CLEARLY Collaborative

Duncan McClellan, Master of Glass meets Masters of Craft

January 27 - March 11, 2023

Florida CraftArt presents an exhibition of original glass and multi-media sculptures created through an exceptional collaboration between nine fine craft master artists and glass master Duncan McClellan, founder of DMG School Project and Duncan McClellan Gallery.

CERAMICS
William Kidd
Charlie Parker
Sue Shapiro

JEWELRY
Pamela Fox

PAPER
Lucrezia Bieler

METAL
Paul Eppling
Dominice Gilbert

MIXED MEDIA
Joyce Curvin
Nneka Jones

WOOD
John Mascoll

CURATOR
David Ramsey

Florida CraftArt
501 Central Ave. St. Petersburg, FL (727) 821-7391
FloridaCraftArt.org

Sponsored by:
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AUCTION JANUARY 25

CONTACT
Tim Andreadis
267.414.1215
design@freemansauction.com

IMAGE: Brian Shumway
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+  

**STATE OF CRAFT**

**Craft and Its Writing as Collectivized Outsider**
   L AUTUMN GNADINGER
   Craft has the potential to revolutionize society and rebuild the world.

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**ON THE COVER:** Daniel Michalik’s Scrap Chair, 2021, recycled cork, bleached American white oak, 30 x 20 x 24 in. page 30. Photo by Daniel Michalik.

**THIS PAGE:** This light sculpture in carved mahogany and gypsum by Reynold Rodriguez is called Cabezón, which can mean “stubborn” or “big-headed.” page 41.
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Welcome Home. The handcrafted comfort of Ido Yashimoto’s living room.

Inhabit. I was once fortunate enough to spend a summer building a log cabin with my family. With the help of skilled tradespeople, my parents, brother, sister, and I raised this structure in northern Minnesota and provisioned it with handmade items, such as rugs, lamps, kitchen towels, birdhouses, and a beloved ceramic frog, bought in small towns nearby.

My family no longer has this cabin, where we loved to play board games and sit by the campfire. Yet I still think of it as one of the most important dwelling places of my soul. It was a space filled with tangible expressions of the vision and labor of my family and of people nearby, a space we inhabited together.

As we head into winter—a time when many move indoors, close to the objects we keep and the people we love—American Craft takes an expansive look at the theme inhabit. In these pages you’ll find the work of furniture and household object makers whose designs and materials make homes more inviting. That includes Daniel Michalik (page 30), whose cork and wood chair graces the cover. You’ll discover hotels where you can experience craft (page 22). And you’ll learn about furniture makers and other artists who are furnishing new tiny homes for those experiencing housing insecurity (page 60).

Essays explore what living with objects over time taught a writer about being human (page 46), why an artist and architect says it’s important to fully inhabit her body and mind in order to create (page 62), and how craft has the capacity to rebuild the world (page 56).

In my mind, to inhabit is to expand into and feel held by a space. It involves being present and feeling accepted. I hope everyone reading this has experienced that feeling at some point in their lives.

I’m also delighted to let you know about two talented editors who have joined the staff of American Craft: Senior Editor Jennifer Vogel and Assistant Editor Shivaun Watchorn. Together, we’re working hard to bring you meaningful stories about powerful craft.

Karen

KAREN OLSON / Editor in Chief

P.S. For a look inside the homes of wonderful craft artists, I encourage you to watch the upcoming “Home” episode of Craft in America. It streams on craftinamerica.org and pbs.org/craftinamerica in November 2022 and premieres on local PBS stations on December 16.

Visit craftcouncil.org/Blog for more stories about American craft.
FINE ART — LAYERED AND STITCHED

Collect contemporary art quilts
WWW.SAQA.COM/ACC

Explore | Join | Collect
CONTRIBUTORS

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

Akiko Busch is the author of many books, including Everything Else Is Bric-a-Brac, Geography of Home, and The Uncommon Life of Common Objects. A contributing editor at Metropolis for 20 years, Busch writes here about what living with handcrafted objects over time has taught her about humanity. page 46

Lena Crown, who lives in Washington, DC, has published work in Folklife Magazine, The Millions, Guernica, Gulf Coast, and more. For this issue she profiles artist Karen Collins, whose dioramas illustrate Black history. The article was coproduced by American Craft and the Smithsonian’s African American Craft Initiative. page 46

A New York City–based journalist originally from Uruguay, Paola Singer writes about Puerto Rican furniture designer Reynold Rodriguez. “I was really surprised by the lyricism of Reynold’s pieces,” she says. “Some of them really seem to want to speak to you, and I think that’s what he hoped to achieve all along.” page 41

Sculptor, multimedia artist, and architect Adejoke Tugbiyele explores queerness and Yoruba spirituality in her work. In an essay on what inspires her in the studio, Tugbiyele shares details about her history, influences, and preferred materials, including palm spines and a Dutch wax family cloth. page 62

Artist, writer, and founder of Ruckus Journal, L Autumn Gnadinger challenges our understanding of craft and its cultural role. Gnadinger’s essay detailing craft’s potential to rebuild the world, and challenging the way craft is written about, was a finalist for the Lois Moran Award for Craft Writing and is reprinted here. page 57

A New York City–based journalist originally from Uruguay, Lena Crown, who lives in Washington, DC, has published work in Folklife Magazine, The Millions, Guernica, Gulf Coast, and more. For this issue she profiles artist Karen Collins, whose dioramas illustrate Black history. The article was coproduced by American Craft and the Smithsonian’s African American Craft Initiative. page 46

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Charming Chevron by Christa Watson
Letters from Readers

