Masters from the North

The Canadian Art Glass Show 2023
with Guest Curator, Fabienne Carbonneau
March 10–May 3

Jill Allan
Ryan Bavin
Catherine Benoit
Pavel Cajthaml
Maryse Chartrand
Cédric Ginard & Karina Guevin
Caroline Ouellette
Gilles Payette
Stephen Pon
Patrick Primeau
Susan Rankin
Julia Reimer
Paul Rodrigue
Naoko Takenouchi

Constellation Series: Zodiac
Stephen Pon
Photo by Fabienne Carbonneau

2342 Emerson Avenue South   St. Petersburg, FL. 33712   dmglass.com   855.436.4527
Contemporary, museum-quality works celebrate material-based traditions and reflect an aesthetic in harmony with nature.

52 Broadway | 828.505.8550
momentumgallery.com

Facebook | @momentumgallery

Hoss Haley, Topography #1, weathering steel, 56 × 45½ × 66 inches.

FROM LEFT: Amber Cowan, Rouge Flambé and Mandarin Cluster #2, 11 × 10½ × 5½ inches. Ani Kasten, Weathered Boat Form, 14 × 22 × 12 inches.
FINE ART — LAYERED AND STITCHED

Collect contemporary art quilts
WWW.SAQA.COM/ACC

Explore | Join | Collect
Features

22 The Ceramist and the Superheroes
CLAIRE VOON
The magnificent sci-fi world of Cochiti clay artist Virgil Ortiz.

30 Tiny Treasures
JON SPAYDE
Suzye Ogawa’s miniature bronze vessels hold memories of LA’s Little Tokyo.

36 Inside the Birchbark Canoe
ANTON TREUER
A professor of Ojibwe on the historical and cultural significance of this watercraft.

42 Potteryland
JANET KOPLOS
A visit to the venerable and beloved St. Croix Valley Pottery Tour.

50 Remembering Well
ELIZABETH FOY LARSEN
Mourning vessels that help the bereaved honor their loved ones.

58 A World of Vessels
JENNIFER-NAVVA MILLIKEN
A meditation on what vessels mean to us and what they hold today.

“I am large, I contain multitudes.”
—Walt Whitman

ON THE COVER: Artist Osa Atoe holds a 2020 red stoneware clay and glaze commemorative jar in the Gulf of Mexico at Lido Beach, Florida. She made this 11 x 6 in. vessel as an urn for cremation ashes. Read more about mourning vessels on page 50. Photo by Joey O’Mahoney.

THIS PAGE: Virgil Ortiz’s Pueblo Revolt 1680/2180, 2017, is a traditional storage jar made from Cochiti red clay, white clay slip, red clay slip, and wild spinach pigment. 16.5 x 11.5 in. Learn more about Ortiz on page 22.
Departments

6 From the Editor
8 Contributors
9 Letters from Readers

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

10 Craft Happenings
A roundup of craft exhibitions, shows, and events. | JON SPAYDE

14 Preview
Fresh Up. Gio Swaby’s textile portraits of Black women are coming to the Art Institute of Chicago. | JON SPAYDE

16 Market
Best Buds. Vases to bring spring indoors. | SHIVAUN WATCHORN

18 New Releases
Books about crocheted coral reefs, Chinese adornment, queer maximalism, and more. | JON SPAYDE

19 The Crafty Librarian
Vessels of the ACC Library & Archives. | BETH GOODRICH

THE CRAFTED LIFE

62 How I Made It
What’s in a Vessel? Artists on the techniques and challenges of vessel-making. | JUAN BARROSO, KIVA FORD, DIDI SUYDAM, SHARIF BEY, HYUNSOO ALICE KIM

72 Travel
Craft Adventures. Four ways to travel to experience craft. | JON SPAYDE

80 Reading An Object
The Making of June. An annotated guide to a Maine lobster boat. | KAREN OLSON

92 From the American Craft Council
News and information from the American Craft Council.

96 End Note
Spirals Take You Somewhere. The eternal beauty of Nautilus, a vessel-inspired sculpture by Christine Norchissey McHorse.
CREATE YOUR SUMMER GETAWAY

300+ courses and workshops from May to August.
Kick start your crafting practice!

To view our complete course listings and to register, visit us at HSAD.ca
FROM THE EDITOR

**Vessel.** One of the oldest human-made forms on earth, the vessel—which by definition holds and contains—is probably as responsible for our survival as anything we have made with our hands.

We use vessels to carry water and to float on top of it. We drink from vessels. We cook, ferment, and travel in them. We use them to wash. In short, they’re a foundational, ubiquitous part of our lives. “Even a spoon is simply a bowl with a handle on it,” Jennifer-Navva Milliken of the Museum for Art in Wood said to me when we first talked about vessels.

Given the stresses and pressures of this moment in history, we thought it would be useful to turn our attention to what’s fundamental. So this issue is dedicated to the vessel, a form that not only sustains us but also offers us beauty in our everyday lives. A form that artists and craftspeople continue to draw upon to shape powerful and poignant works.

Here you’ll find handcrafted iterations of all sorts, including mourning vessels—urns, coffins, jewelry, and sculpture—designed to help the bereaved honor the dead, modern bud vases, a diagrammed Maine lobster boat, miniature bronze baskets by Suzye Ogawa, and a textile version of the traditional Korean moon jar by Hyunsoo Alice Kim.

You’ll also discover the striking works and powerful storytelling of Cochiti potter Virgil Ortiz, Sharif Bey’s take on African power figures (which he calls vessels), a close look at Ojibwe birchbark canoes by professor and author Anton Treuer, an essay on vessels and humanity by Milliken, and Janet Koplo’s account of her visit to the venerable St. Croix Valley Pottery Tour, where longtime artists are working to pass along the legacy of function to a new generation of ceramists.

Today, we are as enamored of and reliant upon vessels as ever, even as they continue to evolve and hold new meanings for us.

*Karen*

KAREN OLSON / Editor in Chief

Visit craftcouncil.org/Blog for more stories about American craft.
CONTRIBUTORS

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

Juan Barroso, who pays homage to immigrants and immigrant labor with his ceramic work, is one of five artists we asked to write about how they made a vessel. Here he describes making a clay mop bucket with moving parts called Honoring the Janitor. Barroso lives in Jackson, Tennessee. page 62.

When Kiva Ford is not creating custom glasswork for scientific research, he’s making sculptures, goblets, pendants, and vessels, including tiny beakers and vases. In this issue he describes how he made a miniature glass pitcher. Ford lives in South Bend, Indiana, where he works toward glass-blown perfection. page 64.

When we learned that Janet Koplos was planning to attend the St. Croix Valley Pottery Tour, we were delighted she accepted our invitation to write about it. Koplos, who lives in the Bronx, New York, is author of books including What Makes a Potter and coauthor of Makers: A History of American Studio Craft. She was guest editor for three issues of American Craft. page 42.

The Museum for Art in Wood’s Executive Director and Chief Curator Jennifer-Navva Milliken writes in this issue about how the vessel has shaped human experience throughout history. “The vessel allows us to think in a cosmic context,” says Milliken, who recently curated the exhibit Vessel at the museum in Philadelphia. page 58.

For a story about birchbark canoes, we turned to Anton Treuer, a professor of Ojibwe at Bemidji State University in northern Minnesota. Treuer is author of many books, including Atlas of Indian Nations, in which he wrote about canoes, and Warrior Nation: A History of the Red Lake Ojibwe. He is editor of the Oshkaabewis Native Journal. page 36.
The article by L Autumn Gnadinger ("State of Craft: Craft and Its Writing as Collectivized Outsider") encourages the destruction of the capitalist system. That destruction would ensure that craft artists would not be able to make a living by selling their work in a free market. Let’s not glorify the Marxist system, because that system would cause the demise of free expression, which is the soul of the craft world.

—Anne R. Rob, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

I am sure quality and excellence were present somewhere in the Winter issue, but I was primarily struck by the pursuit of novelty—in theme and object outcome. I can get novelty anywhere. Excellence is not so common and much more engaging.

—Curtis Benzle, Huntsville, Alabama

I was surprised by the letters in the last issue from readers who were unnerved by the Fall cover (Wall Flower by Tip Toland). I loved the palette and fabric designs, but thought the central figure teetered on the edge of cutey.

—Cherry Elliott, Fort Bragg, California

Talk to Us
We welcome your letters and comments at letters@craftcouncil.org.

Sign Up for Monthly Inspiration
Get American Craft Council’s inspiring emails—including the monthly Craft Dispatch and artist interviews in The Queue—at craftcouncil.org/Signup.
Craft Happenings

MARCH OPENINGS

65th Annual Heard Museum Guild Indian Fair and Market
Heard Museum, Phoenix, Arizona
March 4–5, 2023
More than 600 Indigenous artists from across North America will gather in Phoenix for this massive art market, which draws tens of thousands of visitors each year. All visual art media are represented, and traditional crafts such as pottery, jewelry, basketmaking, and weaving make a strong showing.

The Mashrabiya Project: Seeing Through Space
The Museum for Art in Wood, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
March 3–July 23, 2023
Mashrabiyas are intricate openwork wooden screens used to define secular and sacred spaces in the Islamic world. Highlighting a large mashrabiya in the Center’s public area, Seeing Through Space (an exhibition that’s part of the larger Mashrabiya Project) presents works by six women artists from the Muslim world, exploring concepts suggested by the screens, including public and private realms and the porosity of boundaries.

Nick Vest: New Work
American Museum of Ceramic Art, Pomona, California
March 17–26, 2023
The pieces in this show were created during a 2022–2023 residency at AMOCA by Vest, a restlessly innovative Pennsylvania-born artist whose studio/gallery is located in Jingdezhen, one of China’s most significant ancient ceramics centers.
CRAFT HAPPENINGS

Roberto Lugo: Hi-Def Archives
Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio
March 17–June 4, 2023
In a double homage to his upbringing in inner-city Philadelphia and to the tradition of Cincinnati-based Rookwood pottery, Lugo’s hip-hop-inflected ceramic work will share space with highlights of the museum’s Rookwood collection. And there’s a bonus: for two weeks, the artist will work in residency in a gallery adjacent to the one displaying his finished pieces.

With the Grain
New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico
March 18–September 4, 2023
For many of the modern and contemporary Hispanic woodcarvers of northern New Mexico, the natural forms of unfinished wood are integral to the beauty of their pieces, not “irregularities” to be mastered. This exhibition highlights the dialogue between material and artistic intention that gives these artworks their special expressiveness.

Funk You Too! Humor and Irreverence in Ceramic Sculpture
Museum of Arts and Design, New York, New York
March 18–August 27, 2023
Originating in the fertile milieu of the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1960s, funk art emphasizes playfulness and figuration. More than 65 works in clay dating from the movement’s origins to the present day will be on display, including works by ceramic pioneer Robert Arneson and ACC Fellow Patti Warashina.

Scandinavian Design and the United States, 1890–1980
Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
March 24–July 23, 2023
From casserole dishes to tapestries to the Viking Punch Bowl made for Tiffany & Co., this exhibition explores “the far-reaching effects of the Scandinavian and American cultural exchange.” Co-organized by the Milwaukee Art Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in collaboration with the Nationalmuseum Sweden and the Nasjonalmuseet in Norway, it features more than 180 objects, including furniture, textiles, drawings, ceramics, jewelry, glass, and product designs.

APRIL OPENINGS

Simone Leigh
Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Massachusetts
April 6–September 4, 2023
Leigh, a lauded African American artist who works with ceramics, bronze, video, and installation, represented the US in the 2022 Venice Biennale. Visitors will see pieces from that exhibition, plus many more from a 20-year body of work that uses traditional African forms and a range of other references to explore what the organizers call “Black femme subjectivity.”
Concrete Journals: Anne Hicks Siberell

Museum of Craft and Design, San Francisco, California
April 8–September 3, 2023

For three decades, Siberell has been collaging together small objects drawn from her daily life—toys, jewelry, shells, keys, ticket stubs—and embedding them in small concrete slabs. These “concrete journals,” a modern variation on the clay tablets produced by ancient scribes, are a record of personal concerns ranging from the intimately personal to the global and political.

Pacita Abad

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota
April 15–September 3, 2023

This retrospective of the career of the late Filipina American artist is centered on her trapuntos, large-scale, exuberantly colorful patterned “paintings,” actually quilted and stitched canvases. But there are plenty of other types of work on display too, including costumes, ceramics, and works on paper—more than 100 pieces in all.

Sé’sh Shóto’sh Psí’sh (Muscle, Bone & Sinew)

Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, Santa Cruz, California
May 12–September 3, 2023

In a series titled Future Ancestral Technologies, to which this exhibition belongs, New Mexico–based artist Can-nupa Hanska Luger creates a visionary Indigenous future using the methodology and tropes of science fiction. On display will be regalia, tools, shelter elements, means of transportation, and other technology Luger has created for this new world—fusions of traditional craft and imaginative futurism.

To Keep Them Warm: The Alaska Native Parka

Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico
May 21, 2023–April 7, 2024

This display of traditional and contemporary parkas from five North American Indigenous cultures demonstrates a deep knowledge of climate, animals, and materials. Drawings, dolls, and parka-making tools help fill out the story, along with historic photographs that show the contexts in which parkas are worn.

Alexis Colbert sold this 2021 ceramic sculpture inspired by Babe the Blue Ox at the Tennessee Craft Fair.

More Craft Happenings!

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

JOHN C. CAMPBELL FOLK SCHOOL

Shape flowers in metal, create copper fountains, reproduce 18th-century tinware, pursue small-scale forging for jewelry, or make critters and roosters! No experience necessary.

folkschool.org/acc
BRASSTOWN, NORTH CAROLINA 1-800-FOLK-SCH

NEW EPISODES ON PBS
CRAFT IN AMERICA
INSPIRATION & HOME
NOW STREAMING ON THE PBS VIDEO APP
CRAFTINAMERICA.ORG and PBS.ORG/CRAFTINAMERICA

MANN ART GALLERY.

ART GALLERY OF SOUTH WESTERN MANITOBA.

