into motion.”

In 2022, Denet Deal moved 4KINSHIP to Santa Fe, seeing an opportunity to represent Native voices in a distinct way, and in a highly visible, high-traffic location. “It’s the mecca of Native American culture and art,” she says of the state capital, noting that she doesn’t think the city is doing enough to make Native American businesses a permanent fixture of its commerce. “In 2023 there are no initiatives in Santa Fe to get Native businesses in a permanent way. No grants, no resources. The talent just isn’t sufficiently recognized. Instead, the city invites Native artists to share their work via temporary permits, pop-ups, and Indian fairs. We belong here, our beautiful art deserves permanent space, and our community deserves reciprocity.”

Johanna Nelson, director of Santa Fe’s Office of Economic Development, acknowledges that the city does not currently have specific incentives to support Native artists but works to connect them with state and nonprofit resources. “We are in the process of developing a strategic action plan for our office,” she says. “Supporting Native entrepreneurs will be a key component—gathering input and making sure we have strategies identified.”

Denet Deal recognizes the long-term significance of opening a Native-owned space on Canyon Road. “I felt it was necessary to be representative in an area that’s considered a luxury, higher-end experience, and offer this space to younger talents,” she says.

### For the Long Run

Intergenerational dialogue permeates 4KINSHIP—between featured artists, and between those artists and their relatives who have passed down traditional knowledge. Younger talent has included Josh Tafoya, a Taos-based designer who handweaves and sews otherworldly, architectural garments, and Suni Upshaw, who under the name Yesterday’s Flowers makes stoneware vessels that explore her Diné and Japanese identities and ancestral practices. 4KINSHIP has also sold new rugs by artists from Two Grey Hills, New Mexico, who carry generations of weaving knowledge. Among them are Virginia Jumbo, Shirley Brown, and Ashley Tsosie, who integrates



bright turquoise wool into traditional neutral patterns, as did her grandmother Bernice Brown.

“The expectation people have of Native fashion or arts is that it looks a certain way, like it’s always looked,” Denet Deal says. “We’d never expect that from the talent that we work with. It’s up to them to decide how they want to authentically represent themselves.”

Tafoya, who has been working with Denet Deal for more than a year, says being able to showcase his perspective has been freeing. “Growing up in New Mexico, I found it extremely hard to sell or display my work,” he says. “My work in fashion and contemporary or experimental weaving really doesn’t fit the mold of what shops and galleries want to showcase. They really want to curate to what they think tourists want.”

He ended up moving to New York, where he felt appreciated for his work, but was forced to move home during the height of the pandemic. Back in New Mexico, he met Denet Deal. “She welcomed me into her space, where I’ve really flourished,” Tafoya says. “Her shop is really something new here and is breaking the mold in Santa Fe. I really think she’s creating a new wave by giving space for artists to create freely.”

“I cherish and value our talent, innovations and energy as Native people,” Denet Deal says. 4KINSHIP reinvests profits from store sales into the Native community, hiring Native photographers, models, writers, and filmmakers.

4KINSHIP also takes on community issues and raises needed funds. Recently, 4KINSHIP spent five months raising about \$200,000 for Amá Dóó Áłchíní Bighan, a shelter in Chinle, Arizona, for Diné domestic-abuse survivors. 4KINSHIP also raised funds to open and maintain the Diné Skate Garden Project to serve youth in Two Grey Hills. “It’s just a show of what we can do when we work together,” she says.

Denet Deal is committed to the vision, having signed a 10-year lease for the Santa Fe storefront. “We’re in this together, and for the long run.”

◆  
4kinship.com | @4kinship

Claire Voon is a Brooklyn-based journalist and critic who has contributed to publications including the *New York Times* and *Artforum*.

# the consummate collector

*Along with her late husband George, Dorothy Saxe built friendships with artists while collecting their work. At age 97, she reflects on her love of craft.*

BY DEBORAH BISHOP

**Before 1980, Dorothy Saxe had not collected much** of anything, apart from some restaurant matchbooks back in her youth.

But soon thereafter, she and her late husband, real estate developer George Saxe, whom she'd met soon after graduating from Northwestern University and who died in 2010, began to amass one of the most thoughtful and free-ranging collections of postwar studio craft in the country—more than 700 objects rendered in glass, ceramic, fiber, metal, and wood, as well as jewelry.

"As a couple, we weren't very acquisitive—we never cared about buying the latest stuff," says Dorothy, a petite and commanding woman of 97 who expresses herself in clipped, declarative sentences that are often capped with a dryly humorous coda. "But once we discovered craft, I guess you could say that switch got flipped."

The Saxes' passion for collecting was sparked after their three children were grown. Both were immersed in philanthropic pursuits, and weekends found George on the golf course and Dorothy attending opera and ballet. "We wanted something new to us both, so we could learn and enjoy these experiences together—but we didn't have any idea what that might be," Dorothy recalls.

When a friend shared her catalog of The Corning Museum of Glass's 1979 glass exhibition, *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey*, the genie flew out of the bottle. "We had no inkling there was such a thing as contemporary art glass," says Dorothy. "We fell in love with the work, and when a glass exhibition came to the Oakland Museum six weeks later, George said, 'Okay, this is it!' But we hadn't a clue where to start."

While many in their position might have turned to an art adviser, the Saxes created their own immersion crash course.

They paged through the Corning catalog, researched artists, and visited studios and galleries. Above all, they learned to trust their gut—still the best advice Dorothy has for new collectors.

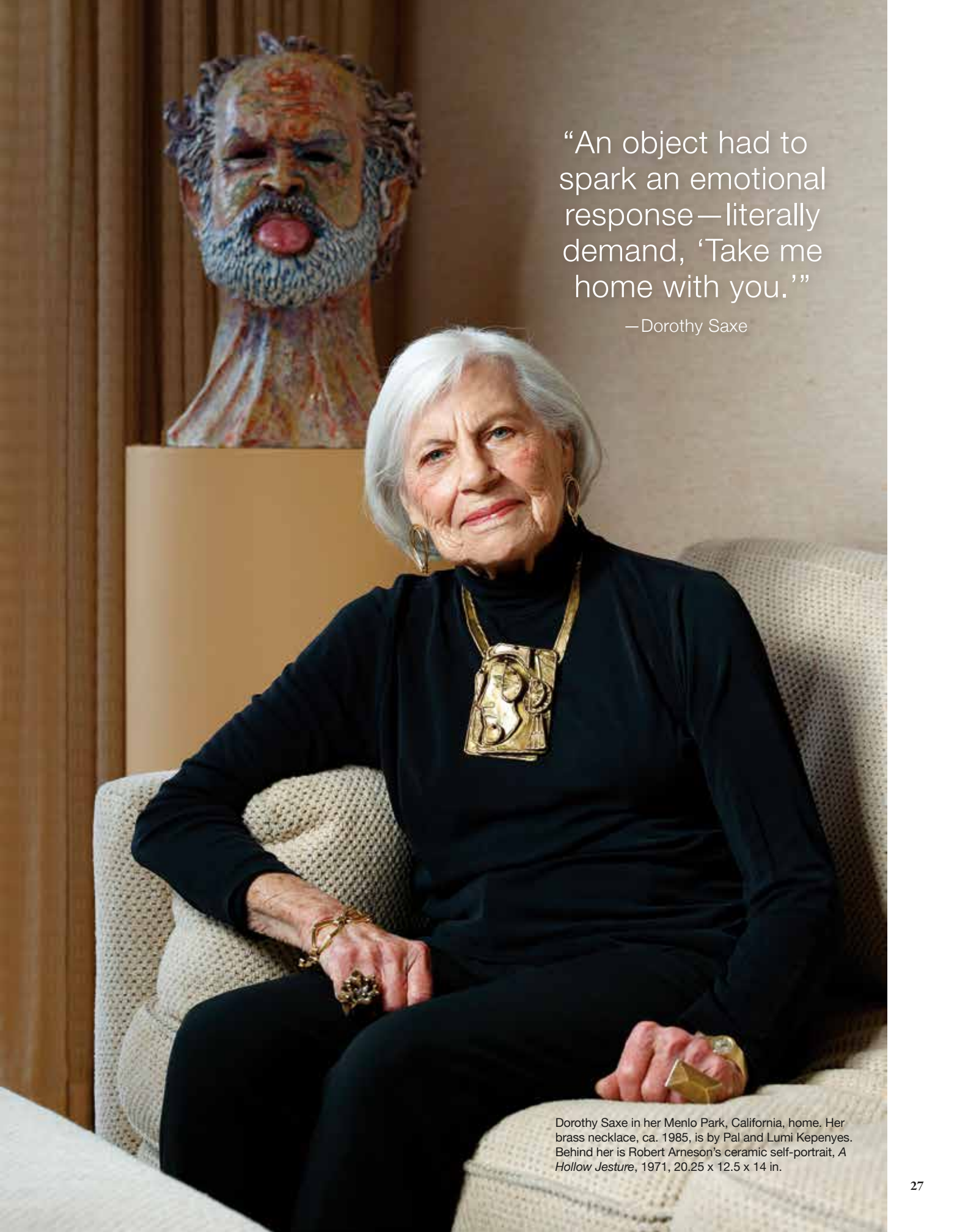
The first pieces they acquired were by Richard Marquis, Jay Musler, "and someone I've never heard of before or since," says Dorothy. "Many of the artists went on to have illustrious careers; others faded away. It made no difference to our enjoyment, because we never bought anything as an investment. An object had to spark an emotional response—literally demand, 'Take me home with you.'"

This was a siren call they happily heeded, and when their collection of glass outgrew their pied-à-terre in San Francisco, George and Dorothy purchased the apartment next door to gain display space. On a wintry day in November, the objects are animated by the crisp light that pours in through windows facing the whitecap-dotted bay. As Dorothy walks through the rooms (wearing expressive jewelry by Sam Shaw), she rattles off artists' names and stories as if they're family members or close friends—which, in fact, many are.

"It was the most wonderful time of our lives," Dorothy reminisces. "The people we met through craft became our best friends—fellow collectors, but especially artists like Howard Ben Tré, Dale Chihuly, Dan Dailey and Linda MacNeil, Flora Mace and Joey Kirkpatrick, and Billy Morris. George gave up golfing, because he said he preferred prowling around the galleries and studios."

Sculptor Joey Kirkpatrick recalls dining with the Saxes in the early 1980s with his wife, artist Flora Mace, and becoming fast friends. "Flora and I had just returned from Pilchuck, full of excitement, and George and Dorothy quickly became part of the fabric of the place—watching glassblowing and



A photograph of Dorothy Saxe, an elderly woman with short white hair, sitting in a light-colored, textured armchair. She is wearing a black turtleneck sweater and a large, ornate brass necklace. Her hands are resting on her lap, adorned with several rings and a bracelet. Behind her, on a tall, narrow wooden pedestal, is a colorful ceramic bust of a man with a beard and a red tongue sticking out. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

“An object had to  
spark an emotional  
response—literally  
demand, ‘Take me  
home with you.’”