On Fire for Kilns
This was by far the most engaging and beautifully photographed magazine I think you have ever done. Congratulations. The piece on community building and kiln sharing (“Kilns That Build Community”) was excellent and thought provoking. It was also well written. Please continue in this direction!
—Martha Farish, Eastsound, Washington

I loved this current issue of American Craft. The story about what takes place during a wood-firing was so accurate. It really captured the community aspect of the task, which is both exhausting and exhilarating. I also really enjoyed learning more about the craftspeople who received a variety of awards (“The 2022 American Craft Council Awards”). Some I was familiar with, or at least knew their work, but some were all new to me. What an expansion of my knowledge of the craft world.
—Jan Schacht, Portola Valley, California

Loved the Whole Thing
I think this was a wonderful issue. The format, the award winners . . . the folding story (“Fine Folds”) was brilliant.
—Erika A. Kates, Newton, Massachusetts

What an amazing, informative, superbly formatted, one to be marked “save” issue.
—Joan Zimmerman, Charlotte, North Carolina

I loved this issue. My expectations were that it would just be about the artists, which is great. But it was also about scholars and scholarly articles that help readers like me understand the place of crafts in a broader context. I love this magazine. Keep it up!
—Joan Tabb, Santa Rosa, California

The Cover Gave Them the Creeps
The articles in the Fall issue are fantastic, as always. I’m sorry, but I think the cover is the creepiest, most disturbing cover ever. I wasn’t sure I wanted to open it, in fear it was a horror movie. Just uninviting.
—Candace Pratt, Portland, Oregon

I normally love this magazine. But this issue was an exception: I hated the cover. I hate the image and the colors and the whole thing. I enjoyed the articles about the award winners, but that’s it.
—Julie Powell, Bellvue, Colorado

Editors respond: Tip Toland, named an ACC Fellow, explores human vulnerability in her clay sculptures, including Wall Flower (cover). We recognize that her work can elicit powerful reactions.

Kudos to ACC Award Recipients
The stories of the ACC Craft Council Award recipients demonstrate that it is possible for talented craftspeople to make a life and career in the craft industry. Also, there was so much to learn in the article about kilns. I had no idea it was so complex and could lead to such community.
—Gary Gregg, Kensington, Maryland

I thoroughly enjoyed this issue. As someone who has been working at her craft for over 30 years, I was especially pleased to see so many lifelong artists featured and honored. I very much enjoy and benefit from seeing work that has grown and matured over the years by artists who have committed their lives to this work.
—Claudia Lee, Liberty, Tennessee

I loved seeing older people who have worked at their respective crafts for decades, along with younger people doing innovative work with materials and ideas.
—Colette Gaiter, Wilmington, Delaware

CORRECTIONS:
In “Material Alchemy” (Summer 2022), there was an error. The article seemed to suggest that iron gall ink and Mars Black pigment are the same substance. This is not the case, as the first is an ancient manuscript ink, while the second is a product of advances in chemistry around the turn of the previous century.

We regret that we misspelled Nancy Koenigsberg’s last name (“The 2022 American Craft Council Awards,” Fall 2022).

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

NOVEMBER OPENING

Vessel: Embodiment, Autonomy, and Ornament in Wood
The Center for Art in Wood, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
November 4, 2022–February 12, 2023

The vessel, a primary craft form, is a bearer of physical things. But at the same time, say the organizers of this show, “the idea of the vessel has been used to explain the secrets of the universe.” Here 15 prominent artists contribute examples of this resonant form, and the Center adds works from its permanent collection.

DECEMBER OPENINGS

CraftForms 2022, 27th International Juried Exhibition of Contemporary Fine Craft
Wayne Art Center, Wayne, Pennsylvania
December 2, 2022–January 21, 2023

New York–based independent curator Jeannine Falino selected the winners in this show, for which works in basketry, ceramics, decorative fiber, furniture, glass, jewelry, metal, mixed media, paper, wearable art, and wood were eligible, as was work created with CAD/CAM technologies and 3D printers.

The Global Language of Headwear: Cultural Identity, Rites of Passage & Spirituality
Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, Wisconsin
December 3, 2022–February 26, 2023

The headwear in this show, drawn from 43 countries, ranges from wedding veils to crowns to Indigenous headdresses and beyond (opposite: helmet). It’s a rich portrait of how the world’s people display power, status, identity, and spirituality on their heads.
Social Fabric: Textiles and Contemporary Issues
Newport Art Museum, Newport, Rhode Island December 3, 2022–June 11, 2023
“What people make to clothe, protect, and decorate themselves and their spaces, tells us about their cultures, eras, identities, families, and lives,” say the organizers of this show. The significance of fabric in life has led the artists on display here (right) to use it to explore issues such as climate change, war, social justice, and racial and gender identity.

Guillermo del Toro: Crafting Pinocchio
Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York December 11, 2022–April 15, 2023
Scheduled to coincide with the premiere of the lauded director’s new animated version of the classic story of the wooden boy, this exhibition (opposite) combines various interpretations of Pinocchio from around the world with production art, props, working sets from the film, and video installation documenting its stop-motion animation process.

Creative Alloys: The Boston Metals Scene
Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, Massachusetts January 28–June 4, 2023
Organized in conjunction with Fuller’s exhibition Daniel Jocz: Permission Granted, which highlights the work of this lauded Cambridge, Massachusetts, metalsmith, Creative Alloys displays work by a dozen metal and jewelry artists in Boston (right). These “creative allies” have formed what the organizers call an “ecosystem,” making the city a major hub for the craft.

La Cartonería Mexicana / The Mexican Art of Paper and Paste
Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico January 29, 2023–June 30, 2024
Using paste, cardboard, paper, and other simple materials, cartonería artists craft piñatas, dolls, Day of the Dead skeletons, and fantasy animals called alebrijes. More than 100 sculptures from the museum’s permanent collection will be on display in this celebration of a living tradition with deep historical roots.