MACKENZIE ART GALLERY.
Regina, SK, Nov 4, 2023 – Feb 18, 2024.

prairieinterlace.ca

Pat Adams
REMEMBER THAT SUNSET WE SAW FROM HERE ONE TIME? 1984
Collection of Julia and Yolande Krueger

JACQUIE AICHE

MADDY LEESER
SYD CARPENTER
AYUMI HORIE

max's
Shops at Excelsior & Grand
3826 Grand Way
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
952.922.8364
www.StyleByMax.com
Love Letters in Thread

The textile portraits in Gio Swaby’s upcoming exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago show the “full glory” of Black women.

BY JON SPAYDE

Bahamian artist Gio Swaby creates what she calls “love letters to Black women” by making life-size portraits in embroidery and piecing—boisterously colorful images that, in the words of Gio Swaby: Fresh Up exhibition organizers, “highlight and celebrate the subjects’ use of fashion as unapologetic self-definition and self-expression.”

The exhibition, Swaby’s first solo museum show, brings together work from 2017 through 2021, plus more than a dozen new pieces. It debuted at the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida, in the spring of 2022. A book, with an interview of Swaby by Nikole Hannah-Jones, accompanies the exhibition.

“Swaby’s intention of creating more positive images of Black portrait sitters who are empowered to be themselves, beautiful but not idealized, is a message that my colleagues and I are honored to share with our visitors,” says Melinda Watt, the AIC’s chair and Christa C. Mayer Thurman Curator of Textiles, who co-organized the exhibition with Katherine Pill, curator of contemporary art at the Florida museum.

Watt points out that the artist chooses textile patterns that have meaning to her and her sitters—“whether that’s a fabric made in the Bahamas, a floral pattern that expresses boldness or subtlety, or a color that glows with intensity. She achieves her goal of creating positive and empowering images of Black women and girls through her great skill with line and form, endowing each subject with personality and power.”

The theme of liberated personal power and agency is underlined by how the women present themselves. “The subjects in her portraits meet the gaze of the viewer directly,” says Watt. “They pose with a combination of ease and pride.”

The curator explains that Swaby, who lives in Toronto, uses free motion machine stitching as a form of drawing on a foundation of painter’s canvas, and often combines this technique with an additional layer of appliqué to indicate a garment or accessory that has personal significance to the sitter.

While these are portraits of pride, they are also images of reality and humanity. One of their most distinctive aspects is that Swaby presents the reverse, or “wrong,” side of her stitching as the face of the work. “This reveals the loose threads that mark the beginning and end of a stitched line, as well as the areas where the bobbin thread tension is inconsistent,” says Watt. “If you’re familiar with machine sewing, you recognize this right away as one of the most relatable characteristics of her work in fiber. Swaby is interested in countering an expectation of perfection; she’s signaling a kind of vulnerability.”

As the artist has said of her subjects, “I want you to know that I see you. I see you in the full glory of your existence, apart from the flattened narrative systematically imposed upon us.”

Gio Swaby: Fresh Up
Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
April 8–July 3, 2023
artic.edu | @artinstitutechi
gioswaby.com | @gioswaby

Jon Spayde is a frequent contributor to American Craft.
Gio Swaby’s works are made from thread and fabric sewn on canvas.
OPPOSITE: Pretty Pretty 8, 2021, 63 × 36 in.
Best buds. Encountering the first flowers to emerge in spring can feel like meeting up with delightful old friends. We offer this selection of bud vases as a way to showcase spring’s tulips and daffodils, a simple bloom picked off a neighbor’s bush (we won’t tell!), or even a favorite dried flower that has sat by the radiator all winter keeping you company.

Douglas Molinas Lawrence starts almost every day with a 6-by-6-by-2 in. block of wood—ranging from ash to zebrawood—from which he carves, chisels, and scorches a unique sculptural bud vase. The Knoxville, Tennessee, woodworker started with a goal of 50 vases, but has since eclipsed 100 and shows no sign of stopping. / $160
douglasmolinaslawrence.com
@douglasmolinaslawrence

At 11 by 7 in., the bag vase from Danté Germain Glass holds more than just a bud, but a single flower emphasizes the casual simplicity and shape of this glass vessel. Germain, who lives and works in western Wisconsin, offers this statement vase in five colors. / $220
dantegermainglass.com | @dantegermain
This mini bud vase set from Orange, California–based Sara Paloma Pottery includes five wheel-thrown, dark brown clay vessels dipped in white crater glaze. With their rippled, angular forms, these squat pots, from 4 to 5.5 in. tall, combine a midcentury aesthetic with a rustic finish. / $430
sarapaloma.com | @sarapalomapottery

When Behnaz Sharifian of Chaargoush Ceramics in Redmond, Washington, returned to school to study ceramics, she became fascinated with the seams and creases inherent in hand-building. The vase pictured here is from a recent series of delicate porcelain and stoneware vessels that celebrate the edges and folds in flower and leaf forms. / $280
etsy.com/shop/Chaargoush | @chaargoush

- Researched and written by Shivaun Watchorn, assistant editor of American Craft.
Celebrating the vibrancy of the oceans, this book explores the audacious soft sculptures of the Wertheim sisters. With stunning accuracy and expressiveness, they have re-created endangered coral reefs in yarn using crochet techniques in their evolving and widely exhibited Crochet Coral Reef project. Essays by academics, arts journalists, and the artists themselves are accompanied by photos that allow readers to take a “deep dive” into these art-reefs.

VALUE AND TRANSFORMATION OF CORALS
By Margaret and Christine Wertheim
Wienand Verlag, 2022
$50
Can the story of America be told through chairs? This volume and the Mint Museum exhibition it accompanies say yes. Here, from the Greek motifs of the Finlay chair (1810–1827) to the free-form bent-lamination curves of Laura Kishimoto's Yumi Chair II (2014), chairs reflect the dominant artistic and cultural trends of a nation conceived via classical ideals, open to worldwide trends, and fond of improvisation and experimentation.

**THE ART OF SEATING: 200 YEARS OF AMERICAN DESIGN**
By Brian J. Lang
D Giles Limited, 2022
$64.95

China's population includes 55 “national minorities” recognized by the state. Cultural anthropologist Deng describes the customs, rituals, and mythologies of more than 30 of these ethnic minorities in *China Adorned*. Combining black-and-white archival shots by Deng with Vinton's colorplates, the book is also a visual celebration of their brightly patterned clothing and rich jewelry. An appendix illustrates textile, basketry, and architectural traditions.

**CHINA ADORNED: RITUAL AND CUSTOM OF ANCIENT CULTURES**
By Deng Qiyao,
photography by Cat Vinton
Thames & Hudson, 2022
$70

The artist-designer Machine Dazzle creates wildly over-the-top wearable art and stage sets for major cabaret, drag, and performance artists. This compendium of Dazzle-ing designs, published in conjunction with an exhibition at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, is richly illustrated with images of his funky-fabulous creations and includes essays and reminiscences by artists, friends, and scholars.

**QUEER MAXIMALISM × MACHINE DAZZLE**
Edited by Elissa Auther
Rizzoli Electa, 2022
$50

In 1850, James Bryce formed a company to make tableware and novelties in pressed glass without compromising quality or artistry. Cheaper than blown or cut crystal, pressed glass was affordable for ordinary Americans, and it sold around the world. With 190 colorplates and a compendium of authenticated Bryce products, this book is a definitive summary of an important glass tradition.

**BRYCE GLASS: ART AND NOVELTY IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY PITTSBURGH**
By Debra M. Coulson and Harley N. Trice,
photography by Gavin Ashworth
D Giles Limited, 2023
$64.95

The dizzying variety of Theaster Gates's work over the past 20 years—from archival projects to films to paintings in tar to “Afro-mingei” pottery—is on display in this lavish catalog of a mid-career retrospective that opened at the New Museum in November 2022. Two hundred photos illustrate the text, which includes essays by Gates observers, including renowned artist/performer Coco Fusco.

**THEASTER GATES: YOUNG LORDS AND THEIR TRACES**
Edited by
Massimiliano Gioni and Gary Carrion-Murayari
Phaidon Press Limited and New Museum, 2022
$69.95

Recker, the author of True Colors: World Masters of Dyes and Pigments, brings his skills as a color trend spotter and forecaster to this sumptuously illustrated, engagingly written book. In chapters devoted to specific tints, he takes up topics ranging from the pink triangles worn by gay concentration-camp prisoners to the royal associations of purple to why the blues are . . . blue.

**DEEP COLOR: THE SHADES THAT SHAPE OUR SOULS**
By Keith Recker
Schiffer Publishing, 2022
$35
Vessels of the ACC Library Collection

BY ACC LIBRARIAN BETH GOODRICH

The American Craft Council Library holds tens of thousands of volumes, nearly 600 linear feet of processed archival materials, and thousands of artist files. But did you know the library also holds an object collection? Here are a few examples of the extraordinary vessels we have on hand. Nearly all of the objects are ceramic, and most were gifts from the artists to the American Craft Museum, which subsequently donated them to the ACC. Many were displayed in the ACC offices and library while the organization was located in New York City. When the ACC made the move to Minneapolis, the objects came along and have been on display in the library ever since. Anyone who comes to visit the library in person can see these beautiful objects up close. For more information about the ACC object collection, contact the library at library@craftcouncil.org.

Toshiko Takaezu, Moon Pots, 8.5 inches high (large), 4.5 inches high (medium), 3.5 inches high (small). Gift to Aileen Osborn Webb as chairperson of the World Crafts Council. On extended loan from the World Crafts Council.

Mike Ball, face jug, 7 x 6 x 5.5 in. Ball made this piece in the tradition of face jug pottery made by enslaved African Americans in the 19th century. Donated by Alexander Haas to the American Craft Council.

Artus Van Briggle, vase with double handles, ceramic, glaze, wheel-thrown, 13.5 x 6.75 x 4.75 in. Donated to the American Craft Council by the American Craft Museum, 1990.


About the ACC Library

The American Craft Council Library & Archives in Minneapolis contains the country’s most comprehensive archive of contemporary American craft history, with more than 20,000 print publications, files on nearly 4,000 craft artists, four major archival collections, and a robust digital collection. To explore the ACC Digital Archives, visit digital.craftcouncil.org. Sign up for librarian Beth Goodrich’s quarterly newsletter at craftcouncil.org/CraftyLibrarian. For more information about joining the Friends of the ACC Library & Archives, contact Judy Hawkinson, ACC’s associate executive director, at jhawkinson@craftcouncil.org or 651-434-3951.
Experience something extraordinary in 2023.

Experience Arrowmont.

Weekend, One-Week and Two-Week Workshops in basketry, books, drawing, enamels, fibers, jewelry, metals, mixed media, painting, paper arts, printmaking, sculpture, textiles, weaving, woodturning, woodworking, and more.

Register at arrowmont.org or call 865-436-5860

Enriching Lives Through Art and Craft

Don’t miss our next online pop-up marketplace!
May 8–21, 2023, at directory.craftcouncil.org

Buy artists’ work right from our American Craft Made Online Artists Directory showcasing 130 artists. Learn about their favorite pieces, view behind-the-scenes studio tours, and get the inside scoop on the pieces our craft curators can’t stop talking about. Sign up to receive online shopping email announcements at directory.craftcouncil.org.
The Ceramist and the Superheroes
For the past 20 years, Virgil Ortiz has been creating futuristic characters depicted in clay vessels and sculptures, fashion, video, and installations. Here, wearing Ortiz’s garments, characters Cuda and Steu, captain and head commander of the Survivorship Armada, collect artifacts for future preservation. On the right is one of Ortiz’s Cochiti pottery storage jars, 2018. Cochiti red clay, white clay slip, red clay slip, and wild spinach pigment. 20 x 16 x 16 in. Photographed at White Sands, New Mexico.
When dug out of the earth, the clay at Cochiti Pueblo, New Mexico, appears reddish brown, the chunks like dusted chocolate truffles. Virgil Ortiz, who was born and lives in this community of the Cochiti people, situated between the cities that Spanish colonizers named Albuquerque and Santa Fe, has been digging into this rich earth since his childhood. As did his ancestors before him, the 53-year-old shapes the harvested clay into pottery pieces, only his have a distinct sci-fi bent: striking vessels in black and creamy white carry faces of imagined nomads in gas masks, surrounded by geometric designs of traditional Cochiti potters; majestic sculptures immortalize fictionalized warriors in futuristic regalia. Creating these time-bending artworks is a way for Ortiz to record stories and traditions. In carrying forth this knowledge, he also affirms the strength of Cochiti Pueblos in the wake of the Spanish invasions and ongoing settler-colonialism.

“Clay is Earth Mother,” Ortiz says. “It gives me the opportunity to have a voice. When I talk about any subject matter, whether past, present, and even future, it’s a prayer to make
Sure that story stays alive.” For the past two decades, the topic that has preoccupied Ortiz is the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, an uprising of Pueblos, including the Cochiti, to overthrow the Spanish in what is now New Mexico. Considered the most successful revolt by Native Americans against European colonial powers, it led to 12 years of independence, with Pueblo Indians driving out colonizers who had enslaved them, forced them to convert to Catholicism, and suppressed their ways of life. For Ortiz, the righteous revolution is a story of resilience. “We’re strong,” he says. “We didn’t lose our ways, and we keep not only art, language, but the word of our ancestors alive.”

Across Time

Ortiz’s work keeps the story of the Pueblo Revolt alive, not through mimesis but through constant reinterpretation and reimagining. Each figure he arduously hand-builds is part of a growing cast of characters in an epic narrative he calls Revolt 1680/2180. The tale envisions the world 500 years after the historic uprising, when plunder of Native land is ongoing in a world poisoned by nuclear war. Native soldiers not only square off against the conquering Castilian army; they also time-travel back to 1680 to help their ancestors rise up during the Pueblo Revolt. Their fight is a timeless one: for territory that is rightfully theirs, and for the preservation of their culture and knowledge that is passed through oral traditions and art.

Chief among the heroes of Ortiz’s story is Tahu, a Pueblo matriarch who leads a skilled force of women fighters called the Blind Archers. Ortiz has painted her on several rounded vessels, portraying Tahu at times blindfolded, bow and quiver at the ready, and at times wearing a decorated helmet featuring spikes of feathers. Then there are the Venutian Soldiers, eerie figures armed with staffs and spears, whose faces are hidden by gas masks. As battles wage across centuries, members of the Aeronauts, a band of hunter-preservationists, are tasked with collecting Pueblo culture from the past, including artifacts, artworks, and ceremonial knowledge. All twins, the Aeronauts often appear in Ortiz’s ceramics in pairs, as painted or standalone figures, or as busts with head-to-toe patterning. Guarding this realm are the wide-eyed Recon Watchmen, who surveil the earth—past, present, and future—for enemy movement. Ortiz has created 19 groups of characters to represent the 19 Pueblo nations in present-day New Mexico.