—Dorothy Saxe

Dorothy Saxe in her Menlo Park, California, home. Her brass necklace, ca. 1985, is by Pal and Lumi Kepenyés. Behind her is Robert Arneson's ceramic self-portrait, *A Hollow Jesture*, 1971, 20.25 x 12.5 x 14 in.



learning about being an artist from the ground floor,” recalls Kirkpatrick. “They thought outside the box of established norms of collecting and put together a fantastic collection that not only supported artists but inspired collectors too.”

The Saxes also encouraged the next generation. Every spring, Clifford Rainey—who chaired the glass department at California College of Art—brought his students to the Saxes’ apartment, where each selected three pieces that moved them and discussed why. “They had a way of seeing things as artists that wouldn’t have occurred to George or me, and we gained so much insight from them into our own collection,” says Dorothy.

After a few years of doggedly pursuing glass, there was little left to buy. “George was getting the bends—he loved the thrill of the chase,” says Dorothy. As they contemplated other media, it was in the context of their primary dwelling, a wood-shingled house in leafy Menlo Park, about 45 minutes south of San Francisco.

“They thought outside the box of established norms of collecting and put together a fantastic collection that not only supported artists but inspired collectors too.”

—Joey Kirkpatrick, sculptor





THIS PAGE, ABOVE: Glass works in Saxe's San Francisco living room include 1990 portraits of her and her late husband, George Saxe, by Narcissus Quagliata, and 23 other works, including the yellow sculpture by Ivan Mares (left) and the tallest red sculpture on the shelves (right) by Lino Tagliapietra, as well as pieces by Zoltan Bohus, Dan Dailey, Alessandro Diaz de Santillana, Mona Hatoum, Jon Kuhn, Jan Johansson, Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, Harvey Littleton, Matei Negreanu, Tom Patti, Sibylle Peretti, Clifford Rainey, Bertil Vallien, Ann Wolff, and Mary Ann Zynsky. LEFT: Clifford Rainey's *Fetish*, 1990. BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Three glassworks by Oben Abright: *Waiting Series II*, 2004; *West Oakland Torso*, 2014; and *Silence Series II*, 2003.

OPPOSITE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Clifford Rainey's *Freedom of Conscience*, 1989. Amber Cowan's *River Green and Mint*, 2015. Two works by American glass artist William Morris: *Canopic Jar: Buck*, 1993, and an untitled bird, date unknown.









This sun-dappled space is cozier—more domestic and inward-looking—than their city apartment, and a natural setting for the ceramic, wood, fiber, and metal objects that reside on every surface (a Viola Frey sculpture holds court over the bathtub). The house is, in its way, a shrine to the very values of postwar studio craft: a rejection of the mass-produced and machine-made in favor of the personal and the handwrought.

“At first, the only ceramist we’d heard of was Peter Voulkos,” says Dorothy. “So our dear friend, art dealer Ruth Braunstein, took us to Pete’s studio to pick out a plate. She also showed us some of his stack pieces, and we fell in love with one, but it was way out of our price range for our first foray. Ruth insisted we just enjoy it for a while and then return it. So Pete came over for drinks and placed it in the house—and it was terrific. Every time we tried to return it, Ruth lowered the price—which was not our intention, although it’s a good technique—until finally, we couldn’t afford not to keep it.”

The Voulkos stack was followed, in short order, by ceramists such as Ron Nagle, Richard Shaw, Robert Arneson, Manuel Neri, and Betty Woodman (“her pieces make my heart sing”) and by objects and furniture in other materials—from a John Cederquist trompe l’oeil chest to beaded jewelry by Joyce Scott, a trove of Kay Sekimachi’s delicate fiber vessels, and a wall of turned wood bowls by her late husband, Bob Stocksdale. “Whenever George needed a fix, he’d visit Bob in Berkeley and come home with two or three new bowls,” says Dorothy.

While Dorothy had long been enamored with textiles, their fiber collection was jump-started when she and George received a New York gallery announcement for Cranbrook-educated, Colombian-born artist Olga de Amaral. “We adored the image, so George called our good friend Jack [Lenor] Larson and asked if he’d take a look. Jack said, ‘Buy it!’” That piece [*Riscos I (Fibra y Azul)*, 1983] still hangs over the fireplace.

Although both Saxe abodes are filled to the gills, many works have already made the transition to their forever homes in museums around the country. In fact, Dorothy considers that she and George were not so much collectors as stewards. Beneficiaries include the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio, the Oakland Museum of California, San Francisco’s de Young Museum, to which the Saxes bequeathed 223 objects by 132 artists in 1998 (of which 105 are already on-site), and many more. It was important to them that the work primarily go to fine arts museums rather than craft-centric institutions, as a direct response to the balkanization of studio craft by the art world at that time.



ABOVE RIGHT: Viola Frey’s *Mask & Rose* (on the wall) and Paul Soldner’s *Untitled Vessel #36-48*. RIGHT: Olga de Amaral’s hanging *Riscos I (Fibra y Azul)*. Betty Woodman’s *Rose Pillow Pitcher* (left) and Xiaoping Luo’s *A-1 Teapot* (right) on the hearth. Side chair by Jay Stanger. OPPOSITE: Sculptures by Sergei Isupov and Rick Dillingham on a Wendell Castle coffee table. Behind the couch (left to right) are Richard Deutsch’s *Journey* (on wall), Peter Voulkos’s *Yogi*, and Michael Lucero’s *Mermaid*.



LEFT: In front of an unidentified tapestry is a 1990 fiddleback maple chair by Sam Maloof and a 2001 walnut end table by Tetsushi Inoue. ABOVE: Nick Cave's 2008 *Untitled (Soundsuit)*. OPPOSITE, TOP TO BOTTOM: Linda Sormin's *Ta Saparot (pineapple eyes)*, 2019. Two works by Al Farrow: *Sabbath Candelabra*, 2017 (right), and *Dreidel*, 2011/2019. Wanxin Zhang's *Mao with Red Babies*, 2008.

#### Discover More

To see details about the works in these photos—which show a small selection of the pieces in Dorothy Saxe's collection—visit the online version of this article: [craftcouncil.org/DorothySaxe](http://craftcouncil.org/DorothySaxe).





“George and I always welcomed work that was challenging and thought-provoking.”

—Dorothy Saxe



“George and Dorothy were absolutely instrumental in shining a light and helping to erase the ridiculous and arbitrary distinctions between art and craft that were then so prevalent,” affirms de Young curator Timothy Anglin Burgard, who met the Saxes in 1996 and wrote the book accompanying the 1999 exhibition—*The Art of Craft: Contemporary Works from the Saxe Collection*. “And they played a vital role by visiting studios, offering encouragement, and supporting the infrastructure by purchasing through galleries.”

Although donating is at the cornerstone of the Saxes’ philosophy, there are pieces Dorothy would have liked living with just a little longer. Linda Sormin’s abstract ceramic *Ta Saparot* (pineapple eyes), a 2019 meditation on the chaos of migration, quickly joined the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s Renwick Gallery. And a Nick Cave Soundsuit (*Untitled*, 2008) had a brief sojourn in Menlo Park before moving to the de Young. “I do miss that piece,” says Dorothy wistfully, describing one of the ornate garments Cave created as a protective “second skin” in response to the vulnerability of Black men after the police beating of Rodney King (sadly as relevant now as they were in 1991).

“George and I always welcomed work that was challenging and thought-provoking,” Dorothy continues, discussing art that meditates on the state of humanity and the world. Two of Richard Notkin’s surreal teapots (which he called “a visual plea for sanity”) rest in the den—one crowned with a mushroom cloud (*Cube Skull Teapot, Variation #25*, 2001). A powerful, glazed ceramic sculpture by Wanxin Zhang of Chairman Mao holding bloody babies (*Mao with Red Babies*, 2008) resides on Dorothy’s bedside table. And she displays two pieces by Al Farrow—*Driedl* and a Shabbos *Candelabra*—part of his series of reliquaries rendered from munitions that explore the intersection of religion and violence.





Ramekon O'Arwisters's *Flowered Thorns*  
#13 2021–2022, 2021, part of the Dorothy  
Saxe Invitational at the Contemporary  
Jewish Museum in San Francisco.





Tosha Stimage's installation *No one is listening to us*, 2022, digital collage on paper, mixed media, vintage ceramics, at the Dorothy Saxe Invitational.

Dorothy acquired the Farrow pieces at two of the Contemporary Jewish Museum's Dorothy Saxe Invitationals, an endeavor she supports that asks artists to explore a Jewish object or concept within the context of their artistic practice. "The Invitational combines two of my greatest passions: I love Judaism and I love art," says Dorothy. (Although Farrow is Jewish, many of the artists are not.) Over the years, themes have ranged from Judaica such as seder plates and Tzedakah boxes to such open-ended concepts as Sabbath and the latest iteration: *Tikkun Olam*—or reparation. "It was so timely and provocative—the best one yet," says Dorothy.

Among the 30 works at the most recent Invitational were a Lava Thomas cracked mirror repaired with kintsugi-like gold leaf (*Gilded Fracture*, 2022); a Ramekon O'Arwisters assemblage of fabric, jewelry, and ceramic shards (*Flowered Thorns #13 2021–22*, 2021); and *No one is listening to us* (2022), an installation by Tosha Stimage that depicts flora indigenous to Israel and Palestine and includes a Palestinian flag. "Tikkun refers to repairing something that is broken, and we leave it to the artists to interpret that however they see fit," affirms

Dorothy, when asked about potential controversy. "The museum and I hold firm in that belief, and I can't wait to see what the next theme brings."

Although she continues to attend galleries, studios, and fairs, and recently joined a new group of glass enthusiasts, Dorothy claims her collecting days are over. "I can't decide if that makes me happy or disappointed," she allows. "There are so many new artists making extraordinary work—and I'm aware that our collection is in some ways dated. But I'm 97! If I buy something now, how much longer am I going to enjoy it?"

Most of the works have already been earmarked for institutions, save for a few pieces selected by family. "I think George and I may have been most impactful as pioneers—both in the collecting and the gifting to museums," says Dorothy. "Of course, they probably didn't realize they'd have to wait quite so long for the rest of it. It's sure been a hell of a fun ride."

♦

Longtime contributor Deborah Bishop writes about craft, art, design, architecture—and other stuff—from her home base in San Francisco, a city she continues to love despite rumors of its imminent demise.