Fluidity: Identity in Swedish Glass
American Swedish Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota February 1–May 28, 2023
This gathering of works by lesser-known contemporary glass artists from Sweden and the American Midwest, including pieces by women artists in the Institute’s collection, “celebrates the achievements of undetected and unheard voices.” A highlight will be an installation by Swedish American artist Jo Andersson that augments glass with light, liquid, and sound.
Anne Lindberg: what color is divine light?
The Textile Museum, Washington, D.C.
February 4–July 1, 2023

The light in the title of this exhibition is created when physical light merges with the myriad threads in Lindberg’s installations (above), producing luminous spaces for meditation and reflection on self, community, and the divine. “A series of programs within the gallery,” the organizers say, “will bring community members together for shared experiences designed to foster understanding and transcendence.”

Hangama Amiri
Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut
February 5–June 11, 2023

Combining textile collage with painting and printmaking, Afghan Canadian émigré artist Amiri crafts intensely colorful works evoking domestic interiors and shops in the market districts of Kabul, the war-torn city her family fled in 1996 (below). Centered on the lives of women as homemakers and entrepreneurs, her works vividly evoke female struggles for livelihood and liberation.

Kahlil Robert Irving
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota
February 16–October 15, 2023

Irving’s dense, colorful, funky assemblages are made of ceramic replicas of everyday objects, ceramic fragments, and embedded found objects and images. This sophisticated, highly finished “junk sculpture” suggests an archaeology of moments in history, the worlds of individual people, and contemporary ways of Black life. On view will be new work, including several pieces commissioned by the Walker.

Shaped by the Loom: Weaving Worlds in the American Southwest
Bard Graduate Center Gallery, New York, New York
February 17–July 9, 2023

This combined gallery and online exhibition will showcase Indigenous textiles from the American Southwest in a dynamic manner that breaks with the traditional, static museum protocols of period, design, and style. Instead, local knowledge, continuing development, market realities, and Native agency and voice will be emphasized, along with comparisons of Navajo textiles with Pueblo and Hispanic weaving traditions.

More Craft Happenings!
Discover additional exhibitions, shows, and other events in the online version of this article at craftcouncil.org/CraftHappenings.
Meet Our 2022 Emerging Artists Cohort

The American Craft Council’s Emerging Artists Cohort is a three-month intensive program, followed by monthly support, that cultivates the next step for independent craft artists to advance their professional careers. This year’s program is supporting 10 innovative artists new to their careers who are expanding craft boundaries and challenging us to new perspectives.

Kadey Ambrose  
Basketmaker  
Fairbanks, Alaska

Tabitha Arnold  
Textile artist  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Brittney Austin  
Knitwear designer  
Carson, California

Vivian Chiu  
Wood artist and educator  
Henrico, Virginia

Michelle Im  
Ceramic artist  
Queens, New York

Emily McBride  
Glass artist and educator  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

SULO BEE  
Interdisciplinary metalsmith  
San Antonio, Texas

Juan Barroso  
Ceramic artist  
Princeton, Texas

Deshun Peoples  
Ceramic artist and designer  
Chicago, Illinois

Sarita Westrup  
Sculptural basket weaver  
Dallas, Texas

Learn more about our 2022 Emerging Artists Cohort at craftcouncil.org/EAC22
When visitors to The Clay Studio in Philadelphia enter the *Figuring Space* exhibition, they'll encounter a sort of community in clay—a gathering of life-size human figures. These diverse bodies are being created by 12 nationally and internationally prominent clay artists, all of whom use the figure to declare their personal, racial, and ethnic identities. Jonathan Christensen Caballero’s tribute to Mexican railroad workers in the American Midwest is titled *Seeds of Tomorrow*. In it, a pair of figures, wearing abstract forms on their heads that suggest Aztec headdresses, carry produce from their kitchen gardens. In Sergei Isupov’s image of dynamism and rest, a running woman with flying red hair is attached to a loving couple seated at a table. Kyungmin Park’s bust of a shouting, or crying, young girl sits on top of a pile of fruit, vegetables, and pastry that, in turn, rests upon the head of a man whose eyes are closed—in sleep?

For the two curators of the exhibition, *Figuring Space* is meant to be welcoming and unsettling at the same time. Jennifer Zwilling is curator and director of artistic programs at The Clay Studio. Kelli Morgan is a professor of visual and material studies and the inaugural director of curatorial studies at Tufts University. Together they worked to devise a show that, as they see it, will give visitors visual excitement and delight, and reflect the diversity of the South Kensington neighborhood, where The Clay Studio moved in April 2022. It will also provide jumping-off points for critical thinking about contemporary concerns.

“The exhibition grew out of Jen and I coming together and having conversations on the heels of all that happened in 2020,” says Morgan, who has served as an advisor to The Clay Studio in its strenuous efforts to forge connections with the South Kensington community and to further anti-racist and anti-colonialist curatorial practices. “We talked about the reckonings we were facing: climate change, COVID, post-Trump, and of course, the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and how the body has always figured so prominently in these issues.”

*Standing in the Room Together*

*An upcoming exhibition at The Clay Studio features humanity, at life-size scale.*

BY JON SPAYDE
The figures assert identity—Latinx, African American, Asian, female, and more—while in many cases also bearing witness to the suffering undergone by so many bodies in the course of our history. But the curators hope the show bears other messages as well.

There’s the matter of the medium. Clay is humble, used to make models for “heroic” representations of generals and statesmen (including Confederate ones) in bronze and stone. “We wanted to shift the paradigm of power from the marble or the bronze,” says Zwilling.