Over the years, he has brought them to life not only through clay but also through fashion, video, and installations. With recent solo exhibitions at the Montclair Art Museum in New Jersey, Minneapolis Institute of Art, and Museum of Indian Arts & Culture in Santa Fe, and one forthcoming in 2023 at the newly constructed New Mexico Museum of Art Vladem Contemporary, Ortiz—recipient of the 2022 Museum of Indian Arts & Culture’s Living Treasure Award—is bringing his storytelling to new levels of visibility.

His action-packed narratives have also caught the attention of entertainment company Meow Wolf, which invited him to create an immersive room of Recon Watchmen (made of foam, fiberglass, resin, and mirrors) at its popular House of Eternal Return in Santa Fe. Open since October, the permanent installation will introduce his work to hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of viewers. The exposure is crucial to why he does what he does. “I’m trying to give Indigenous folks superheroes, but also give everybody a lesson in history,” Ortiz says. “It’s not told in schools, it’s swept under the carpet. I’m acknowledging what our people went through, and that it didn’t put a stop to who we are and how we live.”
“I’m trying to give Indigenous folks superheroes, but also give everybody a lesson in history.” —Virgil Ortiz

Ancestral Voices

It’s perhaps no surprise that Ortiz grew up in Cochiti Pueblo consumed by science fiction and fantasy. He watched Star Wars, Star Trek, and Battlestar Galactica, productions that continue to influence him. At the same time, he was immersed in traditional Pueblo art: his father was a drum maker, and his mother, Laurencita Herrera, and grandmother Seferina Ortiz were potters. Virgil, the youngest of six children, remembers waking up and seeing his mother seated at the dining table, creating with clay. His family often made what are known as Storyteller figures—a seated matriarch or an animal holding young ones, the elders appearing to pass on tales. “I would come home after school and be anxious to work with clay next to our mom and grandmother,” he says. “I never knew it was art being created on a daily basis.”

Ortiz was about 15 years old when he began exploring his own style, modeling and painting figures inspired by the action figures from his favorite fantasy franchises. His inventive works caught the eye of Robert V. Gallegos, a family friend and New Mexico art dealer, who invited Ortiz to his gallery in Albuquerque. There, Ortiz and his parents saw a vast collection of historical Cochiti figurative pottery. Known as mono (the Spanish word for monkey), these playful figures were caricatures of white outsiders made in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for a growing tourist market. Many scholars understand them as potters’ social commentaries on a landscape that was changing before their eyes with the arrival of the railroad system. Carrying the traditional Cochiti colors of red, ivory, and black, the mono bore striking resemblance to Ortiz’s own sculptures. “My parents told me, ‘We didn’t even know about these pieces. Remember this day, because it’s like our ancestors were talking to you, and through the clay,’” he says. “I just had a connection I know was built into me. It’s ancestral memory.”
TOP LEFT: This storage jar, 2018, shows a Venutian soldier wearing a gas mask due to environmental destruction, 17 x 12 in. TOP RIGHT: Jai Nopek, 2022, part of the Recon Watchmen series, 41 x 31 x 17 in.; with Ha’pon (war shield), a collaboration with Simon Levin, high-fire clay and glazes, 39 x 21 x 5 in. BELOW: Ortiz’s Sirens: Secret Passkeys & Portals installation at Meow Wolf’s House of Eternal Return, Santa Fe. OPPOSITE: The artist with two Recon Watchmen characters at Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah Wilderness in New Mexico.
Ancient Methods

Since that visit, Ortiz has only ventured deeper into his imagination. He has built barrel-like vessels with faces of Watchmen in relief; double-spouted water jars painted with the profiles of Stargazers, seers in his expansive universe; wall masks and standing figurines of other characters wearing goggles and respirators. Still, his materials and methods stay rooted in the past. In addition to digging for his clay and using the ancient coil-and-scrape hand-building method, Ortiz prepares his own paint in a process that can span more than a year. The red accents on his pottery are naturally occurring, and the ivory is white slip, but the dramatic black pigment comes from wild spinach that must be picked at its bloom. Ortiz harvests the plant, boils it, then dries the mixture on corn husks. The result can be broken off in pieces, crushed, and rewet into paint.

Ortiz also fires many of his vessels and decorative sculptures the traditional Cochiti way, inside a beehive-like structure of dried cow manure over a scaffolding of chicken wire. Pieces are fired just once, by burning cedar and aspen wood around the sides of the makeshift furnace. “All the oxygen and air and smoke is pulled upward and away from the piece, and you keep adding the fuel until it becomes a huge fireball,” Ortiz says. “All of a sudden the cow manure starts to burn from the outside inward, and that creates our kiln.” After the firing, he rag-polishes the pots, wiping away ashes to reveal the colors, and creating a patina with egg white or animal fat.

According to Ortiz, the process is a dying art, in part because it is so time-consuming. He sees it as his responsibility to help teach other Cochiti artists how to gather and prepare clay—acts that are steeped in ritual and respect for the material. “When we harvest the clay, we have to introduce ourselves, explain our purpose, ask for guidance, for inspiration,” he says, “and we only take as much as we need. We also pay respect to who knows how long our people have been getting clay from this clay bank, and pay homage to what they’ve done and how they’ve paved the road for us.”

To Infinity

In recent years, Ortiz has also been embracing new ways of making. In 2016, his friend Neil Celani, also a ceramist, took him to Santa Fe Clay. It was the first ceramics store Ortiz had ever visited, and it “blew my mind,” he says. “It was like being in a candy store, to see all the different types of tools and all the clay and colors all prepped and ready to go.” He began experimenting with high-fire clay and broadened his tricolor palette, painting entire busts in colors like bright red and teal, incorporating subtle textures, and experimenting with metallic finishes.
He’s also been building bigger since being exposed to different kiln types, such as an anagama wood kiln built by his friend Simon Levin, an Illinois artist. In 2021, Ortiz was in residence at the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts, where he had access to gas kilns, wood kilns, electric kilns, soda kilns, and a salt kiln. The scale of these ovens allowed him to build bigger than he ever had. Ortiz made sculptures in the round up to five feet tall, including a standing Watchmen figure with a cocoon-like body, and several busts of steely-eyed Watchmen with elaborate headpieces. Finished with high-fire glazes, they look like relics, only with the visual pop of action figures—ageless artifacts sent from the future.

Ortiz identifies his works as Indigenous futurism, a term coined by the Anishinaabe cultural critic Grace Dillon to describe a movement of narratives—unbounded by time and space—that assert Indigenous sovereignty. The artist defines it simply: “storytelling that connects the past, present, and future. [My work] is an awakening of the truth and education of our history and actual events.”

This idea of an infinity of timelines—and with it, infinite ways of enduring—pushes him to keep inventing. Ortiz has designed garments for his characters, created videos, and written a screenplay for Revolt 1680/2180, which he is trying to make into a movie.

Through it all, he continues to communicate with his family through clay, including those he calls his “best teachers”—his grandmother, mother, and father. “Even though they’re in the next dimension, I still get messages from them,” Ortiz says. “I know they’re very proud, but I know that it’s not my talent, it was just lent to me to talk about our history. Traditional clay will always be the heart and soul—the nucleus—of everything that I do.”

virgilortiz.com | @virgilortiz

Claire Voon is a Brooklyn, New York–based journalist and critic who has contributed to publications including the New York Times, Artforum, and the Brooklyn Rail.
tiny treasures
Suzye Ogawa uses intricate processes to make miniature vessels from bronze and natural materials. Here, she inspects and finishes several pieces.

The vessels are ornamented bronze, finished with basketry details: coils and weaving in natural materials like sweetgrass, seagrass, bamboo, and grapevine. Their shapes evoke Japanese pottery and basketry, and they’re sometimes embellished with precious metals and stones and images from the Japanese seasons.

And they’re about one and a half inches tall.

These exquisite micro-miniatures are the work of an artist who, as a little girl, spent hours in her father’s Los Angeles dental lab, watching him craft dentures from gold. Suzye Ogawa knew that she, too, wanted to make things, and small metalwork was a natural avenue for her. She was drawn to baskets as well. “I love the fact that women of all cultures have made baskets,” she says. “They’ve made them from things that normally get thrown away or get composted.”

And because she grew up in Los Angeles’s Little Tokyo neighborhood, a vibrant Japanese American community, she also learned Japanese dance and ikebana, the art of flower arrangement. Putting all of that together created a nexus, she says. “I had the metal and the fiber, I like to work small—I’m near-sighted—and I had this really rich Japanese cultural environment that was subliminally giving me cues.”

During her career as a school speech therapist, Ogawa spent evenings and summer vacations developing her craft. The idea for her bronze baskets came to her while taking her first basketry class in the 1980s. “There was a wonderful little fiber shop around the corner from where I was living,” she says, “and I took my very first basketry class there, from a world-renowned basket artist who’s passed away, Judy Mulford. Working with her, a light went on in me.
After eight hours of making this very crude, tiny little basket, the light went on and I said to myself, ‘Oh, I want to combine metal with fiber!’

She eventually mustered up the confidence in 1987 to bring her work to the Contemporary Crafts Market in Pasadena. “There was interest in it,” she says. “People were already combining metal or ceramics with fiber in various ways—but nobody else was doing work that was so little!”

Ogawa, who now sells her work at other shows including ACC’s American Craft Made, is interested in how miniaturization affects the relationship between viewer and object. “People view small things differently,” she says. “Working small invites the viewer in closer. Viewers have to make a commitment to come in more closely like that, which creates a more intimate relationship. And when you have created such fine detail at that small scale, it’ll hold them, it’ll fascinate them.”

At the same time, she’s careful to distinguish her work from that of other small-scale metal artists. “People will approach me at a show, thinking the work is jewelry—because it’s small and it’s in a case,” she says. “But it’s not jewelry. I have great respect for jewelers, for whom everything is very, very precise, but that’s really not my style.”

She calls her work wabi-sabi, invoking a medieval Japanese aesthetic that values the expressive power of imperfection and small defects. “My pieces are not perfect, they all have something kind of quirky about them,” she says. “My husband is a retired architect, and he took a look at one of my baskets once
“Viewers have to make a commitment to come in more closely . . . which creates a more intimate relationship.”

—Suzye Ogawa
“The needlework that’s required can be a real challenge.”

—Suzye Ogawa

TOP RIGHT: Ogawa constructs each piece with various types of wax using hand tools from her father Howard Ogawa’s dental laboratory. “He was a master wax worker. I try to channel his skill in each piece,” she says. MIDDLE LEFT: To create embellishments in her bronze pieces, Ogawa shapes her wax forms using letter press type, including hand-carved wood pieces from Empire Printing in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, now closed. “It is my way of knowing that Empire Printing’s legacy continues,” she says. MIDDLE RIGHT: After finishing her bronze work, the artist coils, weaves, and twines natural materials using beading silks and beading needles. RIGHT: To weave this handle, Ogawa uses materials including palm fruit stalk, which she cuts and coils.
and said, ‘Well, you know, it’s kind of lopsided.’ And I replied, ‘Well, yeah, I’m kind of lopsided!’”

Since retiring she’s become a full-time artist, and a move to the Northern California hamlet of Fort Bragg—plus the pandemic—has offered her the peace and quiet to, she says, “work slower and savor the joy of the materials.”

Ogawa models her vessels—and her slightly larger sculptures, which include a bronze kimono and a samurai kabuto (helmet)—in multiple types of wax, then casts them using the venerable lost-wax technique. Then comes the application and weaving of fibers—“they have to be thin enough to be in scale,” she says, “and the needlework that’s required can be a real challenge.”

This is work she “can’t help but do,” she says, and it’s all homage to her background. Her father, Howard, became a hero to Asian American dental students who, in the 1950s, were barred from university dental fraternities with their extensive labs. Howard opened his lab to all comers, at all hours, and mentored generations of dentists without charge.

Ogawa uses Howard’s dental tools in her work, she says. To create embellishments on her wax models, she uses Japanese type from the Empire Printing Company, the first Japanese-language print shop in Little Tokyo, which opened in 1912 and closed in 1990.

“My pieces,” she says, “all ultimately come from the places that are important to me.”

suzyegawa.com | @suzye_ogawa_designs

Jon Spayde is a frequent contributor to American Craft.
INSIDE THE BIRCHBARK CANOE

Called wiigwaasi-jiimaan by the Ojibwe, this light, buoyant, and fast vessel was the peerless watercraft of choice for thousands of years.

BY ANTON TREUER
America has historical amnesia. Citizens today often struggle to face uncomfortable facts of history, such as the genocide of Native Americans, their internment in residential boarding schools, and slavery. The absent and distorted narratives have many Americans singing Woody Guthrie's “This Land Is Your Land” while many others grapple with historical and contemporary traumas that have yet to be properly addressed. We can’t get to reconciled if we skip all the reconciling; we can’t get to healed if we skip all the healing.

We all lose when we lose sight of our history. We are all products of that history whether we see it or not. So losing narratives means losing ourselves, in a way. America and many of her citizens are having an identity crisis.

Art and music have a special power to transcend our differences. We speak to one another in these media with and without words; and in these fertile environments, healing can grow. In Origin: A Genetic History of the Americas, Jennifer Raff shares that Native American DNA has been separated from that of other humans for around 35,000 years. At the time of Columbus’s arrival, there were 100 million Indigenous people in the Americas; the entire population of Europe was only 88 million. This continent was not home to scattered bands of roaming nomads in the wilderness, but to numerous different sophisticated and populous cultures. The art of Native Americans predated all others in this place, has been sustained throughout America’s history, and continues to thrive today. It is timely and necessary that we reenter this space. It can unlock a deeper understanding of our history and identity, and help unlock the healing we all need.