A clay sculpture of a figure with a human face and animal horns, standing in a forest. The figure has a dark, textured face with a somber expression. Its head is adorned with a circular, sun-like or horn-like structure. The body is covered in intricate patterns, including a grid of small holes and larger, irregular shapes. The sculpture is set against a background of lush green trees and foliage.

# Pieces of Life

*Chris Malone's elaborate clay and mosaic sculptures tell stories of spirituality and an unknown past.*

BY AMBER LONG

Once, as a boy living on a farm in rural Indiana, Chris Malone worked a sheet of aluminum foil until it gave way to the fragile figure of a horse. “Wow, you’re pretty good at this,” his mother said. “How about we give you some modeling clay.”

“What’s modeling clay?” Malone asked.

Today Malone, based in Maryland, makes striking clay figures and complex mosaic sculptures. Through them he tells stories about his “unknown African past” and expresses his spirituality. The faces of his intricate busts and dolls are often looking up or frowning or fixing the spectator with a piercing gaze.

Malone’s work has appeared in such disparate publications as the *Washington Post* and *Art Doll Quarterly*. He has shown at the Brooklyn Art Museum in New York and is represented by Stella Jones Gallery in New Orleans. Several of his dolls were featured in the 2012 film *Woman Thou Art Loosed: On the 7th Day*, starring Pam Grier and Blair Underwood.

Malone, who is largely self-taught, credits his success to the power of creativity and a strong personal drive derived from his upbringing. “This was a true old-fashioned farm,” Malone says of his childhood home. His family rose early to tend to the cows, chickens, and skunk kits that called the farm home, before the school bus came. “There was nothing like, ‘I didn’t get around to milking the cow’ or ‘Oh, I forgot about the eggs.’ No, that was your responsibility.

“To this day, I’m up in the morning by 6:30 and I’m taking care of things,” he says. “I’m working in the garden. I’m taking care of the animals,” which include bull mastiffs, a labradoodle, a bloodhound, and peafowls. “There’s no day off.” By 8 a.m., he’s in his home studio sculpting. Each of his pieces takes about a month to finish, and he works on two or more at once.

Photo by Steven M. Cummings.





Sculptural ceramic busts in the woods next to Chris Malone's kiln shed in rural Maryland.







“It’s a lot like everyday life. You just make the right choices.”

—Chris Malone on allowing materials to convey the stories behind his work



ABOVE: Malone’s *They Told Me I Had No Reason To Be Upset*, 2022, mixed media ceramic, 23 x 11 x 10 in. OPPOSITE: Malone sculpting in his kiln shed and creative space.

Malone typically creates his sculptures in sections. When making a doll, he begins by covering an aluminum core with polymer clay. He toasts each section for 20 minutes before painting it and joining it to another part of the doll. When working on a bust, Malone covers an armature with paper, and then covers the paper with ceramic clay. The type of armature varies based on the size of the bust. He allows the clay to sit for almost an hour before cutting the head and body in two. He then hollows out the sections, scores them, and joins them back together.

Many of his busts feature adornments such as feathers, fabric, beads, tiles, sculpted flowers, and geometric shapes—even parts of old sculptures that he breaks off and repurposes. It’s a free-form process of building and experimentation. He allows the materials to determine how the story behind an individual sculpture or mosaic is conveyed.

“It’s a lot like everyday life,” Malone explains, giving insight into this creative process. “You just make the right choices. I’m thinking about different kinds of things to use for hair.

Maybe wire, and I could put felt on top of the wire. I could put beads on top of that or into the felt to make it look like the hair is moving.”

Fabric from local shops and feathers feature prominently. “I have peacocks that drop their feathers every year,” he says. “I get their feathers, clean them off, and dry them out. I use those inside, around the head, or in different places on it. I like for fabric to come from all over the world, different fabrics. Just like me, it took a lot of different kinds of people to create me. That’s what I do with the fabrics.”

For a doll such as *Don’t Move They Might Be Watching* (2019), Malone might fasten cloth and mirrors to the doll’s obsidian polymer skin. “I hollow out the head, then I join it back together so there’s a hole in the back, large enough that I can set the eyes in,” he says. “The eyes are very important because I want the eyes to grab people.” Malone embeds tiles and pieces of glass into the soft clay to provide movement and to control the degree of brilliance emanating from the fragments.

Malone is open to and inspired by voices that others might disregard or simply not hear. The creation of his mosaic-on-foam-board sculpture *The Runaway is Hiding in the Garden* (2020) followed an encounter with a spirit.

“When I first moved to Alexandria, I was walking through Old Town, either late at night or early in the morning,” Malone says. “Old Town is kind of creepy anyway. At night, there aren’t many people. I walked from my apartment, and a spirit came to me.” The spirit asked whether Malone was real. “Yes, I’m real,” he responded.

The spirit said, “I don’t think I’m real.”

“I don’t think you’re real, either,” Malone said.

The spirit added, “I don’t think I’m alive.”

The spirit told Malone that he’d escaped from somewhere and was hiding in an old woman’s garden. He asked whether Malone was running away. Then he asked, “Who owns you?”

“No one owns anyone anymore,” Malone said. “Or they shouldn’t.”

When Malone explained that he was an artist living in the present day, the spirit said he wanted him to tell his





story. The spirit's energy pestered him all the while, leaving his side only when the mosaic sculpture was completed.

Experiences such as this were normalized in his family. "The ancestors are always present," he says in his matter-of-fact manner. "They're not with you every day. They have other things to do. This might be my reality, or this might *be* reality. By saying that, I realize this is weird to some people."

Malone has never sought formal training. Once, a high school art teacher, spotting his talent, asked him to fill a sketchbook with drawings conveying cubism, modernism, and neo-classicism. The teacher mailed the sketchbook to a few colleges, and Malone received two offers of admission.

"It meant nothing to me," he says, recalling the economic strife of his teenage years. "We were living day to day. Are we going to have enough food? That's what we were concentrating on. When I got these envelopes, it was like getting something in a foreign language. When I showed it to the teacher, she was happy for me. But, through no fault of her own, she didn't explain to me what I should do next."

Once he began pursuing his craft, Malone found that teaching artists charged exorbitant fees or asked him to travel long distances for classes. "I'm not taking my Black ass anywhere I didn't feel I was wanted, in the middle of nowhere!"

Instead, he picked up techniques from the craftspeople around him, such as the contractors completing renovations on his house, and applied them to his work. "You figure it out," he says. "Yeah, and I figured it out."

Whether he's honoring his beliefs, exploring the past, or devising new ways to use mosaic pieces, finding his way as an artist has required vulnerability and generosity. Malone shares videos of his progress and setbacks on Instagram. He teaches online and studio-based workshops such as "Creating the Modern Doll" and "Mixed Media Character Sculpture Materials," providing other artists with some of the knowledge that wasn't readily available to him.

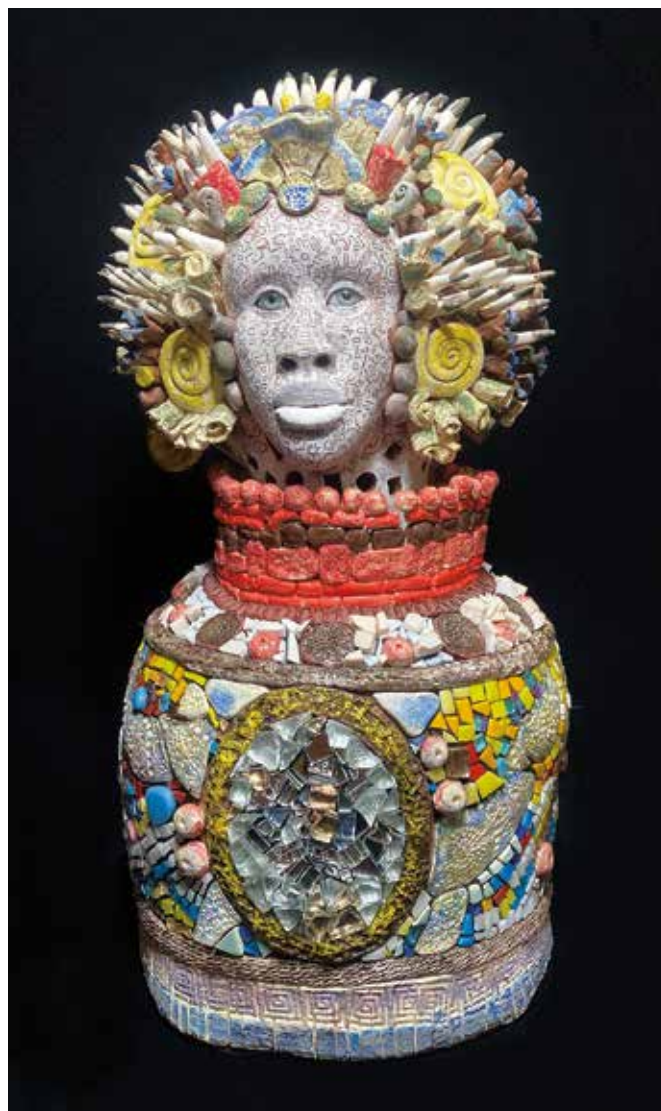
In 2021 Malone became a member of the Smithsonian's African American Craft Initiative, launched by the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage to expand the visibility of African American artists. "It will be nice to see what we as a group, and what the Smithsonian as an institution, will do with this," he says. "We as crafters and artists should be inclusive and nice to each other."

♦

@chrismalone634

Amber Long is a digital magazine intern with the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and an urban planner for the city of Rogers, Arkansas. She's a journalist and writer who hopes one day to write a love poem in Pittsburgh.

This article was coproduced by the Smithsonian's African American Craft Initiative and *American Craft*.



ABOVE: Malone's *But You Cannot Have My Power*, 2021, mixed media ceramic, 23 x 11 x 11 in.

OPPOSITE TOP: *The Runaway is Hiding in the Garden*, 2021, mosaic tile and glass, 48 x 10 x 3 in.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Malone in his kiln shed and creative space working on the sculpture *I Can Only Suggest, the Choices Are Yours*.



Norwood Viviano's *Detroit Population Shift*, 2009, CNC machined and cast aluminum, 36 x 26 x 18 in. The piece, which depicts Detroit's changing population over time, took hundreds of hours to carve and required a computerized mill.

# SEEING IS BELIEVING

*Three craft artists turn scientific data into visual works that help explain the world.*

BY PAOLA SINGER





Made from kiln-cast glass, Viviano's *Recasting Detroit*, 2021, combines imagery from the city's manufacturing past and its current urban landscape, 11 x 16.5 x 13.5 in.