“The idea of twelve full-scale human sculptures in a room,” she adds, “basically all at eye level, so that you can enter this space and be surrounded by a community of figures representing different cultural backgrounds standing in the room together—this is what we wanted and needed to do as well.”

**Figuring Space**
The Clay Studio, Philadelphia
January 12–April 16, 2023
theclaystudio.org | @theclaystudiophl

Jon Spayde is a frequent contributor to *American Craft*. 
Nick Cave, an ACC Fellow, is an art-world rock star who moves effortlessly between fine art and contemporary craft. This publication, produced in conjunction with an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, situates Cave’s work within the context of the current moment of cultural crisis. Essays, interviews, and beautiful images combine to illuminate Cave’s significance and impact. The exhibition will be on view at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, November 18, 2022–April 10, 2023.

**NICK CAVE: FOROTHERMORE**
Edited and with text by Naomi Beckwith
DelMonico Books and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 2022
$65
Hodo-hodo is a Japanese phrase whose meanings range from "moderately" to "so-so." For Satoh, it means "just enough," and here he explores this concept as applied to his practice as a designer working with food, fashion, and architecture. Satoh’s words will inspire anyone looking to live more intentionally with the objects around them and to move more thoughtfully through the world.

JUST ENOUGH DESIGN: REFLECTIONS ON THE JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY OF HODO-HODO
By Taku Satoh, edited and translated by Linda Hoaglund
Chronicle Books, 2022
$16.95

CHUNGHI CHOO AND HER STUDENTS: CONTEMPORARY ART AND NEW FORMS IN METAL
By Jane Milosch Arnoldsche, 2022
$85

This long-awaited celebration of metal artist, jeweler, and ACC Fellow Chunghi Choo explores her work and career through the lens of her importance as an educator and mentor. The book features Choo’s discussion of her teaching philosophy and sources of inspiration, as well as essays by the late Jack Lenor Larsen and Paul J. Smith and work by 32 artists who studied with her.

CONTEMPORARY BLACK AMERICAN CERAMIC ARTISTS
By Donald A. Clark and Chotsani Elaine Dean
Schiffer Publishing, 2022
$60

Interviews with 38 ceramists and more than 300 images spotlight the significant role Black American artists play in contemporary ceramic practice. Dean and Clark begin by looking at a few prominent early artists and their key contributions to ceramic technique and process. This history, they argue, provides the foundation for the diversity of work and practice we see today.

JOSH SIMPSON: 50 YEARS OF VISIONARY GLASS
By Josh Simpson, Sue Reed
Schiffer Publishing, 2022
$65

In a book rich with archival and contemporary photos, Simpson traces the evolution of his work: beginning with vessels in traditional shapes, he went on to explore space, producing planetary and stellar forms, and to experiment with different types of glass. Essays by scholars such as William Warmus and Tina Oldknow accompany the artist’s often humorous insights into his long and distinguished career.

RINGS! 1968–2021
Introduction by Helen Drutt
Metal Museum, 2022
$45

Produced in conjunction with an exhibition conceived by renowned collector, advocate, educator, and ACC Fellow Helen Drutt, this publication showcases the stunning amount of skill and innovation that can appear in a simple ring. There’s fantastic finger decoration here, by jeweler juggernauts such as Sharon Church and Thomas Gentille, as well as by relative newcomers such as Stacey Lee Webber and Zach Mellman-Carsey.

Compiled and written by Rachel Messerich, ACC’s Programs Manager, Legacy and Editorial.
From 1993, the Year of American Craft

BY ACC LIBRARIAN BETH GOODRICH

This year marks three decades since the “Year of American Craft” was declared through a congressional resolution and presidential proclamation by George H. W. Bush in December 1992. ACC worked with the National Steering Committee to organize events that recognized, celebrated, and promoted the broad spectrum of craft in the US, as well as in Canada and Latin America. In addition to national events, states issued their own proclamations and organized their own events to celebrate craft in their regions. In 1993, First Lady Hillary Clinton called on Michael Monroe, then head curator of the Renwick Gallery, to mount an exhibition at the White House, inaugurating a collection of American craft made by artists from across the country, and donated by the artists or their sponsors to the White House collections.

Since the recent discovery of unprocessed archival materials on the Year of American Craft in the ACC collection, library staff have incorporated this material into the archive collections. The archives from this national event have now tripled in volume, and a detailed description of the collection is available on the ACC Library website, under “American Craft Council (1940–present),” “Series 20.” The activities of every state are documented, and in addition to paper materials, the collection includes ephemera such as tote bags, T-shirts, desk calendars, glass paperweights, pins, and posters. You can learn more about this collection and all of the archives at craftcouncil.org/library-archives/archives.

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 Hawkison, ACC’s associate executive director, at jhawkison@craftcouncil.org or 651-434-3951.
Big Dippers. As colder temperatures set in, we fire up our stoves for soup season. This winter, enliven your servingware collection with these handcrafted ladles in wood and metal. Each ladle is an elegant option for sharing a warm pot of soup, sauce, or stew with friends and family.