The Significance and Swiftness of the Birchbark Canoe

The birch is a remarkable tree. Indigenous to the United States and Canada, its range stretches from coast to coast in cold-weather climates. The Ojibwe and neighboring tribes near the Great Lakes discovered that the bark can be peeled from living trees without killing the tree itself. Once separated from the tree, it is highly resistant to rot. Natural oils and moisture in the bark make it pliable but strong. It was a preferred building material for covering wigwams and manufacturing vessels that ranged from cups to maple sap containers, called biskitenaagan, to the birchbark canoe. The manufacture of the birchbark canoe became a refined and highly specialized art form. It might seem quaint or even cool to some, but few people realize
that it was the engine that drove military and financial power for everyone in the region for generations. The fates of tribes and empires were determined by this vessel.

The birchbark canoe was central to the formation of Ojibwe identity. Although the DNA of Ojibwe people is ancient in North America, the emergence of the Ojibwe language and culture happened more recently as the Ojibwe began a migration over 1,500 years from the Atlantic Coast to the Great Lakes. They traveled by birchbark canoe. Wooden dugout canoes were difficult on the big water of the Great Lakes—heavy, easy to capsize, with a deep draft, and limited in size by the size of the trees themselves. The birchbark canoe could be made small for inland lakes and rivers or scaled up for big water or hauling furs. It was more buoyant than a dugout, with a lighter draft, and harder to capsize. In trade and travel, there was no match.

The French arrived in Sault Ste. Marie around 1600. This was the Ojibwe population nexus, in the heart of birch country. Although we often think Europeans had technological advantages over Natives, it was much the opposite. The French abandoned their boats and watercraft and adopted the birchbark canoe. Their quick assimilation of the Indigenous mode of transportation was critical to their trade success. Rather than fight the Ojibwe, Ottawa, and Potawatomi, they instructed their men to marry Native women and cement trade and military alliances through marriage. While this custom was driven by the imperatives of French patriarchy and colonial ambition more than any special love for the Natives, the result was transformational for both. Even today, there are millions of people who have both French and Native ancestry across the birch forestlands of the United States and Canada.

The Ojibwe were powerful military allies for the French and instrumental in their defeat of the British and the allied Iroquois Confederacy during the Beaver Wars throughout most of the 1600s. When the French and British established a significant (though temporary) peace in 1713, access to Ojibwe trade and canoes were topics of great importance.

The Ojibwe used the birchbark canoe in their role as middlemen in Dakota trade with the French, and this light, buoyant, fast vessel was critical to their success. When war broke out between the two tribes in the middle of the 1700s, the Ojibwe had a major technological advantage over the Dakota because of canoes and geography. The Dakota used wooden dugouts and had to paddle upstream to attack Ojibwe villages. The Ojibwe would typically rally their warriors and pursue the Dakota, easily overtaking them.
The manufacture of the birchbark canoe became a refined and highly specialized art form. Few people realize that it was the engine that drove military and financial power for everyone in the region for generations.
them in faster birchbark canoes. When the Ojibwe attacked the Dakota, they would float downstream for a couple of days, strike, and flee in their faster craft. From 1600 to 1825, the Ojibwe multiplied the size of their territory twentyfold at the expense of other tribes.

The advantages of birchbark canoe technology were not just geographic (living where birch trees grow); they were technological. The idea that you could make a frame and cover it with birch bark was not hard to imagine or see. But making it work required highly skilled, trained, and practiced canoe artisans. There are some good documentaries on the Ojibwe practice for this, including Wiigwaasi-jiimaan: These Canoes Carry Culture and Earl’s Canoe.

The production of a birchbark canoe does not begin with the frame. It begins with the bark, which is assembled in a staked, sand-lined bed with the outside of the bark facing the inside of the canoe. It is weighted down with rocks, and the sections of bark are sewn together with split black spruce roots or jack pine roots. The frame is constructed inside this bark envelope, usually with steamed and bent cedar ribs, ash gunwales, and cedar sheathing. The ends of the canoe are sophisticated laminations of ash, often with dozens of laminations to make the ends and manboards. All seams are sealed with a mix of rendered pitch, deer tallow, and charcoal. It’s a major undertaking, and if the wrong materials, design, or seal are used, it just won’t float. But when the artisans knew the craft, this vessel was the peerless watercraft of choice for thousands of years.

Today, fiberglass, Kevlar, and other materials have been used to mass-manufacture canoes, and the art form of birchbark canoe construction is rare knowledge in most places. Ojibwe artisans such as Wayne Valliere, a teacher with the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians in Wisconsin, keep the craft and traditional knowledge alive; there are hobbyists who study Indigenous knowledge as well. Yet the design of the canoe has endured for thousands of years. While its function in history has surely changed, the legacy and impact of this art form is at the center of the history of North American tribes, and of the French, British, and American trade and military empires.

Anywhere there is water, Native people traversed it, fished it, and called it home. Many tribes developed incredible watercraft—the products of their unique bodies of knowledge and ways of knowing. Learning about these living cultures and art forms can enlighten and heal us all. The vessels are as deep and significant as the water itself.

◆

A professor of Ojibwe at Bemidji State University, Anton Treuer is editor of the Oshkaabewis Native Journal and author of many books, including Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask and Warrior Nation: A History of the Red Lake Ojibwe. He received his BA from Princeton University and his MA and PhD from the University of Minnesota.
Ready to explore the next chapter of your craft practice?

Apply for our 2023 Emerging Artists Cohort, a three-month intensive program followed by monthly support designed to help craft artists advance their professional careers.

Through facilitated workshops, presentations, and conversations, participants will gain a deeper understanding of the professional skills and opportunities that will help them diversify revenue streams and thrive in their professional practice. After the three-month program is complete, all participants will receive a $10,000 accelerator grant to help propel them to the next level of their profession.

Application period: April 12–May 10, 2023
Apply online at craftcouncil.org/Cohort2023

This program is possible thanks to the Windgate Charitable Foundation.
The St. Croix River, which forms part of the border between Minnesota and Wisconsin, is stunning with its towering rocky banks, forests, and lush green hills. It is so beautiful that it was one of only eight rivers included in the original national Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, enacted by Congress in 1968. The river valley is also home to bucolic farms and many artists. The St. Croix Valley Pottery Tour was first held there in 1993 and is now one of the longest-running pottery tours in the country, drawing talented ceramists from across the nation.

The tour was born when three Minnesota potters—Linda Christianson, Janel Jacobson, and Jeff Oestreich—coordinated their spring sales with a joint map. From that humble beginning, the tour grew so that now hundreds of fans arrive each May, braving the early spring mud to browse the works of dozens of potters at seven host studios. For 2023, the tour has added an eighth studio.

I’ve attended the tour many times. Last year I visited after the tour had just reconstituted following two years of virtual sales during the pandemic. This is what I found.

Gridlock on Farm Roads

The St. Croix Valley Pottery Tour is always a celebratory event, but last year, it rocked with excitement. Not only was it the tour’s 30th anniversary, but it was larger than ever, with 66 American potters and two from England hosted at seven pottery studios about an hour north of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Among the orchards, wineries, and farm fields, significant intersections on the rural roads were posted with the tour’s distinctive red-and-gold jug-silhouette signs to mark the routes—roads so rural that my GPS once advised me “Turn left, if possible.”

Moreover, after a period of prolonged cold, the May weather suddenly shifted to sunny 70s for the first two of the event’s three days—all the more reason for the citizenry to go for a drive in the greening countryside. No one keeps a count, but there were lots of people. The lines of parked cars stretched out of sight down the farm lanes. Observers described gridlock at Jeff Oestreich’s studio, where a one-lane dirt road with cars parked on one side required turn-taking to enter or exit.
Attendees were unfailingly polite as they gingerly tried out unpracticed hugs. The tour is never wild-party time, but unquestionably there was a buzz of energy, of conversation, of sounds of delight as people encountered other people or desired pots. There were rituals of picking up and turning over each object, proactively hanging on to one beloved pot and then another and another until the load was taken to a holding table and hands were free to acquire more.

Most of the venues displayed each potter’s wares on an identified table, with the maker hovering around to greet collectors and colleagues and to answer questions. Regular host Guillermo Cuellar, however, mixed makers on the dozens of tables at his hilltop studio overlooking the St. Croix River, coding the price tags with a band of color. Some works were nevertheless immediately identifiable, such as the primitive drawings and animal sculptures of local cult figure Mike Norman. In other cases, the visitor responded to form or decoration and looked up the coding to see whose work it was. Cuellar believes this presentation fosters attentive looking, encourages people to set aside preconceptions, and ensures that makers new to the site get as much attention as the old-timer favorites. Besides, he says, that’s how our pots live in our homes.

At the studios of Oestreich, Richard Vincent, and Ani Kasten, each potter handled checkout individually, while the other hosts—Cuellar, Linda Christianson, Matt Krousey, and the potter-couple Will Swanson and Janel Jacobson—had a centralized checkout, quicker for the buyer but requiring more careful accounting for distribution of profits.

Food and beverage options varied, but everyone provided something, mainly out of hospitality but also to keep browsers from wandering off to the cafés in the surrounding small towns. In years past, Cuellar made a practice of cooking up a true lunch with the aid of many volunteers (who get first choice of the wares) and serving it on pottery that was also for sale. What better advertisement than seeing the plates, bowls, and cups in use? The practice was suspended in 2022 out of concern for pandemic sanitation, but there were still desserts, served on paper plates or napkins. Swanson and Jacobson, famed for baking and freezing 4,000 cookies over the winter in preparation for the event, also suspended the practice last year—in part because Jacobson broke her wrist in August 2021, and it was challenging enough to get back to potting. The Kasten venue has offered soups, had a popcorn machine, and provided s’mores for children at a firepit, as well as a rope swing. Several sites contract with food trucks. Krousey and Vincent usually have live music. Three of the seven hosts provide golf-cart shuttles to ferry visitors from parking to displays.

Each of the host studios provided a distinct browsing experience, so there was always something new for regular visitors. Most of the hosts, while invariably inviting potters whose work they respect, made an effort to provide for different tastes. Seemingly every possible aesthetic for functional pottery was represented. Function is the key term. This is a pottery tour, not a ceramic sculpture exhibition, and while the highest price I saw in 2022 was $2,600 for an elaborately worked object, a huge percentage of the wares cost between $30 and $100.
There were rituals of picking up and turning over each object, proactively hanging on to one beloved pot and then another and another . . .
Pottery for sale at the 2022 tour. The artists are: ROW 1 (from left to right): Sandra Byers, Randy Johnston, Matthew Metz, Ani Kasten. ROW 2: Kyle Carpenter, Kip O’Krongly, Sam Taylor. ROW 3: Minsoo Yuh, Matthew Krousey, Mark Shapiro. ROW 4: Becky Lloyd, Sue Tirrell, Robert Brady. ROW 5: Liz Quackenbush; Donna Polseno; Jeanne Blisson and Ikuzi Teraki; Maggie Jaszcak.

Photos courtesy of the artists.
Continuity and Change

The tour originated when Oestreich, Christianson, and Jacobson all moved to the upper St. Croix River Valley around the same time and decided to hold simultaneous sales, with a brochure and map, in hopes of drawing bigger crowds. The coordination expanded after Swanson joined Jacobson and Bob Briscoe built a house and studio nearby. Briscoe is credited with being the promotional energy behind the tour. “He brought in a spirit of marketing that we didn’t have before, a kind of can-do attitude, which not everybody has,” Swanson remembers.

Briscoe, Oestreich, and Christianson have been major figures on the workshop circuit, where they would take the opportunity to hand out flyers for the tour as it grew. For the first three years, MacKenzie participated, which attracted many people, and then he bowed out. There has been a slight change in membership over the years, most strikingly in 2016, when Briscoe sold his house and studio to Krousey, and Connée Mayeron Cowles passed her site to Kasten. Briscoe has since retired from pottery making, but Mayeron Cowles still participates in the tour at her former studio.

The generational shift was acknowledged last year in a different way at Cuellar’s studio, where his daughter, Alana Cuellar, showed her work in person after participating in the virtual event during the pandemic years. In 2023 she will be his cohost, and eventually, he says, she will be the host and he a guest. A generational focus is also planned by Oestreich. He intends that...
in 2023 the majority of his guest potters will be under 40, to encourage the legacy of function. In 2022, exceptionally, his selection of guest potters had a local focus. He invited Leila Denecke, Ursula Hargens, Ernest Miller, and Nate Saunders from Minnesota; Jim Grittner from Wisconsin; and Margaret Bohls, now in Nebraska but formerly of Minnesota. In a show of loyalty, he included the Leach Pottery of the United Kingdom, where he apprenticed from 1969 to 1971.

This year marks one more major change: the addition of an eighth studio on the tour, that of Peter Jadoonath. A guest exhibitor since 2018, Jadoonath is currently co-board president (with Lindsay Oesterritter) of Studio Potter online magazine.

There is some debate over whether the St. Croix Valley tour or 16 Hands, in Floyd, Virginia, is the oldest continuously operating American pottery tour. But the Minnesota version has certainly grown larger and become more influential. Its advantage over 16 Hands is being located within an hour’s drive of a metropolitan area of nearly four million people. Its annual choice of Mother’s Day weekend is strategic: Minnesotans and Wisconsinites are usually by May desperate to get out after the long winter, and usually the weather is reasonable. But not always. I remember that about 10 years ago the tour weekend was rainy and gloomy. I thought, What a shame, probably no one will come. I was quite wrong. The crowds were as good as usual, and everyone laughed about the mud on their boots, pants, and cars. Most of the sites have both tents and some indoor space, but even at unprotected tables, such as at Cuellar’s, pottery is not going to be hurt by a little rain!

The St. Croix Valley Pottery Tour has been the model for other locations, such as Art of the Pot in Austin, Texas, which follows the Mother’s Day timing and the practice of inviting guests. However, the underlying appeal of every pottery tour is visiting studios and getting a hint of how potters live.

“The potter has to be there,” says Swanson, who has taken on most of the organizational responsibility for the St. Croix tour. “The whole idea is to go and meet the potters, see three hundred of their pots, so it’s really a different experience from going to a gallery and seeing eight or ten pots and having some employee of the gallery explain it to you. There are still lots of people who walk in the door and say, ‘Oh, I’d like to live in the country and make pottery.’ There’s that vicarious thing of how do these people live, how do they do this?”

Oestreich says, “You know, what I like about it is it’s returning to what potters did a thousand years; they sold right from their studio. And I love that. We need galleries, too, though. We need it all, internet, gallery sales, home sales, tours; we need it all to reach the public.”