**After moving to Plainwell, Michigan**, a town of about 4,000 residents on the banks of the Kalamazoo River, artist Norwood Viviano realized that nearly everyone he met had in some way been affected by the paper mill industry. The Plainwell Paper Mill, established in 1887, was the town's beating heart until it declared bankruptcy and shuttered its plant two decades ago.

Viviano chose Plainwell in 2005 to be close to Grand Valley State University, where he teaches sculpture, and because it seemed like a tranquil and affordable place to raise a family. Being there, he says, made him think more deeply about the "ties between industry and community and the hierarchies at play," leading him to create a series of metal sculptures called *Recasting Michigan*. The sculptures showed, in a tactile way, the population shifts that have taken place since the industrial revolution in manufacturing cities across the state. "That was my first foray into experimenting with data," he says of the works, completed between 2009 and 2011. "Most people would walk right by raw statistics, but if you make it three-dimensional, it has an ability to draw you in."

One of the sculptures, made of cast and machined aluminum, has an angular, geode-shaped base representing Detroit's population growth and decline over time (it peaked in 1950), and a flat top showing a detailed three-dimensional portrait of the city as

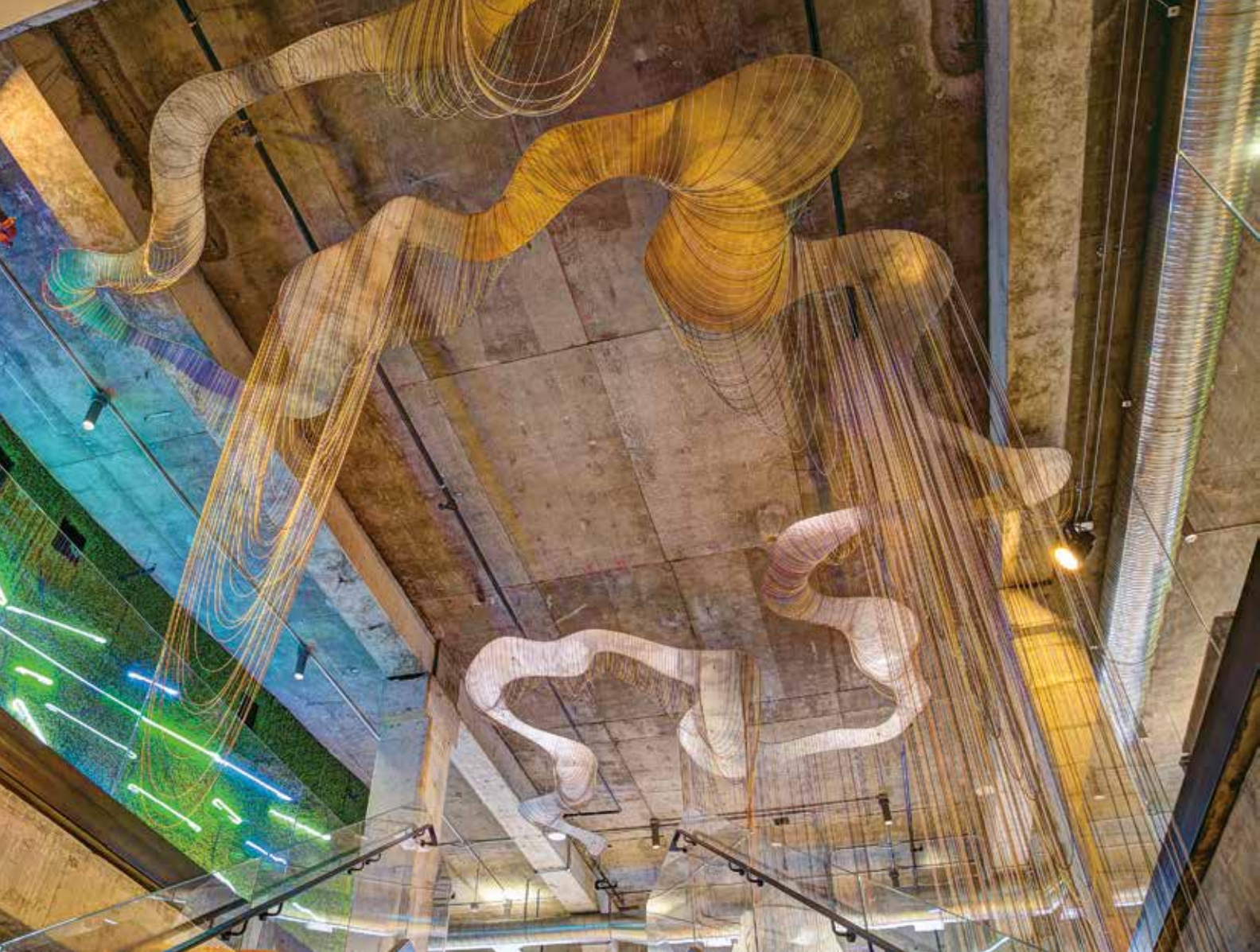
seen from the air. Carving it required a computerized mill and took 300 hours.

Viviano is part of a group of sculptors and craft artists who are using statistics and data in their creative processes. The themes they deal with are varied, yet they seem unified in their goal: to help people understand important social, political, and environmental changes that occur over long periods of time.

"Craft is really effective at providing accessible pathways to understanding the world around us," says Beth C. McLaughlin, artistic director and chief curator at the Fuller Craft Museum in Massachusetts, which recently unveiled an exhibit called *Material Mapping: Data-driven Sculpture by Adrien Segal & Norwood Viviano*, on view until March 2024. "Humans have been using their hands to convey information for thousands of years, and incorporating data is a way of expanding this tradition."

McLaughlin says she is seeing more and more craft related to data, as well as significant interest from collectors. Although the trend is hard to quantify, there is anecdotal evidence supporting a growing link between facts and statistics and craft, including the publication this year of *Making with Data: Physical Design and Craft in a Data-Driven World* (CRC Press), which presents more than two dozen contemporary designers, researchers, and artists who are using data to produce objects, spaces, and experiences.





The strands in *California Water Rights*, 2017, Adrien Segal's aluminum and ball chain suspended sculpture, represent the largest permitted water users in California, 34 x 16 x 32 ft.

### Illustrating Natural Phenomena

Adrien Segal, the other artist in the Fuller exhibit, has used a variety of materials, including bronze and plywood, to create sculptures that illustrate environmental processes and natural phenomena. In 2017 she won a CODA award for *California Water Rights*, a monumental site-specific installation based on water allocation data in California. The three-story piece, which occupies the atrium of a tech lab, is made of more than 1,000 color-coded ball chains draped at varying lengths from an undulating metal “river” that hangs from the ceiling. Each strand corresponds to the amount of water allocated to an entity, be it a corporation, government institution, or individual, and each ball represents one acre-foot of water, or about 326,000 gallons, providing a striking visual of the immense quantities of water used in the state.

Although the piece raises questions about sustainability and shows the perils of mismanaging a finite natural resource, Segal says she is more interested in presenting information in an experiential way than in feeding us an opinion.

“Some people think I’m an environmental artist, but that’s not a true reflection of who I am,” says the Oakland, California, resident. “I find inspiration in tapping into natural patterns and processes and connecting to these grander forces in the universe. I provide the richest possible information about how I got to those things, but leave the interpretation to others.”

Pressed further, she adds: “I don’t believe the purpose of art is to have an agenda.” In this sense, she’s somewhat of an outlier among the cohort of artists who use data.





## Depicting the Climate Crisis

"I've been making work with climate data as a response to the climate crisis for over eight years," says Illinois-based weaver and sculptor Tali Weinberg. "Before that, I made work about gender violence and other forms of injustice."

Her recent climate-related series, 2021's *Silt Studies*, focuses on the minute particles of rocks and minerals that are carried away by flowing water, eventually becoming sediments somewhere else. As Weinberg explains on her website, "When ecosystems are polluted, silt goes from benign to destructive."

There are 18 *Silt Studies*, each a unique tapestry made of hand-dyed, earth-toned cotton lines representing temperature data for some of the major watersheds in the US, including the South Atlantic Gulf Basin and the Lower Colorado River Basin. "In my translation of the data, 126 years takes form as 18 rows of color, each row an average of seven years of temperature," explains the artist, who interweaves

plant-derived fibers with petrochemical-derived fishing lines, drawing a connection between petrochemical extraction and the buildup of toxic plastics in the earth and in human bodies.

She uses a floor loom, generating the color-coded information line of thread by line of thread. "I don't think of weaving in binary terms, but it does lend itself to this translation process," she says of the craft, which has historically been linked to mathematics, particularly geometry.

Weinberg's tapestries are undeniably beautiful, the kind that could find a place of prominence on the walls of an elegant home. When asked about the possibility that their attractiveness might distract people from the message (i.e., the gravity of the world's environmental ills), she says that "art for centuries has used beauty as a way of engaging people." But she also clarifies that, in addressing the climate crisis and the losses that come with it, it is worth remembering that "there is still a lot to care for and protect, and a lot that's still beautiful."



TOP: Tali Weinberg's *Silt Study: Arkansas White River Basin*, *Silt Study: Texas Gulf Coast River Basin*, and *Silt Study: Lower Mississippi River Basin*, 2021, plant fibers and dyes, petrochemical-derived fishing line, 18 x 18 in. each. BOTTOM LEFT: Weinberg in her studio. BOTTOM RIGHT: Detail of *Silt Study: Souris Red Rainy Basin*, 2021.



### The Beauty Draws You In

One of Norwood Viviano's latest projects, *Cities Underwater*, is also one of his most visually striking. It consists of nested cylinders made of ethereal glass. Translucent blue outer vessels represent water, and grayish inner vessels represent cities. These interior vessels are thick at the bottom, depicting our present time, and become impossibly thin at the top, our future. Using lidar data (a remote sensing method used to examine the surface of the Earth) along with scientific projections, Viviano shows us the projected loss of land due to rising seas in a stark way that is easy to grasp. By the year 2500, for example, New Orleans could be completely underwater; New York City could be 39 percent underwater.

"Beauty is a strategy to draw someone into a conversation before they know what the work is about," he says. "It may make people more willing to engage with the content."

Viviano started working with glass after completing a fellowship at the New Jersey-based Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center, an internationally acclaimed program devoted to glass. Before that, he worked with ceramics, resin, and bronze. Having access to university labs and workshops allows artists to experiment with materiality and process, and thus bring data to life in awe-inspiring ways.

Segal, for example, has her own studio in Alameda but sometimes uses the facilities at the California College of the Arts, where she holds a teaching position. And one of her most important pieces, called *Molalla River Meander*, was completed during a residency at the Oregon College of Arts and Craft. This wooden sculpture depicts the subtle



TOP: Installation detail of Viviano's blown glass *Cities Underwater*, 2018, showing predicted land loss due to sea level rise in Boston; Galveston, Texas; and Miami Beach and Miami, Florida. BOTTOM: Viviano (second from right), Julian Goza, Benjamin Cobb, Sayuri Fukuda, Pablo Soto, Niko Dimitrijevic, Gabe Feenan, and Sarah Gilbert create a population graph of New York City during Viviano's 2017 residency at the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington.