At 13 in. long, this classic wooden soup ladle is equally useful as a sauna dipper. It comes in jatoba (pictured here) or hard maple. Focusing on dense woods, Brad Bernhart of Earlywood in Red Lodge, Montana, makes kitchen goods that stand the test of time. / $62 earlywooddesigns.com | @earlywood_designs

Benjamin Leatham of Cannon River Bowl & Spoon in Finland, Minnesota, makes kitchenware from salvaged wood. The subtle curves of his 12-by-3.75-in. black cherry big dipper show off its striking wood grain. “Surround yourself with things you find beautiful and use them every day,” Leatham says. / $72 cannonriverbowl.com | @cannonriverbowl

With a curved handle for a comfortable grip, this award-winning, 10-in. flame-blackened ladle is long enough to reach the bottom of a deep pot. Jonathan Simons, of Jonathan’s Spoons in Kempton, Pennsylvania, began burning cherry spoons to create decorative patterns. As a bonus, it also waterproofs them and enhances the natural grain of the wood. / $66 woodspoon.com | @jonathanspoons

Copper rivets attach the 18-gauge copper scoop of this ladle to its forged-steel, reverse-curl loop handle. At 10-by-3.5-in., the ladle—made by Nicholas Wicks Moreau and his team at Wicks Forge in Pownal, Maine—dishes up a hearty serving. / $59 wicksforge.com | @ricksforge•

Nicole and Harry Hansen of Sterling & Steel in Salida, Colorado, team up to make their Craftsman-style ladle. Harry, once a farrier, turns raw stainless steel into rugged, textured handles, while Nicole, a fine jeweler, hammers and shapes sterling silver into a smooth, luminous ladle for soups, gravies, and sauces. Available in three sizes. / $165–$610 sterlingandsteel.com | @sterlingandsteel

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: Photo by Darcy Horn. Photo by Caren Dissinger. Photo courtesy of Wicks Forge. Photo by Brad Bernhart. Photo by Mark Wiedman, courtesy of Nicole and Harry Hansen.

Researched and written by Shivaun Watchorn, assistant editor of American Craft.
Florida CraftArt presents an exhibition of original glass and multi-media sculptures created through an exceptional collaboration between nine fine craft master artists and glass master Duncan McClellan, founder of DMG School Project and Duncan McClellan Gallery.

**CERAMICS**
- William Kidd
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- Pamela Fox

**PAPER**
- Lucrezia Bieler

**METAL**
- Paul Eppling
- Dominice Gilbert

**MIXED MEDIA**
- Joyce Curvin
- Nneka Jones

**WOOD**
- John Mascoll

**CURATOR**
- David Ramsey
“I wanted to create an environment where people who like to read, write, cook, and create felt at home and felt inspired by their surroundings.”

—Kathy Setzer, Heywood Hotel
When entering a hotel, often after a grueling drive or flight, it’s gratifying to find that you’ve arrived at a place that feels like a place, that embodies the city or town or corner of countryside in which you are standing.

Unlike hotels that evince a mass-produced appeal that positively eradicates any sign of character, the craft hotel embraces the well-designed, the unique, the quirky, and the cozy.

Sometimes this comes down to a set of brightly colored, hand-embroidered pillows on a custom-upholstered sofa, or a hand-hewn wooden bedframe with inlaid brass accents. Or locally made ceramic and glass tableware, or a collection of rainbow-colored dioramas. Perhaps the wool blankets on the beds are loom-woven. Or the soaps are crafted by a local artisan who cares that you experience the natural scents of cedar or mint.

These are beautiful offerings that are, in fact, acts of generosity by the hoteliers, designers, and craft artists who have given something of themselves in order to create a tangible connection—to let you know where you are and that you are among the people who live in this place.

In some cases, craft hotels go a step further and offer ways for you to express your creativity. These opportunities might include pottery classes—even outings where guests collect and refine raw clay—jewelry-making classes, or the simple provision of a sketch pad and pencils in each room.

Here are five great craft hotels. Each has what it takes to ensure that you inhabit the exact spot where you stand.
Heywood
Austin, Texas

Upon first glance, you might mistake this seven-room hotel inside a 1925 Craftsman bungalow for a private home. That would be music to the ears of owner and operator Kathy Setzer, who evangelizes about what she calls “handcrafted hospitality.” The Heywood Hotel, located in the East Austin neighborhood, is designed to feel like a friend’s comfy digs.

When Setzer and her husband and co-owner, George Reynolds, installed the room air conditioners, for example, they realized the black cords would be visible to guests. Setzer’s mom came up with the ingenious fix: hand-crocheted cord koozies.

The Heywood (its name is a nod to furniture maker Heywood-Wakefield), while down-home, is modern and stylish as well. A soaring central staircase leads to a new courtyard patio full of native plants. Says Setzer, “Guest rooms are built around this patio, with a ‘Marfa meets Palm Springs’ aesthetic.”

Color and flair abound. “I wanted to create an environment where people who like to read, write, cook, and create felt at home and felt inspired by their surroundings,” says Setzer, who has outfitted the hotel with textiles by local designers Leah Duncan and Shay Spaniola, leather accessories by Noah Marion, wooden vases by Brian David Johnson, and ceramics by Kristen Saksa Juen.

heywoodhotel.com | @heywoodhotel

ABOVE: A Heywood room with cabinetry and walnut bed by George Reynolds, wooden vase by Brian David Johnson, and textiles by Leah Duncan. BELOW: In the gift shop, a vase by Johnson; a leather desk pad by Noah Marion; and a soapstone shaving set, leather journals, and personal accessories by Son of a Sailor.
Tides Inn
Irvington, Virginia

Located on a private peninsula surrounded by the clay-rich Chesapeake Bay, the Tides Inn has been around for 75 years. This classic coastal hotel, which serves local oysters and crab, expresses its creative side with a designated “maker space” where resident artist Theresa Schneveis leads classes in nature-inspired collage, candle-making, crocheting, and throwing and hand-building clay. Schneveis, whose pottery is featured in the dining room, told us she’s adding a new class, “where I take guests to collect clay, bring it back to the studio, and then teach the process of refining.”

right: Resident artist Theresa Schneveis leading a “nature’s art” workshop at the Tides Inn. inset: Guests may participate in pottery classes. Schneveis fires each of the pieces after guests depart, then mails them. below: The maker space at the resort is a contemporary, light-filled studio.
Alma
Minneapolis, Minnesota

When entering the elegant Hotel Alma, you are immediately torn: Go up the stairs to the guest rooms? Or hang a left and browse the craft shop for treasures, such as walnut bowls from the Holland Bowl Mill in Michigan and clay mugs by Minnesota ceramist Guillermo Cuellar? You’ll also be tempted by the sights and smells of Alma’s award-winning cafe and restaurant, located just beyond the shop.