A Magic Formula

What else makes the tour successful? “Hospitality,” says Swanson. “It’s important to have a good time.” Jacobson adds, “When there are one or two hundred people, it kind of feeds the enthusiasm because other people are there and they’re holding up their pots.”

Here’s another part of the St. Croix tour’s special magic: “It’s a group project,” Swanson says. “We don’t hire a marketing expert; we just do it all ourselves, so people have to really chip in and make it work by contributing their mailing lists and beating the bushes out there and
letting people know . . . that there’s this great national event here in Minnesota.” The event includes potters from all around the nation. The buyers are from all around the country, too. Briscoe started a tradition of posting a map on which visitors could mark where they were from, once tallying 36 states and a few foreign countries. Krousey, who purchased Briscoe’s home and studio, has continued the tradition. Cuellar has estimated that 25 percent of the buyers at his site are from outside of Minnesota.

While there is always a search for new customers, the tour benefits from continuity. As buyers meet the potters, enjoy the atmosphere, and take home their purchases, it becomes habit-forming. Not only do buyers look forward to the festive event, they develop favorites among their purchases, and it comes to seem both boring and unimaginative to choose a dinner plate from a stack of indistinguishable commercially manufactured offerings. Mindful living shapes the personality of handmade pottery, and the St. Croix Valley Pottery Tour has made it a pleasure to buy. And to sell: Swanson says that 99 percent of the potters who have participated say they would like to return. And so would I. The eleven things I bought from nine of the potters barely squeezed into my suitcase and tote bag for the flight home.

Janet Koplos is a coauthor of Makers: A History of American Studio Craft and an honorary fellow of the American Craft Council. Quotations in this article are taken from her most recent book, What Makes a Potter: Functional Pottery in America Today, which includes interviews with four of the St. Croix Valley Pottery Tour hosts, along with 46 other individual potters or teams.

LEARN MORE
Explore ACC’s 2014 oral histories of the St. Croix Valley Pottery Tour—which are both recorded and transcribed—at go.digital.craftcouncil.org/StCroixOralHistories

The 2023 tour will be held May 12–14, 2023.

minnesotapotters.com | @stcroixvalleypotterytour
remembering well

Mourning artists make vessels—whether pottery, glass, or jewelry—that help the bereaved commemorate their loved ones.

BY ELIZABETH FOY LARSEN

LEFT: Widow I Do Now, 2021, glass, 18 x 14 x 14 in., was created by Minhi England while on the Netflix series Blown Away. The piece commemorates the loss of her husband, Jesse, and the life they planned together.
When Minhi England’s husband, Jesse, was terminally ill with peripheral nerve sheath cancer, the couple was forced to have heartbreaking conversations about what Jesse wanted to have happen to his body after he died. Unlike with many couples, their conversation went well beyond whether he wished to be cremated or buried. As glassblowers and the lead artists at Artful Ashes, a Seattle-based company founded in 2012 to make customized memorials of glass and human cremains, the Englands knew that art would imitate life—or, in this case, death.

Jesse passed away in May 2021 at the age of 37. England didn’t ask another glass artist from the Artful Ashes team to create his memorial. She was his partner in love and art and work. This was her task. So she set to work, making good on his instructions to fashion a glass orb with wisps of aqua, blue, and silver dichroic glass to complement a curling white swoosh made from a teaspoon of Jesse’s ashes.

“I was oddly filled with joy, thinking of his big smile, how he so easily connected with strangers,” she remembers of the day she pulled the hot glass from the furnace, layered the colors into a tube shape, and rolled it in Jesse’s ashes. Then she sealed the colored glass and ashes in a layer of molten glass that she twisted and cut into the shape of a globe. “But I was painfully aware of the hole [made by] his absence as I injected his ashes into the glass, the very material that was his life’s work. I’m not sure I’ve ever felt so many vastly opposing emotions within a singular moment.”

Artful Ashes memorials are purposefully small—orbs are three inches across and weigh one pound; customers provide only a tablespoon of cremains, and even less is used in the finished product. (Any cremains that are not used are returned or spread in Puget Sound.) That way, the customer retains the majority of the ashes to do with as they wish, while also having a memorial they can keep close by. England says the chemistry of the ashes “literally brings light and life to the glass.” The company creates approximately 800 memorials a month.

Today, England, who has also created glass sculptures to commemorate her late husband, keeps Jesse’s memorial by her bedside and takes it with her when she travels to places they had dreamed of seeing together. “It’s a gentle reminder that he’s not gone—because the love is still so abundant,” she says.
While there is no single tradition that marks how Americans mourn the passing of their loved ones, it’s a general truth that we often cope with the inevitability of death by denying it is going to happen. That can mean we don’t think about the vessels that will contain the earthly remains of our nearest and dearest until we are standing in a funeral home, staring in shock at a wall of mass-produced coffins and urns. It’s a process that doesn’t allow for the beauty and care and originality that can represent a life. Today, that one-size-fits-all ethos is starting to shift as a new breed of “mourning artists” draw on different craft traditions to help people memorialize their loved ones.

Unlike England, who was already working as a mourning artist when her husband died, Brooklyn-based artist and jeweler Margaret Cross started making mourning jewelry in 2008, after her best friend and former lover passed away suddenly when he was only 25. Cross was 24 and had recently graduated from Pratt Institute, where she had majored in printmaking.

At the funeral, Cross felt the need to touch her friend’s coffin but was always pulled away by well-meaning people who wanted to comfort her. Aching for something to physically connect her to her loss, she made herself a ring with a coffin-shaped garnet. “I just needed something tangible when everything was so out of control,” she says. “Something to hold on to, and keep me present, and make me feel connected to my loved one.”

That ring led to others, until word of her work spread via Instagram. Today she makes up to 20 pieces a month for her Love and Loss collection, including rings and pendants that preserve a small amount of ashes behind hand-cut crystal. She uses 100 percent recycled metals and employs traditional goldsmithing methods, which eschew the use of resin, epoxy, and glue. She also makes fine jewelry using ethically sourced stones, in which she incorporates symbols such as skulls, spider webs, and clasped hands. After finding a pamphlet on Victorian hairwork on eBay, Cross also started working with locks of hair, braiding them and placing them in pendants.

Cross’s customers often tell her that her pieces have helped them in their grieving process. “I don’t take credit for that or anything, but it’s so nice to be able to witness that and to feel really appreciated, which I do in this work.”

The desire to keep loved ones nearby is also behind the success of vitrifedstudio, the Portland, Oregon–based business of
Creating urns that make joyful associations was front of mind for Sarasota, Florida–based ceramist Osa Atoe, who in 2020 responded to the worldwide tragedies of the COVID pandemic by making a series of urns for cremains. “I sell pottery to make a living and do monthly collections,” she says. “But that was not a normal year. So I wanted my work to reflect on all that loss. I think as a society we’re not very good at making space for grief, and I wanted to . . . use creativity and my craft to generate that space.”

Atoe uses red stoneware clay, which she throws on a wheel, to create her vessels. Her surface decorations are highly textural—mostly carvings and stampings—and her color palette sticks mostly to white, aquamarine, and light blues. The results are lively, not at all somber—which is by design.

“My family is Nigerian, and if someone dies and has lived a nice full life, they get a party,” she explains. “It’s not just about grief, it’s about a celebration of their life. [You can] remember someone as a joyful person, a creative person, a beautiful person.”

Atoe’s 2020 collection of 12 urns sold out. But she still makes vessels—including commissions—that can be used as

BELOW: Infant urns by vitrifiedstudio, 2022, porcelain, various sizes.
OPPOSITE: Commemorative jar by Osa Atoe, 2020, red stoneware clay, 10 x 8 x 8 in.
“I think as a society we’re not very good at making space for grief, and I wanted to . . . use creativity and my craft to generate that space.” —Osa Atoe
urns. Unlike the rest of her collections, which typically sell out quickly on a first-come, first-served basis, anything that can be used as a mourning vessel is password protected on her website, so when people reach out to her, they can browse and take their time and not, in her words, "have to speed shop."

Atoe cites Massachusetts-based potter Lucy Fagella as a leader in the artisan urn tradition. Fagella makes not only ceramic urns but also biodegradable paper urns from clay and reused, recycled, and reclaimed papers, which can be buried and degrade naturally. Another well-known artist working in memorials is Paa Joe. Based in Ghana, he makes custom figurative coffins that reflect the lives of the deceased and are sometimes shaped like lions, roosters, and even baguettes.

St. Louis–based artisan blacksmith Gabriel Chaille got his start in memorial art with a commissioned request while he was studying blacksmithing at Hereford College of Arts in Hereford, England. A woman who'd been recently widowed asked the school if anyone would be interested in creating a commemorative trophy in her late husband's honor, which she could then give to the local rugby team. Chaille stepped up and was so moved by the family's reaction to his work that he decided to focus on memorial projects for his undergraduate thesis.

His next project was a pair of memorial urn holders that he created to hold the ashes of his recently deceased uncle, who had battled schizophrenia. He gave one holder to his parents and the other to an aunt and uncle. Made from forged steel, the holders look more like sculptures than vessels, with twisting pieces meant to evoke the chaos of a life bent by mental illness. But there are also symbols of his uncle's unique talents and propensity for creative joy,
including a repurposed welded bicycle chain to symbolize his uncle’s love of biking—he had kitted out his bike with a car stereo system—and vertical pieces that symbolize piano keys. The sculpture, called In Memoriam, 2016, forged steel and porcelain, 24 x 14 x 12 in. OPPOSITE TOP: Blue Hydrangea, 2022, 12 x 8 in., by potter Lucy Fagella, who makes biodegradable urns from cellulose fibers, reclaimed porcelain clay, recycled paper, and soy-based ink. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Ghanaian figurative coffin artist Paa Joe’s Lion Coffin, 2022, wood, enamel oil paint, 35 x 14 x 8 in.

During his research, Chaille has made a series of vessels with lids, inspired by urns, and another commissioned memorial piece, this one a hanging garden that combines forged steel and porcelain planters. “It is something that [the bereaved] can come to regularly to care for. It’s a ritual of remembrance that is about giving life,” he says.

During his research, Chaille learned that the term funeral parlor derives from a time when it was commonplace to have a room in a house where a body was kept before being buried. “People were much more familiar with death,” he says. “And in a lot of ways, I think that’s been taken away. I think that’s part of the grieving process that doesn’t really exist anymore. [My work helps people] find other ways to reconcile with death . . . coming alongside someone who needs something more than what is available currently in the funerary market.”

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.
How this beloved and ancient form has sustained humankind and contained our beliefs about everything from safety to gender roles.

From the earliest stages of human development, the vessel has been integral to our survival and daily sustenance, our grasp of abstract concepts through metaphor and imagination, and our understanding of the secrets of the cosmos.

The vessel offers sensual awareness of form, volume, and weight. But its material qualities are dwarfed by the role the vessel plays in our comprehension of the world. The pleasing roundness of the shape reassures and comforts us in the familiar way that some bodies gestate and nurture life. And the singular act of containment—the vessel’s principal role—prompts thinking about offering and ownership, consumption and care, transportation and traversal.

As a useful form, the vessel is a bowl, a boat, or a physical body—a temporal home for viscera and the curious energies that make us who we are. For humans, this concept of the
vessel provides us with some of the most profound poetry ever written. “I am large, I contain multitudes,” Walt Whitman declared parenthetically in the poem “Song of Myself.”

Certainly, human dependency on the vessel has opened up ways of thinking about our world and its mysteries that provide reason and reassurance as well as creative inspiration.

This elemental form continues to inspire artists, writers, makers, and thinkers. The FIFA World Cup 2022 teams who played in the Lusail Stadium in Qatar found themselves in a structure modeled on a vernacular bowl—a “burnished golden vessel,” in the words of UK-based architecture firm Foster + Partners, that boasts state-of-the-art air conditioning, shade, and natural lighting to host some 80,000 spectators in comfort. Over thousands of years of drawing inspiration from vessels, one would think this well would run dry. Yet we find new ways of cementing the vessel in our collective imagination, crafting tools based on old and new typologies along with mimetic objects that evoke pleasure and ideas rather than perform the services of containing, safekeeping, preserving, or transporting.

A particular ceramic bowl from the predynastic period of ancient Egypt (ca. 3700–3450 BCE) embodies many of these essences. Ample and globular, it stands on its own two humanoid feet and tips itself forward in a generous offering of its contents. Its surface is slipped, pleasingly smooth, and unadorned. Historians are unsure of the exact purpose of this anthropomorphic bowl but have identified similarities between its stance and shape and the Egyptian hieroglyphic for “to bring.” This merger of the vessel with the human body is not a new concept. Creator and nurturer of life, with the ability to move from place to place and to give of itself—the idea was as relevant in prehistory as it is now.

A bowl by Aaron Haba, guilelessly titled Vessel (2014), is also tipped in offering, though it is made of wood rather than clay. At a height of 8 feet and a diameter of nearly 10 feet, it seems to invite the universe to curl up inside. Haba was inspired by these lines, written by the founder of Taoism, Lao-Tzu:

Shape clay into a vessel;
It is the space within that makes it useful.
Cut doors and windows for a room;
It is the holes which make it useful.
Therefore benefit comes from what is there;
Usefulness from what is not there.

Vessel appears to be a humble wooden bowl, but on an astonishing scale. Made from Douglas fir timbers that originally housed a church, Vessel is Haba’s paean to spiritual buildings and monuments. Gazed on from above or from ground level, the object’s size prevents it from being seen in one glance. When we encounter it, we consider the more cosmic attributes of containment; the vessel’s emptiness and its gesture of offering seem sacred.

The acts of creation and sustenance, as they occur in the body, have defined much thinking about gender and female-ness. In ancient civilizations, as constructs of property and ownership developed, divisions were established based on who enjoyed these privileges and who should be designated as “owned.” Ensuring family lineages and securing legacies translated into the need to establish domain over the womb, and thus evolved the patriarchal society. Viewing the female body as a vessel—a subservient container—has dominated constructs of gender and race to the present day.