TOP: Adrien Segal's carved plywood *Molalla River Meander*, 2013, shows changes in alluvial flows in the Oregon river over 15 years, 15 x 46 x 11 in. BOTTOM: Segal grinding away on *Molalla River Meander*.



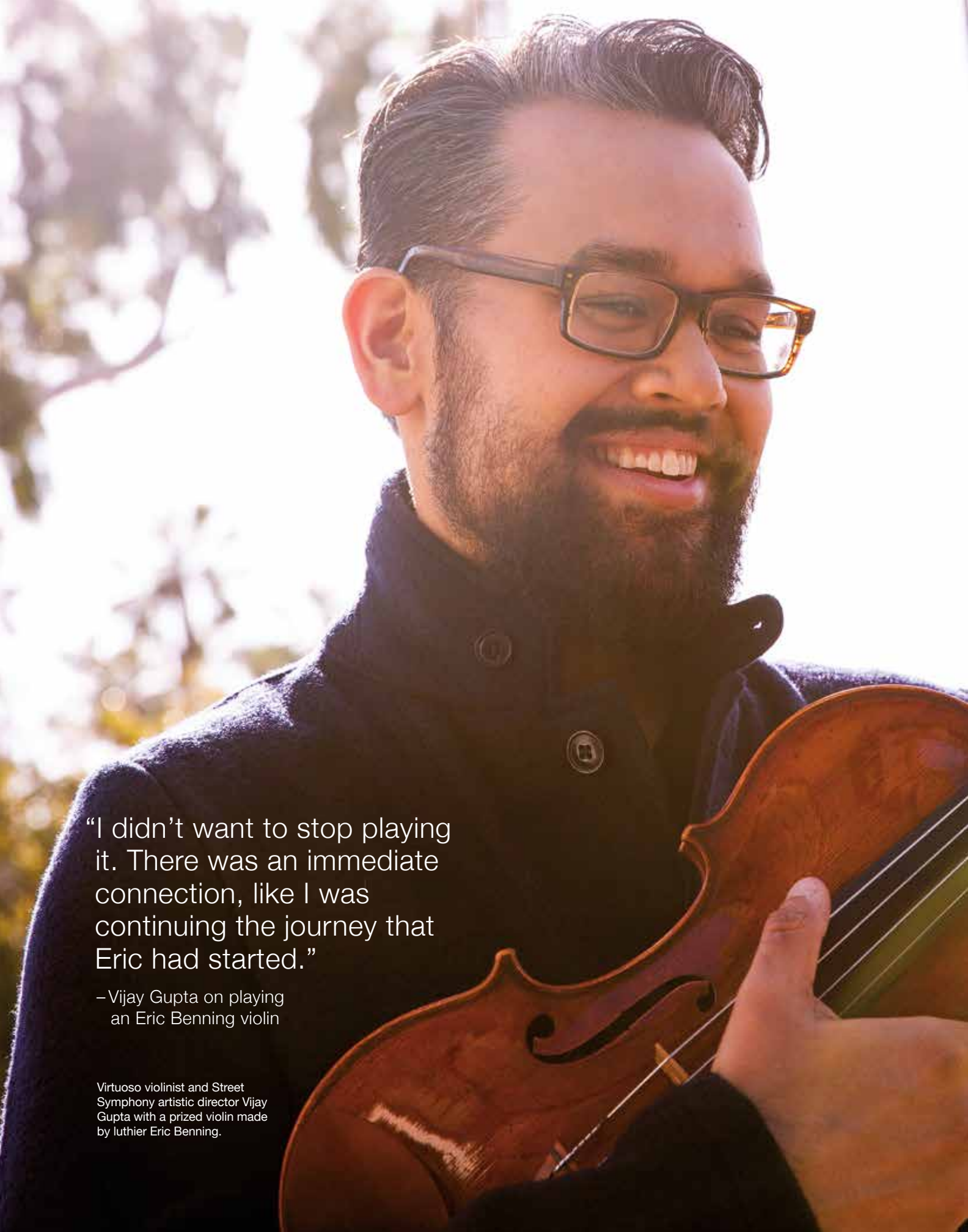
changes in alluvial flows that happened over 15 years in a section of the Molalla River in Oregon. It has 15 layers of plywood that were cut with a CNC router (a machine that uses computer programming to control a high-speed cutter), then carefully glued together and sanded, resulting in a cohesive flowing form. “I wanted people to connect to how a river moves in a more intuitive way,” explains the artist.

Many of us think of data as being austere and unapproachable, but artists like Viviano, Segal, and Weinberg make us realize that’s not necessarily true. Not as long as we have the benefit of their artistic vision.

“We are trying to tell stories with data,” says Viviano, “of challenges related to the past, present, and future—and we’re telling them from a point of view.”

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

A close-up portrait of a man with a beard and glasses, smiling while holding a violin. He is wearing a dark blue jacket. The background is bright and out of focus, suggesting an outdoor setting with trees.

“I didn’t want to stop playing it. There was an immediate connection, like I was continuing the journey that Eric had started.”

– Vijay Gupta on playing  
an Eric Benning violin

Virtuoso violinist and Street  
Symphony artistic director Vijay  
Gupta with a prized violin made  
by luthier Eric Benning.





Photo by Kat Bawden.

# IN TUNE

*Virtuoso violinist Vijay Gupta and third-generation luthier Eric Benning work together to create beautiful music—and both share it with marginalized communities.*

BY ELIZABETH FOY LARSEN

**When he was a 9-year-old boy studying at Juilliard,** Vijay Gupta played 18th-century Italian violins borrowed from Machold Rare Violins, at that time the world leader in the historic string instrument trade. Gupta remembers Machold's New York salon as something out of the court of Versailles: impressive, overwhelming, intimidating.

The same could be said of the instruments he was playing. "Machold had made a contract with my parents that when I was traveling around the world as a soloist and playing their violins, an adult had to carry the instrument," he says. "So my dad was always carrying an instrument that was worth three times the price of our home."

Gupta signed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 2007, when he was only 19 years old, and was a member of the orchestra's first violin section for the next 12 years. Today he is the artistic director of Street Symphony, a nonprofit that he founded to bring free musical experiences to disenfranchised communities, including people across Los Angeles who are struggling with addiction and incarceration. He is also a cofounder of Skid Row Arts Alliance, a consortium that creates art for and with the nation's largest homeless community. A 2018 John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur fellow, Gupta travels the world not only to perform and record but also to give talks on anything from the connection between music and mental health to the role music can play in social justice.

Along the way, Gupta has had the privilege of playing a number of exceptional violins: from the 2003 Krutz he used for his LA Phil audition, to a rare 1731 Domenico Montagnana that was loaned to him by the orchestra, to the priceless 1716 Stradivarius that legendary Ukrainian American violinist Nathan Milstein played for 40 years—an instrument so dear to Milstein's heart that he renamed it the "Maria Teresa" after his wife and daughter.

These were all incredible instruments, but Gupta says none of them resonated with him in a way that made him feel he had found his voice. That changed in February 2016, when he was invited to give a talk in Canada. At the time, Gupta was playing the LA Phil's 1731 Montagnana, which was worth millions of dollars. He couldn't risk damaging it in the colder northern weather.

Gupta asked a Los Angeles-based luthier and violin dealer named Eric Benning if he could borrow one of his violins for the trip. Benning offered Gupta a violin made in the style of 18th-century Italian luthier Carlo Bergonzi, which Benning had just finished making in 2015.

"I didn't want to stop playing it," Gupta says, smiling at the memory. "There was an immediate connection, like I was continuing the journey that Eric had started. It wasn't a *thing*. It was a living, breathing creature, and I was now part of the process. Eric had finished carving the wood and painting the varnish, and now I was continuing the journey of that instrument into the world."

Gupta's connection to Benning's violin resonated on more than a musical level. As his work with Street Symphony and Skid Row Arts Alliance shows, he is adamant that classical

music is for everyone, not just people who can afford orchestra tickets. Benning's parents—luthiers Hans and Nancy Benning—are of similar mind and in 2018 established the Benning Academy of Music Foundation, which funds music schools for disadvantaged youth and adults in Mexico.

A third-generation luthier, Benning started making his first violin when he was 9 years old. "I studied with my folks, which is the natural progression in this business," he says. In 1997 he went to Chicago to study with Carl Becker, his great-uncle, whom he credits with having a pivotal role in his understanding of how to make instruments. Over the course of his career, Benning has made more than 120 violins, violas, and cellos, completing 4 to 5 instruments a year.

As an instrument dealer—Benning Violins in Studio City is a family business—Benning doesn't hold on to his violins. He wants them out in the world, being played. But he does

DJ Sir Oliver mixes it up with Street Symphony players during a 2019 block party at the Midnight Mission in Los Angeles's Skid Row. OPPOSITE: Third-generation luthier Eric Benning inside Benning Violins, the family shop in Studio City, Los Angeles, which opened in 1953.



Photo by May Rieger. OPPOSITE: Photo by James Bernal.





collect bows, including one that was made for a violinist in Napoleon's court. Gupta also purchased his bow, made in the 1840s by Jean Pierre Marie Persoit, from Benning Violins.

Benning uses a combination of old-school machine and hand tools to craft his instruments. Cellos are especially demanding to make. These days he can't use a chisel for more than a half hour due to a work-related shoulder injury he sustained when he was younger. "Making instruments [requires] very concentrated effort in a very small form," he explains. "So you are tense and you have to [remember] to relax at times and let stress off. But when you are young and you are strong, you can muscle through and all of a sudden you are like, *Oh, why does that hurt?*"

Benning purchases most of his tonewood—wood that possesses specific tonal qualities—from dealers in southern

Germany. The wood has undergone a process that includes being felled and floated down a river to a woodcutter, who sometimes puts the logs under a sprinkler to control the rate of drying before cutting them. The boards then age for several more years before they are ready to be sold. The aim is to leave enough moisture in the wood to equal ambient moisture in order to prevent bowing, twisting, cupping, and splitting later. While many violin makers prefer tonewood that has seasoned for 5 to 10 years after being cut, Benning still stocks wood that his parents and grandfather purchased as far back as the 1940s.