Let’s say you head up the stairs (or choose the accessible guest room on the first floor). Alma’s seven impeccable rooms are designed to make travelers feel cared for, even pampered. The owners, Margo and Alex Roberts, have lavished attention on every detail of this hotel, which is located two blocks from the Mississippi River and the Stone Arch Bridge, in a historic building that once housed a wooden speedboat manufacturer.

Margo says the couple envisioned Alma as a place for guests to dream, relax, and rejuvenate.
They accomplished this with the help of myriad craft artists. “We’ve been inspired by and honored to be in partnership with the creators in our community,” she says. Each room blooms with crafted amenities, including wooden furniture by Marvin Freitas, hand-sewn robes from KISA Boutique, brass work by Jonathan Gomez Whitney, and apothecary specialties by Margo herself.

almampls.com | @almampls

“We’ve been inspired by and honored to be in partnership with the creators in our community.” —Margo Roberts
The Maker
Hudson, New York

Want to sleep like an architect, a writer, or someone who lived in a Paris studio in the 1920s? In collaboration with craft artists in the Hudson Valley, this lush hotel has been described as a “curated sanctuary with a bohemian sensibility.” The Maker, located near the Hudson River between New York City and Albany, features 11 rooms across three historic buildings, each lovingly outfitted according to themes such as “Architect Studio” and “Artist Studio.” The majority of the furnishings are vintage and have been refurbished by local artisans, including Gary Keegan, who hand-carved many of the restaurant tables and restored several mantles; Steven McKay, who, with hotel cofounder Lev Glazman, designed light fixtures and restored the silk shades in the conservatory; and Steve Delmar, who reupholstered many pieces including a George Smith sofa. In addition, local DC Studios designed a stained glass skylight for the top floor of one of The Maker’s buildings. The hotel even features a line of custom perfumes inspired by the “travel fantasies we’ve lived or long for.”

theemaker.com | @themakerhotel

The ”Artist Studio” room includes furniture, objects, and artwork from a variety of time periods. TOP: The lounge, housed inside a restored 19th-century carriage house, includes a hand-carved fireplace, vintage decor, and craft cocktails. The hotel offers a custom line of fragrances.
Saguaro
Palm Springs, California

For big, bright, eye-popping fun in the desert, visit the Saguaro. This stylish hotel not only features a pool surrounded by rainbow-colored room balconies—architects Peter Stamberg and Paul Aferiat selected colors that mimic the surrounding desert’s wildflowers—it’s furnished with art and craft galore.

The Saguaro bills itself as a “getaway for spirited travelers in search of uncomplicated fun,” where the main values include “community, collaboration, and creativity.” The lobby features furniture and a ping-pong table handcrafted by California’s Amigo Modern, while multiple dioramas by Sarah Scheideman show Barbie dolls in different parts of the hotel, including the pool and spa. The hotel also offers an array of programming, such as a class on making paper flowers taught by artist Gina May.

thesaguaro.com | @saguarohotels

Jennifer Vogel is senior editor of American Craft.
buoyant and BOLD

In Daniel Michalik’s hands, cork—harvested from live trees—becomes a versatile and exceptionally beautiful medium.

BY CLAIRE VOON
“I just carve away at it” like a giant shawarma,” Daniel Michalik says, gesturing at a wedge of cork in his Brooklyn, New York, studio. It’s an offcut of a massive cylinder the artist received from Portugal, home to about a third of the world’s cork forests. “I love the color, the size of the chunk,” he adds. “There’s something so warm and beautiful about the material.”

Most often encountered as wine-bottle stoppers, notice boards, or coasters, cork takes on beguiling forms in Michalik’s studio. Here, highly geometric furniture pieces and other functional home objects, from planters to wine coolers, demonstrate the material’s versatility and celebrate its natural grain and texture.

Trained in woodworking, Michalik is an enthusiastic maker of chairs, adeptly cutting and layering sheets of cork into surprising ergonomic supports. One stool, a block of cork with neat, horizontal slices running from curved seat to base, behaves almost like a spring, moving slightly with a user’s body as they shift. An undulating chaise lounge is made from three layers of cork sheets, each with an alternating pattern of cuts. The latticework releases the material’s flexibility—cork has a natural ability to compress and stretch—allowing Michalik to mold the long sheets into waves. The resulting S-shape can rock gently while creating a distinct material experience. “It comes into maximum contact with different parts of your body,” Michalik says. “That speaks to this haptic, psychological presence that I sense with cork. It’s soft, it’s friendly, it responds to your body. It’s never too cold, never too hot, it’s very tactile.”

The chaise lounge is an early example of Michalik unlocking cork’s vast potential. The Massachusetts native began experimenting with it about two decades ago as a graduate student in the Rhode Island School of Design’s furniture design program. He had been researching alternative materials when he chanced upon keenly priced pallets of cork. The stuff responded differently to tools such as the lathe and the band saw, inspiring Michalik to see familiar skills anew. “I felt I had stepped off of a spaceship onto a new planet,” he recalls. “It was doing things that I’d never seen done with any other furniture material before.”
“I felt I had stepped off of a spaceship onto a new planet. It was doing things that I’d never seen done with any other furniture material before.” —Daniel Michalik
ABOVE: Michalik says the design of these recycled cork Cortica Cortiça Chaise Lounges—26 x 20 x 74 in.—allow for gentle rocking both side to side and front to back, providing a sense of effortless floating.