As such, the vessel provides important territory for interrogating ongoing dynamics of power and possession. In making her coopered vessel works, Alison Croney Moses is in constant engagement with this question. An artist whose roles—as maker, educator, community activist, mother, Black woman—intersect in all of her work, Croney Moses is acutely aware of the sensual nature of her pneumatic containers, which have increasingly taken on the figural qualities of the feminine. In My Belly (2021), a gracefully swollen belly carved and coopered from cedar protrudes into space, balancing on its own weight. The staves that form the volume radiate from the navel, emphasizing its outward growth, yet not quite joining as perfectly as we would like. This tension between the satisfyingly curved surface, sanded to perfection, and its jostled contents illustrates an important concern for the vessel maker: interior versus exterior. Our bodies change shape from the inside, through breath, pregnancy, or metastasizing cells. Sometimes, due to the physical trauma of birth or surgery, the interior parts rearrange, impacting the outer surface of the bodily vessel. This shift—the vessel finding its equilibrium—reflects truths that are otherwise unexposed.
The “choreography of shape and space” that defines the vessel, in the words of ceramic artist Syd Carpenter, informs our relationships with the world. The spaces we inhabit or traverse mediate our sensory engagement with it. Through the vessel’s walls we absorb and digest truths, which settle and mingle with new encounters. The resulting mixture, comprising sense and experience, could be called memory.

In Carpenter’s newest series, Farm Bowls, she restores the stories and memories that have been erased from lands that were owned and cared for by African Americans. The bowls are precariously balanced (many on representations of brains, the vessels of memory) and bear the weight of farm animals, implements, homes, fences, and other tools for tending and cultivating land. The names of the landowners are carefully inscribed on the works. For Carpenter, an artist for whom the vessel provides a rich lexicon of signs and ideas, the bowl is a reclaiming act designed to hold the truths of the past for future stewards who will keep the land fertile and nourished.

The vessel keeps, holds, and remembers but remains transitory. While this is yet another reason for its alignment with the human body, it also reflects the idea of the body’s contents moving between worlds. In video artist Bill Viola’s Going Forth By Day (2002), a man is shown floating away in a small barge while two people on the water’s edge witness his departure. Viola based this five-part work on the Egyptian Book of the Dead; its wordless elegance, dreamlike pace, and layering of mythologies on a contemporary scene remind us—through this symbolic use of the vessel—how informed we are by the ancients and their understanding of universal phenomena.

Jack Larimore’s Sycamore Story (2021) relates a similar theme with poetry and reverence. In it, a boat-like form traverses the protective sheath of sycamore cambium that encircles it. Is it departing or arriving? According to the artist, a vessel is a container for living things; wherever they are on their journey, the living materials, both contained and containing, tell a story that reaches the most primeval part within us all. That part knows what’s going on, even if the concerns of our time have dimmed its acuity.

TOP: Aaron Haba’s room-sized Vessel, 2014, reclaimed church timbers, carbon, beeswax, 8 x 10 x 10 ft. LEFT: Made from cedar wood and milk paint, Alison Croney Moses’s My Belly, 2021, 17 ⅛ x 9 ½ x 13 in., is part of the series My Black Body.
Sometimes there is tension between the built world and the natural world. The depiction of a vessel traversing between these realms reflects the complexity of fears and tensions that accompany us as we live our lives. The vessel brings a sense of safety; encompassed by it, in these re-creations of wombs, we gain confidence to confront the unknown, releasing ourselves to the next world.

“The vessel has entered human consciousness from very early times as a vehicle for important and sacred ideas, often becoming a repository of value, of collective memory and experience,” wrote curator, educator, and potter Christopher Tyler. We invoke its form again and again, in the realms of our imagination as well as our quotidian lives.

In considering the vessel’s contemporary relevance, I’m reminded again of the design of Lusail Stadium. Its beauty and functionality belie the dark lethality that was invested in its construction, during which many workers died. This dichotomy shifts our focus to the most vulnerable in society. Who has access to the protection of the vessel? Who has been sacrificed for it? And how can we draw from the comforting traditions established around the vessel, such as holding and nurturing, to build equity and create space for all people?

The vessel, as both an ancient and modern form, will not let us forget or ignore; it calls to and magnifies our humanity, and we look to future artists, makers, and consumers to answer these questions in time.

Jennifer-Navva Milliken is the executive director and chief curator for the Museum for Art in Wood. She has served as a curator and writer focusing on the intersecting fields of art, craft, and design for museums and organizations in the US and abroad.
What’s in a Vessel?

Five artists describe the construction of their extraordinary vessels and reveal what they hold.

JUAN BARROSO
Honoring the Janitor

Materials: Stoneware clay, bolts, underglaze

Biggest challenge: Getting all the pieces to work together so the mop bucket is functional

Size: 23 x 23 x 14 in.

Honoring the Janitor is made of coil-built stoneware fired to cone 5 in an electric kiln. The coils of the main bucket were scored, slipped together, and the surface smoothed with my finger and then a rubber rib tool. It was a challenge to get the proportions of about 20 different parts accurate enough for them to fit and move together well. I wanted the mop bucket to be functional, all the way down to rotating wheels.

The wheels were wheel-thrown, and the mechanism that squeezes the mop was made with small slabs. Hidden bolts allow the movement between parts. To reflect the overlooked labor of janitors, I hand-painted the image of a janitor on a small corner of the bucket using underglaze and a tiny watercolor brush.

I want to use my work to help humanize the immigrant and honor immigrant labor. This vessel was inspired by the labor of the janitors in schools, whose presence and labor often go unnoticed or unappreciated. Before my mother became a legal resident of the US, she cleaned houses and drove around with a bright pink vinyl sign that read, “Lucy’s House Cleaning Services.” Because I observed a lack of respect for the janitor at school, I was embarrassed by that sign.

Years later, while working the closing shift at Michaels, I was mopping the restrooms as clean as my mom would have left them. I realized then the dignity with which she worked to provide food and a decent education for my sister and me. I also realized that learning to work hard and blend in was a part of the undocumented immigrant experience. At times, it may be a response to the fear of deportation and the hope of more time to pursue the American dream.

The mop bucket holds the story of my family and a reflection of the immigrant experience. My favorite part about this vessel is its ability to start conversations about immigrant labor, conversations that may help break down the line separating people into an us-or-them mentality.

juobarrosoart.com | @juan_barroso_art

Juan Barroso was born in Oklahoma City and grew up in San Miguel Octopan, Guanajuato, Mexico. He received his BFA in art at the University of Oklahoma and his MFA in ceramics from the University of North Texas in Denton. His ceramic work is represented by Companion Gallery in Humboldt, Tennessee. Barroso currently lives and works in Jackson, Tennessee.
KIVA FORD
Tiny pitcher

Materials: Green borosilicate glass
Biggest challenge: Being extra precise so as not to destroy the glass
Size: 1.75 x 1 x 1 in.

Fingers like fine machines twirl molten glass inches from a 5,000-degree flame. Absolute focus is needed to control this capricious and unforgiving material. One wrong move can result in a destroyed piece of glass or a trip to the emergency room.

Gravity, breath, fire, and graphite were the tools needed to shape this tiny, intricate borosilicate glass pitcher.

I began making miniatures when I lived in Jersey City. Friends often said they loved my larger works, which include intricate sculptures, but had no room for them in their small apartments. I was inspired to make works that could exist in any space and still embody the beauty and perfection that I seek in my forms.

Over the years, making miniature vessels has turned into a type of meditation for me. It brings me into the present and allows me to focus on balancing creation and observation. This is because when I make miniatures, I never have a shape in mind until I begin to heat the glass. I react to the glass as it moves and try to keep my mind a blank canvas. The creator uses skill and craft to bring the object to life, while the observer must listen to the material and feel what it wants to do. I find that I do the best work when I am able to achieve this balance.

To create this pitcher, I heated the glass until it became molten and then I shaped it using basic, minimal tools, which can be tricky when working in miniature. I love its handle. It was challenging to get an elegant sweeping handle with flawless seals connected to the pitcher.

In a way, this is the physical manifestation of my ideal vessel. I am a big fan of Plato’s theory of Forms, which says, roughly, that forms live somewhere
transcendent to humankind and creators have to reach into the ether and bring these ideal forms into the physical world.

My formal training as a scientific glassblower and decades of work in the field have given me the precision needed to create such intricate works. By day, I manage a scientific glassblowing shop for a major university and work with scientists to create unique custom glassware for research—from particle detection tubes to optical cells for dark matter research. It is incredibly rewarding as a craftsman to be able to contribute to scientific research.

Scientific glassblowers are trained to make handmade items look like they were machine made. The goal is always for flawless work. I enjoy the never-ending quest for the perfect piece of glass.

kivaford.com | @kivafordglass

Kiva Ford’s passion for glass is anchored by his degree in scientific glassblowing from Salem Community College in New Jersey. He has collaborated with scientists at top universities and research institutions throughout the United States. His sculptures, goblets, pendants, and vessels have been featured by the New York Times, the Corning Museum of Glass, and the Glass Art Society.
I originally designed this amphora pendant in the early 1990s. I had been working on a series of pendants that were wearable objects. This had been my inspiration: to create truly sculptural pieces that were also functional. All of the works had chains within them that could be pulled out by another form that nestled on the top—much like a bottle and its cap. Most of the pieces were vessels of some sort, but not traditional vessel or urn-like forms.

At the time, I was a new mother and deeply sensitive to not only women’s (and my) fertility, but also to how we become vessels ourselves, when carrying a child. Vessels can protect what they hold, as an unborn child is protected by being inside the womb.

When the Plan B Art Project was initiated, with the goal of drawing attention to the state of reproductive rights, I immediately thought of these early pieces and what I might contribute. It was suggested that I use an amphora as a form to work with, as it relates so directly to the message the project seeks to communicate: that women's bodies are their own and we have the right to choose and be safe and healthy in doing so.

The irony of wanting to protect one’s unborn child while at the same time believing in the right to terminate a pregnancy is not lost on me. It’s a poignantly emotional dichotomy that women struggle with.

I love working in metal and have an affinity for it. The parts of this amphora pendant are cast from original metal models I created by hand. The material is oxidized sterling silver with a hand-sanded finish. Connecting the chain to the bottom piece of the urn was the most challenging aspect of the work and had to be done before I assembled and soldered the pieces together.

I felt compelled to incorporate the IUD into my piece—thus, the “T” form that serves as the cap to the amphora. (The original amphora was topped with a pearl connected to the chain.) This is to draw attention to the fact that the use of birth control is also being restricted in the United States. Many women feared that when Roe v. Wade was overturned, the IUD would become illegal, deeming any woman using it a murderer.

◆

didisuydam.com | @didisuydamcontemporary

Didi Suydam received her MFA degree in jewelry/light metals from the Rhode Island School of Design. She has exhibited and sold her work in galleries and shops internationally and has been featured in books and publications including Metalsmith, Metropolis, Vogue, Harper’s Bazaar, and the New York Times.
My Boilermaker series is largely inspired by the voluminous features and impaled surfaces of nkisi nkondi. These power figures, originally from the Congo region in West Africa, were used to affirm oaths and ward off evil. Because of colonialism, these objects made their way into Western consciousness as looted artifacts. This pint-sized figurative vessel, Boilermaker: Tweet, honors my family history as well. My father and uncles worked as boilermakers—tradespeople/welders who build, maintain, and repair boilers. My older brother and several cousins and nephews still do. I am from Pittsburgh, an old steel town, and although the city reinvented itself many times over since its industrial decline in the 1970s, four generations of Bey boilermakers exist in my hometown.

Of course, the physiognomy of the central mask-like face is consistent with West African sculptural conventions, but I also wanted to express the anguish of the ever-toiling and overworked laborer, so I sculpted it roughly from a very coarse clay I acquired years ago from a brickyard in North Carolina. I love that my fingerprints are so visible in the clay.

Each of my sculptures is structured around a central pottery form. Boilermaker: Tweet is built around a single rose vase form I first saw my friend and mentor, David MacDonald, throw during a demonstration in the late 1980s. After throwing the vase using a low-fire red earthenware clay, I flipped it over, added a wheel-thrown coil to the bottom, and then coated the entire piece with white terra sigillata (made from OM4 ball clay). I then impaled the vessel with countless nails and shards of previous works that I found while rummaging in attics, garages, basements, and the homes of relatives.

I often rediscover and repurpose shards and components of earlier works. For example, I originally made the face and feet in 1999–2000. I stored these fragments in a shoebox and kept track of them for nearly two decades before they emerged as integral parts of this series. The porcelain shards incorporated into Boilermaker: Tweet are fragments from Syracuse China, a large manufacturer of hotel and institutional ceramics based in the city where I live. The factory closed in 2009, part of the shift away from manufacturing in the US economy. The shards can be seen as emblematic of this shift, while also speaking to the longevity and domesticity of ceramics.

After impaling this vessel’s leather-hard vase with countless nails and shards, I dried it slowly and then fired it to cone 04. The zinc coating burned off the nails, leaving a black crusty residue. The natural rust of the nails and resulting iron oxide stain on the white matte undersurface is the result of a cold finish. In multiple settings, I sprayed the metal with a solution of hydrogen peroxide, salt, and distilled white vinegar. Eventually it began to rust, and the rusty solution bled into the white vase. It is all in the process.

sharifbeyceramics.com | @sharifceramics

Sharif Bey is a Syracuse, New York–based artist and educator. He studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, Slovakia, and earned his BFA from Slippery Rock University, his MFA from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and his PhD in art education from Penn State University. Bey’s work is represented in museum collections throughout the United States.
HOW I MADE IT

[Image of a ceramic sculpture with nails protruding from it]
Drawn to the traditional moonjar’s modesty, roughness, asymmetry, and beauty of curve, I began exploring this form from a third-person perspective, learning Korean aesthetics for the first time as a stranger—I was born in Korea and spent many years living abroad as a modern nomad—and through the eyes of a textile artist.

I define Korean aesthetics as modesty, the beauty of curve, pragmatism (efficiency), and harmony with nature, all of which are prevalent in Korean traditional culture—from music to fashion to architecture. Due to the flourishing of scholarly culture and Confucianism in the 17th-century Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), Koreans valued modesty as a supreme virtue. This idea of modesty not only influenced the language and culture, but also inspired the fashion of making. Contrary to Europe during the Renaissance, which boasted of its wealth with splendid architecture and fashion, the display of wealth in Korea was taboo. Artisans therefore avoided dazzling decoration, placing a high value on maximizing the utilization of material property.