Gupta purchased the 2015 Benning and played it for several years until a 2010 Benning Stradivarius model came up for sale and they did an even swap for the instruments. Benning still remembers the details of the 2010, which is made of Bosnian









ABOVE: Tonewood, used in making stringed instruments, is meticulously dried and possesses specific tonal qualities. RIGHT: Cubbies where Benning instruments are stored. OPPOSITE TOP: Eric Benning works on a violin while his son Levi looks on. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Eric's father, Hans Benning, met his wife, fellow luthier Nancy (formerly Toenniges), in Germany. Together they have run the shop for decades.



maple and Italian spruce that his grandfather had acquired in the 1940s. “As a maker, you look at wood and you just have a desire to make it. . . . You see something gorgeous and you’re just like, *Oh, I want to see what that thing does,*” he says of his decision to use those particular pieces.

Today, the 2010 Benning is Gupta’s primary violin. “It’s my Maria Teresa,” he says, adding that he and Benning have worked together frequently to refine the instrument, making tweaks to the sound post, which Benning says can affect the tone and responsiveness of an instrument. They have also made string changes and bridge and tailpiece adjustments.

“An artist’s voice is never found in a vacuum, ever,” Gupta explains. “It’s co-created. So my voice is as much Eric Benning’s voice as it is the voice of the room I’m playing in, and the people I’m playing for, and the audio engineer recording me.”

♦  
guptaviolin.com | @guptaviolin  
benningviolins.com | @benningviolins

Elizabeth Foy Larsen is a writer and editor living in Minneapolis. Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Mother Jones*, the *Daily Beast*, *Travel + Leisure*, and the *Star Tribune*.

ABOVE: Eric Benning adds strings to an instrument.  
BELOW: Vijay Gupta makes beautiful music on one of Benning’s lovingly crafted violins.







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# The Night Owl Downstairs

*A Korean painter, printmaker, and ceramic artist has created and collected in her Atlanta basement studios for seven years while family life proceeded upstairs.*

BY JIHA MOON



ABOVE: Jiha Moon in her painting studio. For her new still life series, Moon mounted Korean mulberry paper, or *hanji*, on canvas, then used ink and acrylic to paint symbolic icons including the peach, peony flowers, and *haetae*, a Korean mythical creature that protects family and loved ones. OPPOSITE: Moon's work table in her painting studio, where she takes her ceramic sculptures to draw and paint on them with underglaze and glaze.

**I am an artist who makes** paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptural ceramics. I am a middle-aged immigrant Korean woman and mom of a 14-year-old biracial teenager. I am also a full-time professor. Atlanta is the city where I have lived the longest besides my hometown of Daegu, South Korea. We live in a suburb called Doraville, at the end of the Atlanta metro system's Gold Line. Overall, I have chosen the American suburban life with my family, while trying my best to be an active artist.

We live in a ranch-style house with a large family entertainment room in the basement that I turned into a painting studio. The only change I made was to remove the carpeting. I also have a ceramic studio, which is located in a former

woodshop that the previous homeowner built in the basement boiler room. My workspace is on the hill side of the house, and from it I can access the backyard and garden.

My dad, who lived in Korea, used to tell me that Atlanta is a sister city of Daegu. I doubt there was anything going on between the two cities, but I understand why he kept talking about it—he wanted to relate to us closely. I get it, because I also find myself constantly trying to make connections between Korean and American cultures. It became my habit to collect relatable images, products, stories, and people. For example, my hometown is known for producing apples, and Atlanta is known for peaches: this iconic fruit often appears in my work.

**My brain and body have adopted disruption as part of the creative process, and it has been this way for more than a decade. I don't try to carve out the perfect moment to work, because that does not exist in my world.**



Starting with the idea of linking East and West, my adventure in connecting things is constantly manifesting. Old and new, Gen X and millennial, Korean mulberry paper and acrylic paint . . . It became my mission to hybridize different things to make new and odd things in my art practice.

### **A Place for Two Studios**

I started using clay as a medium about 10 years ago. I wanted to make scholar's rocks with clay (found rock formations that look like landscapes or animals of cool abstract form; my parents used to collect these weird-looking objects). When I won MOCA GA's Working Artist Project award in 2012, I signed up to work at MudFire, the local clay studio in Decatur, for a year. I paid the entire year's membership up front to encourage myself to go there regularly, giving myself enough time to play with clay and develop fluency with the medium.

As a painter who usually works alone, being in a community-based studio was not easy at first. I felt awkward and often uncomfortable in the big, open setting. People there wondered if my sculptures were functional. I hand-build and throw, often following the shapes of vessels to build the forms and then altering or deconstructing them. My intentions were mysterious to people who were used to thinking of clay objects mainly in terms of how they function. When I cut a big hole out of a thrown vase, I was asked if I planned to put a candle inside. Through these interesting reactions, I learned to understand objecthood and how to communicate with objects to make better sculpture. Overall, I met so many wonderful people and learned a totally different perspective. It was an amazing social study for my own understanding.

In 2016, after some exploration around the neighborhood, my husband and I found our home in Doraville where I could have my painting and ceramic studios in the basement. I put wood panels over sawhorses to make large tables where I often bring my sculptures to paint. The same year, I won an Artadia Award and bought a Skutt kiln and Shimpo wheel to complete my ceramic studio.

### **Connecting Work, Family, and Mediums**

I have had studios outside of my house, but it was never ideal. I spent too much time driving back and forth, and paying rent for two studios was a lot. I needed a place where I could take care of my family, get rest, eat, and work all in one place. I like having my studios at home. While I am working, I can hear my son taking a shower and my two dogs running around rambunctiously—and I can smell what my husband is cooking upstairs. It can be distracting. Sometimes I have to yell through the ceiling for everyone to be quiet, but I love this setting.

I find my peace within chaos. When I know my family is doing what they need to do, I can better focus on my work. My brain and body have adopted disruption as part of the creative process, and it has been this way for more than a decade. I don't





ABOVE: Jiha Moon's bisque-fired ceramics wait to be drawn on and glazed. BELOW: The artist upstairs in her home with her son, Oliver Moon Wilson, and their poodle, Miso Moon Wilson. OPPOSITE: Moon's *Haetae* (yellow ears), 2022, stoneware, underglaze, and glaze, 15.5 x 6.5 x 7 in.

try to carve out the perfect moment to work, because that does not exist in my world. However, I confess I am a night owl and work best when everyone else has gone to bed. I am finally left alone after 10 p.m. Sometimes I find myself up until 3 a.m. working. I finally get into my zone and my process is moving, and alas, I cannot stop until it gets late.

I like to play the same movies or K-dramas on Netflix over and over for background noise. Sometimes I do watch, but most of the time I am just listening because I have seen what is happening already and it does not require my full attention. Plus, this is the way I keep track of time. I have played the Netflix series *Ugly Delicious* (featuring star chef David Chang) several times. Recently I have been watching *Somebody Feed Phil*. The show takes us to different cities and countries to learn about food and culture. It is warm and funny and full of jokes. Have I told you how I learned English? It was by watching *Friends* and *You've Got Mail* nonstop.

Anyhow, besides my night owl habit, I have another struggle, which is to balance splitting my time between my painting and ceramic studios.





ABOVE: This in-progress green sculpture includes fish scale patterns and a goddess. LEFT: Moon draws and paints on a piece inspired by the *haetae* and Pennsylvania Dutch folk art.

People asked if I like one medium over the other, and they both give me different, difficult tasks and joys. They both take a long time to convert concepts into process. I jokingly say the painting process is like dealing with my husband (a good old problem) and the ceramic process is more like my teenage son (a new, adventurous, and unexpected problem). They are similar yet very different. I still have not structured my studio discipline perfectly, but I follow my deadline and exhibition schedules for both practices, and it has been manageable so far. Of course, painting and ceramics influence each other so much.

### Conceptual Collections, Making Moves

What else? I collect many objects and images based on my conceptual interests. My studios are full of objects that I have made and found. When I was hooked on the color blue and on Blue Willow ceramic patterns, I went to every thrift store in town to find old Blue Willow plates and tea cups. My friends also sent them to me. I often incorporate these patterns into both my paintings and ceramic surfaces. For *Stranger Yellow*, a solo exhibition in 2022 at Derek Eller Gallery in New

York City, I made a centerpiece using this pattern. Blue Willow was designed by a British company based on a made-up Chinese love story. People here collect these objects to affirm their fantasy of Eastern beauty and tradition.

My family and I plan to move this fall to Tallahassee, Florida, as I recently accepted a position at Florida State University teaching painting. I am sad to leave Doraville and Atlanta, but I'm also excited to start my next chapter. Of course, I will have to rebuild my studios all over again, but perhaps they will be even better than the ones we have here. As my husband points out, "Every time we move, we upgrade our life and things get better." I am hopeful that this necessary chaos will be adventurous and inspirational.

♦

jihamoon.com | @moonjiha

Jiha Moon is from Daegu, South Korea, and is moving from Atlanta, Georgia, to Tallahassee, Florida. Moon's work has been acquired by museums around the country, including the Asia Society Museum in New York City and the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC. She will have a solo exhibition at Shoshana Wayne Gallery in Los Angeles in November.

Photos by Ari Skin.



ABOVE: *Yellowwillow*, 2021, stoneware, underglaze, and glaze, 15 x 11 x 11 in. RIGHT: *Yellow Hare*, 2023, stoneware, porcelain, underglaze, and glaze, 21.5 x 12 x 10 in. BOTTOM LEFT: *Bless Your Heart*, Keanu, 2023, sits at the center of a collection of pieces in the studio. BOTTOM RIGHT: *Yellowwave Spine*, 2021, 19.5 x 9.5 x 8 in.





With handcrafted furniture, the process of looking through music can be as wonderful as listening to it. This detail shows the flip bins at the top of the Dovetail Vinyl Storage Cabinet from Symbol Audio.

# Craft That Holds

*Three small companies handcraft storage crates, shelves, and credenzas to help music collectors organize all that vinyl.*

BY DANIEL WAITE PENNY

**During the most recent Record Store Day**—an event held every April to celebrate independently owned record stores—more than 1.8 million records made their way into the hands of fans and collectors. It was the best week of sales in years.

Following an ebb in the early 2000s, record sales in the US have increased dramatically. In 2022, the Recording Industry Association of America tallied the sales of 41.3 million EPs and LPs. It turns out that despite the pervasiveness of digital recordings—or perhaps because of it—some fans crave a physical connection to the music they love.

With this revival in record sales, a flourishing category of furniture has emerged for storage and display. And just like the indie acts and local bands that have become most associated with the return of analog music technology, this new wave of record storage is being led by independent artisans and craftspeople at small companies who understand that for vinyl enthusiasts, it's always been about more than just the music.

These companies are reimagining the way we collect records by creating handcrafted pieces for vinyl storage and display that are designed to stand the test of time.

Photo courtesy of Symbol Audio.