LEFT: This vase, 10 x 6 in., reveals texture within the cork.

Today, Michalik tends to work solely in cork, sourced from one of the world’s largest cork producers, Portugal’s Corticeira Amorim. A large portion of its harvested bark becomes wine corks, but the rest gets blended and cast into blocks or used as insulation. Part of cork’s appeal to Michalik is that it is recyclable, sustainable, and “ecologically positive,” as he puts it. “As you harvest the material, you foster growth in the life source. The forests get stronger and more robust, and the trees release carbon into the atmosphere,” he says. It is also hardy—ideal for objects designed to last and interpreted by cats as scratching posts. Over time, each piece will also develop a unique patina.
ABOVE: Michalik in his Greenpoint, Brooklyn, studio. BELOW: The Sway Stool, 20 x 14.5 x 13.5 in., is made from a single block of recycled cork. The patterns cut into all four sides allow the stool to rock and pivot, responding to the movements of the sitter.

Using cork makes sense, especially as environmental concerns heighten the criticism of fast furniture, and Michalik has noticed a surge in its popularity in architecture and design. “It goes back to this need to return to the Earth that we all feel right now,” he speculates. He hopes to build on this interest by publishing a book that compiles his research into the history and agriculture of cork, and that proposes it as a model material for reimagining craft and design. “If we think more about the effects that our spaces have on our bodies, we can be more mindful in how we use and take care of those objects,” he says. “Because they’re better for us physically and psychologically, and they’re better for the systems of life on Earth.”

danielmichalik.com | @danielmichalik

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.
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domestic bliss

Mattie Hinkley makes everyday objects more fun—and sexy.
Mattie Hinkley’s work is a mesmerizing mix of the fantastical and the practical. They delight in the mash-up of flat, functional surfaces and woozy shapes that evoke body parts and dreams—especially when it comes to the objects they put in their home. “If I make a really minimal plywood bookcase and I set it near a fantastical bench, it helps me find balance. I don’t think I could live with all flat planes, but nor could I live with all blobitectures,” says the Chico, California-based maker.

Take Wedge, a sculptural rug. Woven with scraps of undyed muslin, it has the classic look of a common domestic object—a throw rug in your grandma’s house or a catch-the-sand rug at your family’s lake house. “I used muslin scrap I found in a discard bin, so it has the raw, undyed quality of a really traditional-looking domestic object.”

But in the middle of the piece is a mysterious, evocative wedge shape. What purpose does it serve? “You can sit on it, you can lie and read a book on it, or you can have sex on it,” they say. “A sex wedge is an ergonomic pillow designed to help you do a task,” says Hinkley. “I want to make domestic objects that are reflective of the home in which I actually live.”
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Mattie Hinkley paints a ceramic jug. *Big Bad Waffle*, 2021, cedar, 59 x 48 in. Hinkley in their studio. Household objects and games made by Hinkley. *Sun Spot*, 2022, cedar, fabric, 60 x 92 x 60 in. *Untitled (long black brush)*, 2020, ceramic, glaze, istle (a plant fiber), 6 x 15.5 x 2 in.
When creating *Wedge*, Hinkley wanted to explore a new medium. “I’d never made a rag rug, and wanted to learn the form,” they say. They also wanted to center a common domestic act that doesn’t get talked about very much. “It’s so strange how unacknowledged sex is in the domestic sphere,” they say. “We cook, clean, eat, and have sex at home, so I made a body of work to acknowledge that. Let’s acknowledge the ubiquity of this joyful activity.”

Hinkley is interested in bringing people together and sparking conversations about life’s more intimate aspects, such as around *Catchallabra*. “A candelabra is placed on a dining table when people come together,” says Hinkley. “I like the idea of gathering, but I wanted to eliminate the formality. I wanted to make it funnier and more accessible, more lowbrow.” The piece is made of unglazed earthenware—a casual, approachable material—and the shape evokes body parts and entwined limbs. They hope the piece intrigues dinner guests and gets them talking. “We can talk about sex and sexuality and it doesn’t have to be sequestered to the bedroom, or whispered about or embarrassing.”

Trained in illustration, residential construction, and fine furniture making—and currently getting their MFA in studio arts at Maine College of Art & Design—Hinkley has a wide-ranging artistic practice (“Curators often don’t know what to do with me,” they say). But they have an abiding interest in creating the furniture and objects we keep in our homes. “Making interesting, sculptural everyday art objects, that’s what I get energy from,” they say.
Hinkley enjoys the sense of accomplishment that comes with making the objects we live with. "When you see them, you’re reminded that you put your time toward something you found valuable," they explain. “You can say, ‘I got to make that. It was a joyful practice.’”

Hinkley’s MFA thesis work is on benches—pieces of furniture that bring people together. “A bench puts everyone on the same literal plane, there’s no hierarchy,” they say. “A bench really represents community—without community it would just be a chair.” For their final MFA project, Hinkley hopes to build the benches in the gallery space where visitors will sit to view their cohort’s final projects. “We don’t recognize the bench because we’re sitting on it, but it’s as valuable as the paintings we’re looking at,” Hinkley says. “I love a good bench.”

mattiehinkley.com | @mattiehinkley

Laine Bergeson Becco is a writer who lives in Minneapolis.
the table that dreamed

The anthropomorphic, emotional furniture of Puerto Rican designer Reynold Rodriguez.