While my Woven Moonjar employs the traditional moonjar’s hue and form, deriving from the virtue of modesty and the beauty of curve, what distinguishes my work from others of its kind is its use of the material’s inherent qualities. The woven moonjar utilizes various textile-based materials and construction techniques, while at the same time paying homage to traditional ceramic moonjar construction methods. Leather strips, and in some cases silver wires, were woven into a lightweight and portable object through the process of braiding, coiling, and knitting. Unlike working with clay, which adheres to itself, supporting the weight of the woven pieces while maintaining a curved form presented a challenge during the crafting process.

This idea of transportability emerged from my countless experiences transporting weighty artworks and delicate pottery from continent to continent as a modern nomad.

*aliceinweaveland.com | @studio_alice*

Hyunsoo Alice Kim is a multidisciplinary artist, researcher, and educator based in New York and Seoul. Her art and research have been invited to numerous international exhibitions and conferences. Kim holds a BFA in textiles from Rhode Island School of Design and an MS in textiles from Philadelphia University. She is a doctoral candidate and adjunct instructor at Columbia University.
Craft Adventures

*On journeys in search of craft, knowledge meets serendipity.*

**Craft and travel go together.** There’s a long history of artists hitting the road in search of a “master” from whom to learn the secrets of a given craft. Today Instagram and other digital media are increasingly bringing faraway craftworks and secrets home to us. But whether you’re a maker or not, nothing beats traveling to a craft hotspot, near home or far away, to learn and be inspired.

**Adventures Near Home**
You don’t have to travel far to discover great craft. I like to add it to the journeys around our home base in Minnesota that I take with my wife, the independent museum professional Laurie Phillips. These jaunts take two forms. A Blind Date is a short trip that Laurie plans without telling me where we’re headed. I
get into her car and keep my eyes closed till we arrive in some corner of Saint Paul, Minneapolis, or a suburb. For longer jaunts that Laurie calls COVID Road Trips, during which my eyes are open, we head farther out into our state and region.

On a 2019 Blind Date, I opened my eyes to find myself in the University of Minnesota’s Weisman Art Museum, in front of a fascinating exhibit of pottery in the early-20th-century Japanese *mingei* (“art of the people”) tradition. It included work by the late U of M ceramics professor Warren MacKenzie, the first American disciple of English *mingei* pioneer Bernard Leach, and three potters taught by MacKenzie. Laurie has also brought me to Minneapolis’s nationally known Northern Clay Center and to Mosaic on a Stick, a cheerful learning center for mosaicists in Saint Paul.

A 2021 COVID Road Trip took us to Duluth and Lake Superior Art Glass, a hot shop and gallery in the city’s Canal Park arts-and-entertainment district, for my first chance to see gathering and blowing at a professional level. Then it was
An exhibition . . . introduced me to the profound work of Texas artist Chesley Antoinette: a wealth of colorful head wraps, or *tignons*, inspired by an 18th-century law that required Creole women of color in New Orleans to cover their hair.
Guided Travel to Meet Artists

To go deeper into craft, you may need expert help. There is a great deal of it to be had in one of the most ambitious programs of craft-related travel, run by the Washington, DC–based James Renwick Alliance. Its journeys include visits to galleries and private collections, and spending time with artists.

Elizabeth Doyle of Bethesda, Maryland, is an enthusiastic Renwick traveler and craft collector. A member of the Alliance for a decade, she’s been on many trips and visited well-known craft regions like upstate New York and Asheville, North Carolina. “I’ve also gone with Renwick to places I probably never would have visited otherwise,” she says, “like Tulsa or Tucson or Norfolk, Virginia. And you
“You can explore multiple layers of the works, and multiple layers of the places where the artists work, on trips like these.”

—Elizabeth Doyle

find great, passionate artists and collectors no matter where you go.”

The Renwick’s arrangements mean that the visitor groups can meet and spend time with major, even iconic, artists. On a visit to the Rochester, New York, area, for example, Doyle met the famed sculptor and furniture maker Wendell Castle, and at Penland in North Carolina she encountered Hoss Haley, from whom she bought a big steel sculpture; the artist eventually installed it in her yard. (“I love this piece so much that I can never move now,” says Doyle with a laugh. “It won’t fit in a townhouse.”)

And then there were the out-of-the-way experiences. After the Tulsa visit, Doyle’s group took what turned out to be a full day’s side trip to the hamlet of Huntsville, Arkansas. That’s the home of Leon Niehues, who began learning the Ozark splint-knife method of basketmaking from traditional masters at age 15 and has been creating distinguished basketry and basketry-based sculpture for more than 55 years. “We went to his small studio in the back of his house,” Doyle says. “The work was amazing—very traditional and very modern at the same time. It was fascinating to meet someone who has committed himself to one practice, in one place, his whole life long.”

Doyle has also covered familiar urban ground on Renwick trips, but craft made a difference. “When I went to cities that I’ve lived in, like New York, Boston, and Philadelphia,” she says, “seeing them through craft meant I experienced them in a way that I never did when I was a resident. You can explore multiple layers of the works, and multiple layers of the places where the artists work, on trips like these.”

—Elizabeth Doyle
International Craft Workshops

You can make these kinds of craft explorations all over the world. One nation that’s legendary for craft is, of course, Japan. Museums in Tokyo and other huge cities are full of exquisite works. But exploring living craft traditions means getting out into smaller places where traditional making continues, sometimes against the odds. For this kind of travel, you need the help of someone like Koshiki Yonemura Smith.

Born and raised in Japan, Yonemura Smith ran one of my favorite Saint Paul restaurants, Tanpopo. A craft devotee all her life—she and her husband, Benjamin Smith, created much of the dishware for the eatery—she decided to branch out into culinary and craft travel after selling the restaurant in 2017. Tanpopo Journeys was born. Since 2018 the couple has organized food-related trips and small craft sojourns.

In 2019 Tanpopo Journeys partnered with Minneapolis’s Textile Center to offer a 13-person, fabric-focused trip. Drawing on connections in Japan, including Yonemura Smith’s brother Kai, a woodworking artist, she set up an itinerary that began in Tokyo, then moved on to a rural silk mill, the Koiwai silk-weaving studio just outside of the small, history-rich city of Ueda, and a pottery workshop in Kanazawa. “Another place we visited in Kanazawa,” Yonemura Smith says, “was a 500-year-old needle-making establishment that began by making fishhooks. The owner, who was 93, showed us some of the beautiful jewelry that the workshop also produces.”

After a pandemic hiatus, Tanpopo Journeys has kicked off more trips. One takes participants to northern Japan to explore the sashiko needlework tradition, while another explores the textiles and crafts of Kyushu. An expanded version of the 2019 textile trip, called Textiles and Traditional Arts of Japan, includes a saori weaving workshop, a roketsu (wax-resist indigo dyeing) workshop, and a class in gold leaf. It’s being offered in the fall of 2023.

“As much as possible, these trips are hands-on,” Yonemura Smith says. “Looking is fine, but I want my groups to experience the craft, talk to people, get their hands dirty, and use all their senses.”

* tanpopojourneys.com
Textile tour participant Charlotte applies wax using a traditional fude brush during a hands-on roketsu (wax-resist indigo dyeing) workshop in Kyoto, Japan, 2019.

Photo by Koshiki Smith from Taoppo Journeys.
A Dream Trip

With a little ingenuity, you can customize a craft trip too. Saint Paul artist Paige Tighe had long dreamed of learning saori weaving in its homeland. She contacted another Japanese-born craft expert in the Twin Cities, Chiaki O’Brien, who runs workshops in saori and Bengala mud dyeing. In the fall of 2018, Tighe joined 11 others on a craft tour run by O’Brien that went to Japan’s third-largest city, Osaka, and to Okayama, farther west on the country’s Inland Sea. But she also eventually split off from the group and had her own five-day saori adventure.

“We started out in this Bengala dye workshop in a suburb of Osaka, a place we never would have even noticed without Chiaki’s connection to it,” says Tighe.

The group’s next stop was a small saori weaving workshop and store where O’Brien also had connections, located across the street from a school for kids with special needs. Paige learned that saori, a very free, improvisational style of weaving, is used in Japan to help people with intellectual and physical disabilities express themselves. Paige got a chance to try saori herself when the group visited Saori no Mori (“Saori Forest”), a weaving center south of Osaka proper.

Then it was on to Okayama and the Arts and Crafts Village. “This was an amazing place,” says Tighe, “with a weaving workshop, a yoga room, and these huge pizza ovens. I did nothing but indigo dyeing there, and it was fantastic.”

The group then went to Kyoto for sightseeing. That’s when Tighe went off on her own for a temple stay, then back to Saori no Mori on her own for a full five days of weaving. “I was pretty tired by then and ready to go home,” she says, “so at first I struggled. I told myself I needed to make a lot of pieces to make the trip worthwhile. But Saori no Mori is peaceful and secluded, and I finally just let go and had a lovely time.”

---

Whether you’re planning a simple craft outing close to home or a trip of a lifetime far away, remember that a good craft journey is a mixture of preparation and serendipity. It’s good to have a source of knowledge, whether that’s a museum, a knowledgeable guide, or a program set up for your support. But you also need to be willing to be open, to improvise and discover.

In other words, it’s a little like making craft itself.

Jon Spayde is a writer and editor who lives in Saint Paul, Minnesota, with his wife and three black cats. He writes regularly for American Craft.
The Making of June

The story behind a 26-foot open lobster boat and how it was built.

Lisa Dingle didn’t grow up around watercraft. “We were not boaters, we did not boat,” she says. Still, she was drawn to wooden boats. After she and her husband, John, bought their home in Southport, Maine, in 2006, she began researching them in earnest. It took 10 years to convince John, who was concerned about the upkeep, that they should get one. They decided theirs should be a new boat, custom-made.

“I’d long had Doug Alvord’s image showing the evolution of the Maine lobster boats on my computer,” Dingle says. “It shows how the hulls of the lobster boats have changed over time, from about 1860 to 1960. I was absolutely enamored with the hulls and their lines. I’d spend hours lost in researching torpedo hulls, reverse transoms, totally geeking out. The art of it . . . oh, holy cow.”

After learning that friends had commissioned a boat from The Apprenticeshop in Rockland, Maine, the Dingles visited the school. “Walking into The Apprenticeshop is like walking into a wooden boatbuilding paradise,” says Dingle. “The smells, the sounds . . . the creativity and craftsmanship are evident almost everywhere you turn.”

The couple described to lead instructor Kevin Carney the type of boat they were looking for. They mentioned Lisa’s love of lobster boats and how they both admired early 1900s Hampton-style versions. Eventually, says Dingle, “Kevin got this look in his eye. He excused himself, and when he arrived back at the bench, he unrolled the design for the Cliffy.” In 2002 Dynamite Payson commissioned plans for a lobster boat based on the lines of the Luella B, an iconic boat used by the Snow family in their lobstering business on Metinic Island in the 1940s. The Luella B was designed and built by Clifford Winchenbach of Waldoboro, Maine, after whom the Cliffy model is named.

“I was gobsmacked,” says Dingle. “I said, That’s my boat!” So the Dingles commissioned this open lobster boat from The Apprenticeshop, which offers courses in traditional wooden boatbuilding and seamanship. In their nine-month and two-year apprenticeships, students build commissioned boats like this one.

“The idea of supporting a nonprofit, where students are learning these incredible skills from master boatbuilders, was such a bonus,” says Dingle. As was being able to follow the boat’s progress “from the final design and lofting to the acquisition of the raw materials, the milling of lumber, and the soaking of frames directly in the salt water of Rockland Harbor.” The Dingles were also able to watch the bronze fittings and the rings for the sail being cast.

People come from across the country—and around the world—to learn these skills at The Apprenticeshop. “It is possible physically to build a boat by yourself, whether that’s a big boat or a little boat, and people do it,” says Nina Noah, who until recently was the school’s director of student affairs and outreach, and who describes in the following pages some of the craft skills used to make the Dingles’ boat. “But the shop’s intentional approach is building together.”

In June 2022 the boat was launched. The Dingles named it June and filled it with friends and family. “We were out and about on June as often as possible this past year, exploring the local waters as we learned to trust her—and ourselves—to get us back home safely. The boat is, for sure, absolutely beautiful. But she is also as solid as her predecessor, the Luella B.”

apprenticeshop.org | @theapprenticeshop

Karen Olson is editor in chief of American Craft.
TOP: With lines based on a boat named Luella B, these plans for the Cliffy were drawn up by Bob Lane in 2002. The Apprenticeshop used them to build a boat for Lisa and John Dingle. MIDDLE: After apprentices finished building the boat, they spent a full day using rollers, pry bars, come-alongs, ropes, block and tackle, and jacks to position it at the exit of the building so a truck could pull it out and launch it. “Moving such a large object is an education that people don’t get in a lot of places,” says Isabella Feracci, executive director of The Apprenticeshop. BOTTOM: June was launched in Rockland, Maine, in June 2022.
Students at The Apprenticeshop built *June* using plans for a wooden lobster boat model called the Cliffy. Here you’ll learn about the materials they used and skills they developed, with photos of the process.

(*Lofting and Molds:* The first step in building a boat like *June* is to draw the plans at full scale, a process called lofting. This allows the builder to create patterns for components of the backbone, like the stem and transom, and create the body sections or molds the hull is built around.)

(*Backbone:* The backbone provides vital and mostly hidden structure and rigidity to the hull. Here, builders used lofting to work out how the backbone would be assembled, especially to determine how the vertical components like the stem, sternpost, and transom would transition to horizontal pieces like the keel and keelson. To fasten the pieces of the backbone together, apprentices fashioned L-shaped bolts and angle brackets out of silicon bronze, a corrosion-resistant alloy.)

(*Deck:* In addition to its aesthetic value, the deck adds to the rigidity and stability of the boat. The deck is laid using strips of pine that are milled with a small seam to allow for a strand of caulking cotton to be inserted into the bottom of the groove. The seam is primed and then covered with a flexible polysulfide caulking. Both the cotton and the polysulfide ensure the deck remains watertight even when the wooden strips swell and shrink as they get wet and dry again.)

(*Framing:* Once the backbone and molds were in place, the builders constructed a temporary “cage” mimicking the shape of the hull. Then they boiled white oak frames, milled and soaked in seawater for weeks beforehand, and coaxed them into position. To retain the shape of the hull over time, the frames were clamped in place to cool off. Then they were faired before the boat was planked, to ensure they created a pleasing, continuous curve.)