## FORM & FINISH

### Mystic, Connecticut

formandfinish.co | @formandfinishco

“Every time I see records in milk crates, I cringe a bit,” says Geoff Foote, cofounder of Form & Finish, a small record storage and cabinet manufacturer based in Connecticut. “Milk crates are ugly.” Still, he has to admit there were some benefits to this dorm-room method of storing record collections; crates are cheap, strong, stackable, and small enough that a single person can carry one when it’s full of all that vinyl and cardboard.

The aesthetic problem of record storage nagged at Foote for years, but he never had much time to devote to it until the pandemic hit in 2020. Foote was a record collector himself who grew up in the heavy metal and hardcore scene in the Boston area before starting Orion Manufacturing, a custom architectural mill-work company in Mystic. When the pandemic slowed the construction trade, he found himself with time to design storage pieces he could be proud to have in his living room—not to mention a surfeit of Russian birch plywood and some idle CNC milling machines.

Thus the Form & Finish Chelle vinyl crate was born. Foote uses his Orion union shop to handle the construction: ripping, spray-finishing, and then vacuum-pressing veneer onto large sheets of plywood. From there the pieces are crosscut to length, pre-drilled, and finished with organic boiled linseed oil for a nice amber color. Made of 5/8-inch-thick plywood, the crate is stackable, durable, and modular—everything Foote had been searching for to store his records. Most important, it is accessible; the products are all flat packed, delivered with American-made fasteners, and assembled at home by customers with just a screwdriver. While some collectors might balk at having to put together their crates and shelves themselves, Foote knew there would be others who were attracted to the analog nature of the process.

“If you can calibrate a tonearm,” he says, referring to the highly sensitive part of the record player that holds the needle above the vinyl, “you’re already comfortable with a lot of the thinking involved.”



The Chelle Vinyl Cube by Form & Finish, shown here in walnut, comes with a removable storage crate that glides thanks to soft close undermount drawer slides. The cube features integral grommeted cord management and is customizable, 24 x 19 x 20.5 in.



The Open 45 Credenza from Geology in oiled walnut, 21 x 60 x 21 in., features a slotted interior that allows for movable divider panels. The shelves can be moved, too, and a cord channel runs the length of the unit for hidden cable management.

## GEOLOGY

### Los Angeles

geologystudio.com | @geology\_studio

Meanwhile, in Los Angeles, Adam Friedman, founder of design studio Geology, has been experimenting with custom vinyl displays that are as opulent as they are innovative. For Friedman, the design of his deluxe record storage systems came from his dissatisfaction with how little he was actually using his record player to listen to music.

*Why not make something that promotes the use of it, makes it easy, makes it appealing?* he asked himself. This question led him to design and build a credenza made from the finest FSC-certified walnut and more than 70 individually hand-crafted components. The result is a piece of furniture that displays records on a 45-degree bias in a unique visual enticement that makes your favorite albums into works of art. To heighten the aesthetics, Friedman kept everything else out of sight with an interior cord management system for power cords and speaker cables that passes below the records and runs the length of the cabinet.

But some record enthusiasts need more storage than

Friedman's Open 45 can accommodate—sometimes requiring space for up to 30 linear feet of vinyl. To handle the physics of bigger collections, Friedman came up with a wood-and-steel structure made in his LA workshop called the Wall of Sound (after Phil Spector's lush production style). Resembling a laboratory shelving system, the wood construction comprises more than 100 individually fabricated pieces, and the metal frame requires over 50 individual welds with 40 threaded attachment points for the woodwork. To keep all these records from crushing an overzealous collector, the Wall of Sound anchors to the wall behind it with attachments utilizing custom-milled magnetic cover plates.

Such complex, custom installations come at a steep cost (upwards of \$20,000), but for the audiophile who might spend \$6,000 on a record player needle, it's a small price to pay to have an heirloom-quality piece of furniture to hold their prized collection. "You want it to be solid for decades," Friedman says. "How is it going to last generationally?"

Photo courtesy of Geology.



# SYMBOL AUDIO

## Nyack, New York

symbolaudio.com | @symbolaudio

Like Foote and Friedman, the father-and-son design team of Blake and Walker Tovin found themselves on a similar journey back to vinyl, but they were frustrated by the lack of contemporary, high-end pieces to store and display their growing collections. Having long operated a furniture studio based in New York City and Nyack that sold designs to the likes of West Elm and Restoration Hardware, the Tovins decided they wanted to create something they could control from start to finish. So they launched a new firm, Symbol Audio, dedicated to their longtime hobby.

Because of their commitment to making in the US with American wood, Symbol chose to partner with a small factory in West Virginia that is known among industry insiders for turning out very high quality wood furniture (the Tovins prefer that the factory go unnamed here). But it wasn't just about aesthetics and storytelling: 90 percent of the American hardwoods used in Symbol's furniture are sourced within 70 miles of their production facility.

Symbol Audio tries to appeal to design lovers as much as to audio geeks. At their entry level is the 24-inch Unison model—an all-in-one record playing and storage solution—but things

can scale up to the massive flagship Modern Record Console. This statement piece is constructed of 14-foot American black walnut boards and sits on a base made of precision cut, TIG welded, quarter-inch stainless steel plates. It's finished with a hand-applied patinated coating. All of this work is done by a single craftsman, totaling 100 hours of labor. Beneath the ocean of wood grain, record lovers will find 6.5-inch, full-range speaker drivers and a 300-watt subwoofer powered by a tube amplifier for an unparalleled warm sound.

Though the Tovins have different tastes in music—Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* is a favorite of Blake's while Walker is more into Jay-Z's *Reasonable Doubt*—an obsessive love of music is woven into the fabric of the company. "We've got a Slack channel for sharing music, and we listen to music eight hours a day in the office," says Walker Tovin, Symbol's brand director. "It really is a business that's authentic to the passion that we all have."

♦

Daniel Waite Penny is a journalist who writes about culture and climate. His work has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, *GQ*, and elsewhere. He is the host of the new podcast *Non-toxic*.

The 52-inch Unison model from Symbol Audio in natural ash, 34 x 52 x 18 in., holds stereo equipment behind a swinging door and up to 420 LPs. It features a vibration-isolated turntable platform and flip bin-style record storage.



# Empowering Artists of Color— Transforming Community



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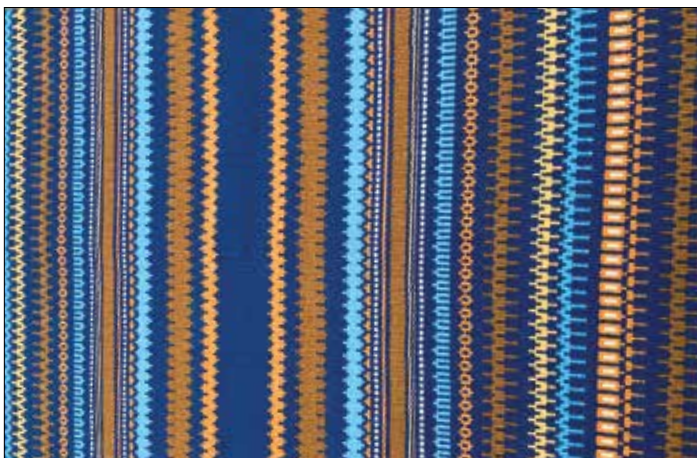
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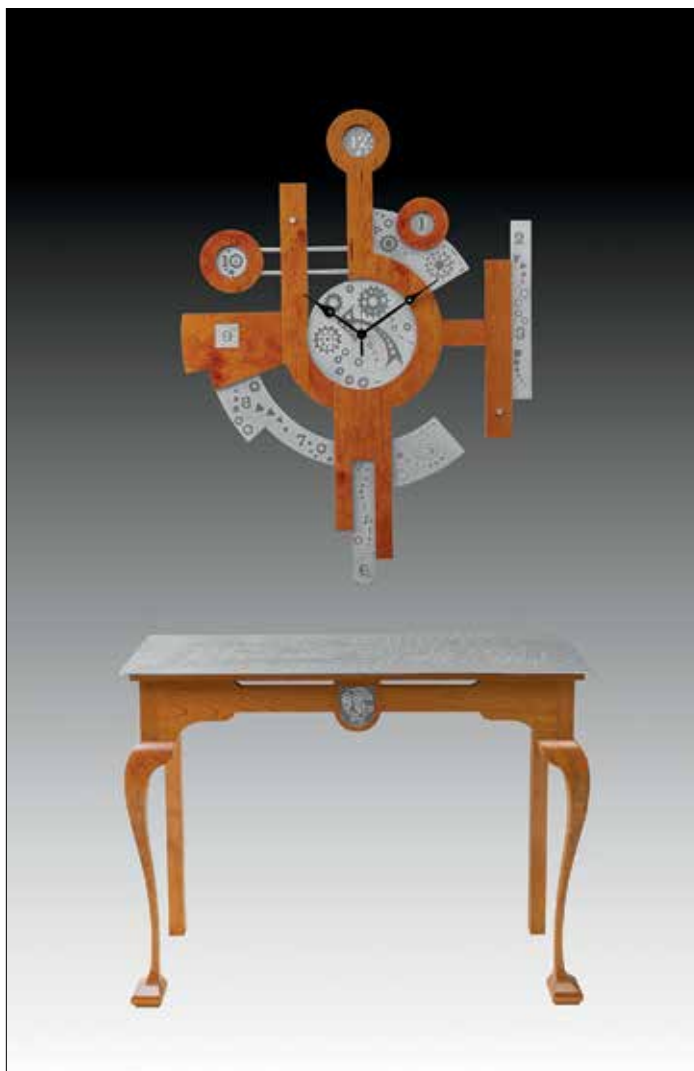
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## FROM ACC'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Fall will be here soon**, and here in the Upper Midwest, many of us are eagerly anticipating the return of crisp autumn air. The American Craft Council is also preparing to welcome a change of seasons, metaphorically speaking.



As I mentioned in my last message in *American Craft*, ACC has worked diligently to complete a strategic planning process aimed at identifying the impact we seek to have in the world through craft. The outcomes of this process, which we are excited to share soon on our digital platforms and the pages of this magazine, reflect the collective wisdom that hundreds have shared with us over many months. To those who participated in one of our strategic planning surveys or shared their perspective in a conversation with our staff or planning partners, I give heartfelt thanks.

I am also profoundly grateful to all our members and donors for your steadfast support. ACC turns 80 in 2023, and one of the ways we've marked this occasion is by completing the most successful Giving Week campaign in our history. Giving Week is a project of current and former ACC trustees to broaden the circle of individuals who support our work. Thanks to our trustees' leadership and commitment—and your generosity as ACC members and donors—we are able to foster the livelihoods of craft artists and cultivate an audience that values the artful work of the human hand.

Once annually, it is our honor to recognize all current ACC donors within the pages of *American Craft*. As you savor this issue, please be sure to pause at page 55 to take in this inspiring list of individuals and institutions who believe, with us, in the power of craft to foster a more joyful, humane, and regenerative world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea".

ANDREA SPECHT / American Craft Council Executive Director



Baltimore Marketplace  
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**CRAFTCOUNCIL.ORG/  
BALTIMORE2024**

# CONGRATULATIONS to American Craft Council's 2023 Emerging Artists Cohort Participants.

ACC's Emerging Artists Cohort program engages 11 innovative early-career artists who are expanding the boundaries of craft in a three-month virtual intensive to advance their professional creative practice.

Cohort participants will connect with established leaders from across the industry, including curators, designers, and gallerists, and learn from exhibiting, marketplace, and social practice artists to gain a deeper understanding of their field and cultivate opportunities to thrive in their careers. Projects designed and developed during the intensive will be supported by a business accelerator grant awarded upon completion of the program.

**Learn more about our 2023  
Emerging Artists Cohort Participants  
at [CRAFTCOUNCIL.ORG/COHORT2023](https://CRAFTCOUNCIL.ORG/COHORT2023)**

## Adam Atkinson

Bakersville, North Carolina  
[adamatkinsonart.com](https://adamatkinsonart.com) @adamatkinson\_art  
*Photo by Myles Pettengill*



Adam Atkinson (he/they) is a metalsmith, curator, and educator. Atkinson received an MFA in metal design at East Carolina University in 2019, and a BFA in interdisciplinary studio practices at Boise State University in 2013. Their work has been exhibited nationally and internationally including at Boone Art and History Museum in Columbia, Missouri, and Nagoya Zokei University in Nagoya, Japan, among others. They have been awarded numerous residencies including the Emerging Artist Residency at the Baltimore Jewelry Center and the three-year residency at Penland School of Craft.

## Daniel Brockett

Leechburg, Pennsylvania  
[foggyblossomfarm.com](https://foggyblossomfarm.com) @foggyblossomfarm



Dan Brockett (he/him) creates handwoven baskets from willow grown on his 12-acre property, Foggy Blossom Farm, in Leechburg, Pennsylvania. As a grower turned self-taught artist, there is an element of companionship with, and reverence for, his material that permeates every project. From choosing the willow varieties he plants to eventually harvesting and selecting each rod for a specific basket, Dan's desire to be in relationship with all aspects of his craft is the driving force behind his work.

## Lexy Ho-Tai

Brooklyn, New York  
[lexymakesthings.com](https://lexymakesthings.com) @lexymakesthings



Lexy Ho-Tai (she/her) is an artist, educator, and goopy human. She recently built and burned a giant heartbreak monster, and is currently constructing tiny textile versions of her family for a stop-motion animation. Her practice is expansive and ever-changing, but often rooted in exploring human connection, otherness, and world-building through craft, play, DIY, and collaboration. She's bad at small talk, convinced that everything is made up, and uses art to explore alternative ways of being in this world.

## Renata Cassiano Alvarez

Springdale, Arkansas  
[renatacassiano.com](https://renatacassiano.com) @renatacassiano



Renata Cassiano Alvarez (she/her) is a Mexican Italian artist born in Mexico City and currently a visiting assistant professor at the University of Arkansas School of Art. She works predominantly in the medium of clay, searching to develop an intimate collaborative relationship with material. Influenced by archaeology and history, she is interested in the power of objects with a sense of permanence and timelessness and language as transformation. Her work has been exhibited internationally and can be found in public and private collections. She works between her studio in Veracruz, Mexico, and Fayetteville, Arkansas.

## Cedric Mitchell

El Segundo, California  
[cedricmitchelldesign.com](https://cedricmitchelldesign.com) @cedricmitchelldesign



Cedric Mitchell (he/him) is a Los Angeles-based glass artist from Oklahoma. He is inspired by an eccentric mix of graffiti art, pop culture, mid-century modern, and Memphis design. Cedric creates work that ranges from functional to decorative art, combining simplicity in design with bold colors to craft handblown vessels with a purpose.



# EMERGING ARTISTS COHORT

## Kristy Moreno

Helena, Montana  
kristymorenoart.weebly.com @kristy.moreno



Kristy Moreno (she/her) is a Mexican American artist born in the city of Inglewood, California. Moving to Orange County inspired her to become involved in the art communities of Santa Ana, leading her to collaborate with group collectives including We Are Rodents and Konsept. She then attended Santa Ana College where she found an interest in ceramics that led her to transfer to California State University, Chico, to pursue a BFA degree. Her work now spans mediums to bring awareness and visibility to an abundant future. Kristy is currently an artist in residence at the Archie Bray Foundation.

## Mika Obayashi

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
mikaobayashi.com @mikaobayashi



Mika Obayashi (she/her) is a fiber and installation artist from Michigan. She received her BA from Amherst College and has exhibited her work in the US and Japan. She is a recipient of the Amelia Peabody Award for Sculpture given by the St. Botolph Club Foundation in Boston (2020) as well as the Mass Cultural Council Recovery Grant (2023), and was a resident at the Women's Studio Workshop in Kingston, New York (2022). She is currently pursuing her MFA at the Tyler School of Art and Architecture in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

## Erin Peña

Minneapolis, Minnesota  
@hummingbird\_knight



Erin Peña (they/them) is a queer, Jewish beader based in Minneapolis. They have worked with beads since they were a child, and these days they primarily create abstract geometric sculptures from beads and thread. They draw their inspiration both from mathematical forms and from the natural world, blending crystalline and organic structures in a way that is compelling and unique. Their work has been shown in several galleries and has been recognized with multiple awards.

## Tracy Wilkinson

Los Angeles, California  
tracywilkinson.com @tworkshop



Tracy (she/her) is a British artist, living and working in Los Angeles, California. She is a sculptor, working in mixed media, primarily glass and clay. She studied at the Royal College of Art in London, graduating in 1988 with an MA in fashion and textile design.

## Qmqlará Williams McCallister

Baltimore, Maryland  
omolarawilliamsccallister.art @adornedbyo  
Photo by Amanda Greene Photography



Qmqlará Williams McCallister (Q, love, beloved) was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. Q currently calls Baltimore, Maryland home. Q's work is a call/response blend of sculpture, performance, installation, ritual, space holding, community building, surface design, adornment, word, sound, song, movement, moving images, and photography. Qmqlará uses a combination of traditional and nontraditional materials including scraps, hand-me-downs, and found and foraged materials from love's studio, home, and local landscapes. The resulting material language provides a cohesive portrait of the many worlds that Qmqlará inhabits and moves through. Q cofounded the Baltimore Community Weaving Studio along with Najee Haynes-Follins in May 2021.

## Ger Xiong

Minneapolis, Minnesota  
gerxiong.com @gerxiong55



Ger Xiong (he/him) was born in Thailand and immigrated to the United States as a Hmong refugee of the Vietnam War. He received his BFA with an emphasis in metals and jewelry at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and MFA at New Mexico State University. His work has been exhibited throughout the US and published in Australia. He is a Fulbright Scholar who researched and collaborated with Hmong artisans in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

This program is possible thanks to the  
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The American Craft Council is a national nonprofit that has been working to keep craft artists and the community connected, inspired, and thriving since 1941. Made possible by members and donors, American Craft Council programs include *American Craft* magazine and other online content, in-person and online marketplaces that support artists and connect people to craft, awards honoring excellence, a specialized library, forums exploring new ways of thinking about craft, and more.

## MISSION

The American Craft Council is a national nonprofit organization that connects and galvanizes diverse craft communities and traditions to advance craft's impact in contemporary American life and to keep craft artists and the community connected, inspired, and thriving.

## 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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\*This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund. This activity is supported, in part, by the City of Saint Paul Cultural Sales Tax Revitalization Program.

The American Craft Council accepts gifts of stock, donor-advised funds, and more. Make a gift in support of our nonprofit mission at [craftcouncil.org/Donate](https://craftcouncil.org/Donate) or call Judy Hawkinson at 651-434-3951 for more information. The above list recognizes those who donated \$5,000 or more to ACC between June 1, 2022, and May 31, 2023.

## JOIN US FOR AMERICAN CRAFT FORUMS

**Come be part of the conversation around craft.**

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

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

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

Learn more at:  
[CRAFTCOUNCIL.ORG/PROGRAMS/FORUMS](https://craftcouncil.org/PROGRAMS/FORUMS)



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**Assemblage.** Definitely maximalist and wildly inventive, designer and sculptor Misha Kahn uses all the traditional craft mediums, combining them in new and fantastical ways to create furniture, lighting, and sculpture. His recent exhibition, *Misha Kahn: Staged*, at Friedman Benda in Los Angeles, included *Curious Unkempt Dawn*, a hand-woven fiber and ceramic table; *Ever Sessile Pupa*, an aluminum and beaded and embroidered fabric chair; and the *Harvest Moon* love-seat, pictured here, made of stainless steel and knit new wool, polyester, and nylon.

In describing the exhibition, Kahn likened his process to creating crime fiction: “I’m drawn to exploring all the various motives and red herrings to arrive, inevitably, at closure. When the mystery is solved, a good storyteller, having carefully tied a string through the entire story, picks up all the seemingly loose ends and brings them together.”

Born in Duluth, Minnesota, Kahn lives in Brooklyn. His new book, *Casually Sauntering the Perimeter of Now*, was published through a collaboration between Friedman Benda and *Apartamento* magazine and released in April. Kahn designed 50 limited-edition dust jackets for the book.

What’s next for the eclectic, exuberant Kahn? “I’m currently working on building a house,” he said recently. “The studio is producing every element of the building and interior. It’s an exercise in finding the Venn diagram of sustainability, mysticism, and radical aesthetics.” —The Editors

♦  
mishakahn.com | @mishakahn



Photo by Timothy Doyon, courtesy of Friedman Benda and Misha Kahn.



# CONTEMPORARY CRAFT



*Lathe Turned Ashleaf Maple*  
by Matt Moulthrop, 10 x 17.5 in.  
*Lathe Turned Spalted Red Oak*  
by Philip Moulthrop, 11 x 12 in.  
For two-person show at Signature  
November 4, 2023.



Multimedia textile  
by Alicja Kozłowska, Poland.  
12 x 9 x 10 in.

*Fiber Reimagined* exhibition  
Partnered with *Fiber Art Now*  
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Oct. 6–Nov. 21, 2023.



*Heron & Moon Wall Platter*  
by Dave and Boni Deal  
at White Bird Gallery.  
Raku fired ceramic.  
24.5 x 24.5 in.



*Thoughts About Pots*  
by Erica Spitzer Rasmussen  
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Handmade paper mixed with  
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9.5 x 8 x 8 in.

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