*Photos by Erin Tokarz.*
**Planking:** Traditional wooden boats tend to be planked in one of two styles: carvel or lapstrake. *June,* a Cluffy, is planked in the carvel style, meaning that planks were laid edge to edge rather than overlapping. They were patterned using a technique called spiling, fastened to the frames in sections, and then joined with scarfs to span the full length of the hull.

**Sail:** A small riding sail is used in traditional lobster boats to help them stay pointed into the wind while fishermen launch and haul traps. *For June,* apprentices made the mast, boom, and sticks by gluing up large boards into a long shape, then faceting it until it was perfectly round. The sail, made of Dacron sailcloth, was cut by hand and stitched along the edges with a sewing machine. Grommets were set by hand along three sides of the sail (luff, head, and foot) so that a line can be woven through to hold the sail to the spars.

**Wood:** *June* was constructed almost entirely of wood commonly found in the Northeast. The structural members of the boat are made of white oak, a dense, rot-resistant hardwood. The planking is made from lightweight eastern white cedar, helping keep the overall weight of the project down. The deck and some of the interior elements are made of white pine, another local wood common in workboats of the area.

**Rudder and More:** The boat's rudder and fuel tanks were made outside The Apprenticeshop, but when a bearing on the rudder had to be adjusted it was modified in-house. Apprentices installed those elements along with many others, including the boat's electronic wiring, transducer, diesel engine, and exhaust system.
Celebrating Five Years!

A supportive woodshop and educational space created by and for women and nonbinary craftspeople. Striving for equity in craft. Redefining workshop culture.

To support WOO or sign up for in-person and virtual workshops visit www.aworkshopofourown.com

@aworkshopofourown

Baltimore, MD
DENISE BETESH
denisebetesh.com
db@denisebetesh.com

ALEX OLSON
alexolsonarts.com
alex@alexolsonarts.com

HRATCH BABIKIAN
hratchbabikian.com
hratchbabikian@gmail.com
SARAH GRAHAM METALSMITHING
sarahgraham.com
sarah@sarahgraham.com

MARTHA COLLINS
studiomarthacollins.com
martha@studiomarthacollins.com

RONA FISHER JEWELRY
ronafisher.com
info@ronafisher.com
MEGAN CLARK JEWELRY
meganclarkjewelry.com
megan@meganclarkjewelry.com

SUZY OGAWA
suzyeogawa.com
suzye@suzyeogawa.com

MICHAEEL CHILDS – ARTISTRY IN WOOD
michaelchilds.com
michael_v_childs@yahoo.com  (415) 828-9663

JENEBA KOROMA
limbagal.com
info@limbagal.com

MARK DEL GUIDICE
markedwood.com
heymark17@gmail.com

WENDY ELLERTSON
ellertson.com
wendyellertson@gmail.com
SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

BETH deVITRY
devitrystyles.com
deVitrydesigns@gmail.com

REGINA DESIGN HANDWOVEN
reginadesign.com
regina@reginadesign.com

ISABELLE GOUGENHEIM DESIGNS
isabellegougenheimd.com
info@isabellegougenheimd.com

ELIZABETH FRANK
elizabethfrank.com
elizabethfrankart@gmail.com

SANDRA TEEPEN
sandieslabel.com
sandyteepen@gmail.com (404) 874-1421

MALACHITE
malachiteleather.com
malachiteleather@gmail.com
STONE AND DOVE HARDWOOD LIGHTING
stoneanddove.com
dan@stoneanddove.com

JACOB ROGERS ART
jacobrogersart.com
jacobrogers@comcast.net

ILENE SCHWARTZ
IleneSchwartzJewelry.com
i@ileneschwartzjewelry.com

TERESA AUDET
teresaudet.com
teresaudet@gmail.com

OWL FURNITURE, A WING OF GEOFREY WARNER STUDIO
owlfurniture.com
info@owlfurniture.com (207) 367-6555

PAMELA ZHANG
pamelazhang.store
pam@pamelazhang.com
Reach our audience of over 80,000 engaged craft enthusiasts and artists.

Ads are available within the pages of this award-winning print magazine, in our special sections, in our targeted e-newsletters, and through our new digital opportunities.

Share your brand with audiences that are:

- **Highly engaged:** 40,000+ opted-in email readers
- **Affluent:** 50% of our print readers are in the top 20th percentile for expendable income
- **Craft-oriented:** professional artists, appreciators, collectors, students, and educators

**To reserve your space, contact**

jsmith@craftcouncil.org
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.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>City, State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gary J. Smith, Chair</td>
<td>San Francisco, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Pollard, Vice Chair</td>
<td>Atlanta, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn Zapf, Treasurer</td>
<td>Asheville, North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriett Green, Secretary</td>
<td>Columbia, South Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg Bullard</td>
<td>Seattle, Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl Dick</td>
<td>Chicago, Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel K. Garceau</td>
<td>Palmetto, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel Gómez-ibáñez</td>
<td>Weston, Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preeti Gopinath</td>
<td>Astoria, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Hofstede</td>
<td>Minneapolis, Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie King Hammond, PhD</td>
<td>Baltimore, Maryland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Loeser</td>
<td>Madison, Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph P. Logan</td>
<td>Winston-Salem, North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Lynch</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Owen McDonnell</td>
<td>Charlotte, North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Myers</td>
<td>Baltimore, Maryland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce W. Pepich</td>
<td>Racine, Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Rustad</td>
<td>St. Paul, Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristin Mitsu Shiga</td>
<td>Kealakekua, Hawai‘i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucille L. Tenazas</td>
<td>Beacon, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodie Wisebram</td>
<td>Atlanta, Georgia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIFE TRUSTEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>City, State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lelani Lattin Duke</td>
<td>Pacific Palisades, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoney Lamar</td>
<td>Saluda, North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlin Miller</td>
<td>Reading, Pennsylvania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara S. Morgan</td>
<td>Houston, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Turner</td>
<td>Kalamazoo, Michigan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Waldman</td>
<td>San Francisco, California</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STAFF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Specht</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy Hawkins</td>
<td>Associate Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz Anderson</td>
<td>Assistant Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenna Brace</td>
<td>Manager of Events and Board Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristine Goldy</td>
<td>Director of Marketplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Goodrich</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn Huber</td>
<td>Member and Customer Service Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Kollar</td>
<td>Development Writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracy Lamparty</td>
<td>Director of Finance and Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madie Ley</td>
<td>Data Systems and Support Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Messerich</td>
<td>Programs Manager, Legacy and Editorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Olson</td>
<td>Editor in Chief, American Craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasey Payette</td>
<td>Marketing Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwynne Rukenbrod Smith</td>
<td>Senior Director of Programs and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanne Smith</td>
<td>Advertising Sales Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessie Stepak</td>
<td>Marketplace Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Tolly</td>
<td>Marketing and Communications Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Vogel</td>
<td>Senior Editor, American Craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shivaun Watchorn</td>
<td>Assistant Editor, American Craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Wieland</td>
<td>Publisher, American Craft / Director of Membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Yarish</td>
<td>Online Craft Marketplace Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SPECIAL THANKS TO THE DONORS AND FOUNDATIONS GIVING $5,000 OR MORE ANNUALLY

Ronald and Anne Abramson
Anonymous
The Bresler Foundation, Inc.
Chuck and Andrea Duddington
Carl and Jan Fisher
Harlan Boss Foundation for the Arts
Katherine Harris and Tom Keyser
The Head Family Foundation
Charlotte and Raul Herrera
Institute of Museum and Library Services
Jack Lenor Larsen Revocable Trust
The John and Ruth Huss Fund of the Saint Paul Foundation
Joseph P. Logan
Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation
Jean McLaughlin and Tom Spleth
Phyllis and Joseph Meltzer
Marlin and Regina Miller
Minnesota State Arts Board
Sara and Bill Morgan
Alexandra Moses
National Endowment for the Arts
Danuta Nitecki
Lynn Pollard
Richard Raisler
Ruth Foundation for the Arts
Saint Paul Cultural STAR Program
Kay Savik and Joe Tashjian
Gary J. Smith and Jamienne Studley
Andrea Specht
Barbara Waldman
Windgate Charitable Foundation
Patricia A. Young

*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 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 December 23, 2021, and December 22, 2022.

INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF CRAFT

Did you know that there are many ways to ensure a bright tomorrow for craft and craft artists? The American Craft Council accepts retirement assets, as well as planned and estate gifts to our general operating fund or the Friends of the ACC Library & Archives.

All planned gift donors will be welcomed into the Aileen Osborn Webb Legacy Circle with the knowledge that their legacy will live on in the work that our visionary founder started.

A list of individuals who have included ACC in their estate plans can be found in our Year in Review. Read this report and learn more about supporting ACC through a planned gift at craftcouncil.org/Support.

Discover New Artists Year-Round at directory.craftcouncil.org

Browse profiles of over 250 ACC-endorsed artists in our American Craft Made Online Artists Directory! Get an introduction to the artists, learn the story of how their work is made, and connect with them directly to support the handmade economy. You’ll also be able to buy artists’ work right from the Directory throughout the year during our online pop-up marketplace events.

Don’t Miss Our Next Forum Conversation

Tying into the themes of each of our magazine issues, our quarterly American Craft Forums bring our community together to explore new ways of thinking about craft. Sign up for an upcoming session and view past recordings at craftcouncil.org/Forums.
Shop, support, and celebrate the handcrafted work of more than 350 artists.

Reserve your tickets now at craftcouncil.org/Baltimore
innerSpirit Rattles
Gentle sounds help uplift mood and calm anxiety. Native Americans used rattles to bestow blessings upon their crops. Use your innerSpirit Rattle to help rattle some rain into your life, some rain out of your life, to rattle your worries away, or just to keep your papers from blowing astray. (Raku rattle comes boxed with story card.)

Find retailers near you:
jdavisstudio.com

Wayne Art Center—Call for Entries
Craft Forms 2023: 28th International Juried Exhibition of Contemporary Fine Craft
December 1, 2023 – January 20, 2024
Entry Period: March 13 – September 11
Awards: $10,000  |  Entry Fee: $45
www.craftforms.org

Peters Valley School of Craft
Learn with Us!
- Immersive Workshops
- Artist Residencies
- Exhibition Gallery
- Craft Retail
- Travel Program
Great instructors coming this summer! Visit petervalley.org for more information.

Interest in advertising?
Learn more at craftcouncil.org/Advertising or contact Joanne Smith at jsmith@craftcouncil.org

Travel MOROCCO in a Creative Way!
JEWELLERY TOUR: 29 April–13 May 2023
Cast silver in the Sahara!
TEXTILES TOUR: 17–31 May 2023
Weaving, embroidery, and more...
https://amazighculturaltours.com
info@amazighculturaltours.com

Asparagus Valley Pottery Trail
April 28–30, 2023
Visit 26 potters at 8 studios in western Massachusetts for 19th annual studio tour and sale. Online opening April 28, noon ET. apotterytrail.com

Creations Gallery
Where you find:
- Ceramic fish by Alan and Rosemary Bennett
- Kokeshi dolls by Jacob and Lisa Hodsdon
- Metal sculpture by Fred Conlon
- Swedish door harps by Todd Preimsberg
- Jewelry by Lisa and Scott Cylinder
- Wood reliefs by Jerry Krider

And more plus Free Shipping!
creationsgallery.com

Florida Vibe ceramic tile wall art by Kevin Ritter and John Rymer
Spirals Take You Somewhere. A complex and elegant vessel-inspired sculpture, Nautilus, 2006, is made from shimmering micaceous clay. Built from a single coil, the piece is hollow in its center and exhibits the singular style of its maker, the late Diné artist Christine Nofchissey McHorse.

Born in Arizona, McHorse learned to make ceramics in the Pueblo tradition from her husband’s grandmother. At age 50, however, she ceased making traditional painted vessels and moved toward sculpture, where she found her own artistic voice. She also started exploring the fundamentals of structure, seeing, as she once told an interviewer, “how far I can push the shape or how much extension I can get without losing the strength of the clay.” The result was unadorned, satiny black forms that boggle the mind, such as Nautilus, which was inspired by a spiral shell in an Edward Weston photograph.

"Spirals, to me, take you somewhere," said the visionary ceramist, who died from complications of COVID in 2021 at the age of 72. "They’re like vortexes, they’re like tornados; they’re a force within themselves." We are grateful for the artists who, like McHorse, take us somewhere and share with us such beauty. And we mourn the many creative people we’ve lost during this pandemic. —The Editors
CONTEMPORARY CRAFT

Specimen C and Specimen L
by Jon Clark
at Gravers Lane Gallery.
2002.
Glass.
Both 18 in x 8 in. diameter.

Cherry
by Krista Grecco,
for Solo Show: Wander
at Signature, March II.
Hand-built porcelain.
13 x 6 x 7 in.

Animal Brothers Mask
by John Gumaelius
at White Bird Gallery.
Reclaimed old-growth western red cedar, feathers.
28 x 18 x 5 in.

Spirit Boat
by Erica Spitzer Rasmussen
at The Grand Hand Gallery.
Paper.
3.5 x 14 x 3 in.

Cherry
by Krista Grecco,
for Solo Show: Wander
at Signature, March II.
Hand-built porcelain.
13 x 6 x 7 in.

Animal Brothers Mask
by John Gumaelius
at White Bird Gallery.
Reclaimed old-growth western red cedar, feathers.
28 x 18 x 5 in.

Spirit Boat
by Erica Spitzer Rasmussen
at The Grand Hand Gallery.
Paper.
3.5 x 14 x 3 in.

Gravers Lane Gallery
8405 Germantown Ave., Phila., PA 19118
GLG@1213 Walnut St., Phila., PA 19107
(215) 247-1603
graverslanegallery.com

The Grand Hand Gallery
619 Grand Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55102
(651) 312-1122
thegrandhand.com

Signature
690 Miami Circle NE, #125
Atlanta, GA 30324-3001
(404) 237-4426
thesignatureshop.com

White Bird Gallery
251 N. Hemlock St.
Cannon Beach, OR 97110
(503) 436-2681
whitebirdgallery.com
inspiration awaits

artful home
art & apparel for your extraordinary life

Make your home a serene oasis with exquisite work by America’s foremost artists. Find pieces that speak to you at artfulhome.com