BY PAOLA SINGER

Reynold Rodriguez’s The Table That Dreamed . . . (of being light), 2021, is a combination table and lamp, gypsum plaster and LED, 80 x 40 x 40 in.
The day I spoke with Reynold Rodriguez, Hurricane Fiona had just descended on Puerto Rico, leaving in its wake dangerous floods and extensive blackouts. “Emotionally, it’s a lot, to have to go back to something very similar to Maria,” says Rodriguez, a furniture designer based in San Juan, recalling the catastrophic storm of 2017. Yet in his creative work, Rodriguez has found adversity to be formative, even invigorating. It was Hurricane Maria that emboldened him to begin designing highly expressive pieces of furniture—the kind he’d dreamed of making for a long time—and to allow his practice as a millwork contractor to recede into the background. “I have a passion for wood, but my true passion is to communicate ideas through design,” he says. “After Maria, I had this restlessness, this desire to show what I could do. One day I woke up and said The time is now.”

Salvaging many of the trees felled by the category 5 hurricane—massive hunks of mahogany, almendro, and guanacaste wood—Rodriguez carved a series of chairs with unexpected curves and shapes. Among these are Gravity and Grace, a mismatched pair that look almost like boulders, the unevenness of their bulky exteriors balanced by perfectly smooth seats. Both are made from mahogany charred to a deep black. Rodriguez posted images of the entire process on Instagram, from collecting trees on the street to hand-carving the trunks, and soon found a following. “There’s an absurd aspect to social media, but Instagram opened up a world outside of Puerto Rico,” he says. “It became a bridge.”

Being based in his hometown, with the ease it affords, has had its downsides. Rodriguez graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design in the early 1990s and headed straight to Barcelona, hoping to find a job there. He was lucky enough to meet Miguel Milá, the esteemed Catalan industrial designer and inventor, who convinced him to return to the Caribbean and build a career that spoke to his roots. It was easier said than done. “I came back knowing that I may never have the opportunities, contacts, or experiences I’d have in a city with a stronger design culture,” he says.
TOP LEFT: *Continue*, 2020, is a large table lamp in polished plaster, 29 x 42 x 22 in.  
ABOVE LEFT: *El Beso*, 2022, terrazzo plaster chair, 28 x 20 x 20 in.  
ABOVE RIGHT: *Maxed Lamp ( . . . from the land of big ideas)*, 2022, carved mahognany, 39 x 22 x 26 in.  
BELOW: *K Chair*, 2020, carved and char-finished almendro wood, 28 x 24 x 24 in.
“My language is emotional, and I want my pieces to have a narrative presence, to establish a communication.”

— Reynold Rodriguez

“I became a contractor, and years went by. The reality is that for many reasons, personal reasons and idiosyncrasies, I would not have been ready to take advantage of what’s happening to me now.”

Rodriguez recently showed his work at Salon Art + Design in New York and at Design Miami, where he was represented by Wexler Gallery, and is getting ready for his first solo exhibition this fall, at London’s Charles Burnand Gallery. Some of his early wood chairs will be on view, along with a dozen or so other pieces, including an anthropomorphic, rangy lamp that rises from a low table, called The Table That Dreamed . . . (of being light). It’s made of gypsum plaster, a material he’s been experimenting with lately, applying it by hand over computer-cut wood and wire-mesh frames.

His favorite recent creation, he says, is a streamlined fainting couch with a plaster body, a taut leather seat, and hammered brass legs. It’s titled Acuéstate y No Jodas Más, which translates roughly to “just lie down and stop bothering me.” After some probing, he revealed that the title had to do with a breakup, with the feeling of wanting something to be over, of wanting someone out of your life. “Change is very painful, but it’s also a source of inspiration,” he says. “My language is emotional, and I want my pieces to have a narrative presence, to establish a communication.”

Although Rodriguez is content working out of his 10,000-square-foot studio in San Juan, set in a former brewery from the 1930s, he’s aching to incorporate more sophisticated processes and finishes, something he might have to outsource. He would one day love to work with the Ateliers Saint-Jacques near Paris, considered the finest stone and metal workshop in the world. “Without using a language that’s too disruptive or loud, I want people to have an experience that isn’t easy to forget,” he says, “to transform furnishings into something more.”

Paola Singer is a New York City–based journalist who writes about culture, design, and architecture for the New York Times, Architectural Digest, and Condé Nast Traveler, among other publications.
The Objects We Keep

How living with objects over time imbues them with meaning and changes what they have to say to us.

BY AKIKO BUSCH

People talk to their laptops, name their cars, invest meaning into such ordinary things as a particular baseball cap or coffee mug. It is a fact of life that we have relationships with all sorts of inanimate objects. But the nature of such relationships varies. Our phones and laptops, appliances, cars, refrigerators—all of these may invite everything from devotion to despair, but most of these objects have a limited shelf life. Some are designed for obsolescence, while technological updates demand that we replace others. Not only are they replaceable, they are designed to be replaced; replacement is in their very nature. Add to that that we live in an age of acceleration, an era that values instant messaging, fast food, fast fashion, and immediacy at large in action and consequence.

How fortunate, then, that it is in the nature of handmade things to have a longer life cycle, one that allows for them to have a past, a present, a future. It is an extended time frame that also affords different, more enduring relationships, ones that are more evolving, dimensional, complex.

As Sherry Turkle notes in her book *Evocative Objects*, “We find it familiar to consider objects as useful or aesthetic, as necessities or vain indulgences. We are on less familiar ground when we consider objects as companions to our emotional lives or as provocations to thought. The notion of evocative objects brings together these two less familiar ideas, underscoring the
inseparability of thought and feeling in our relationship to things. We think with the objects we love; we love the objects we think with.” Turkle’s exploration of evocative objects as centerpieces of human thought and feeling ranges from objects of design and play (a cello, for example, the size of a human body, that enables its player to “make the conscious connection between thought and touch”) to an heirloom family rolling pin that helps a woman mourn her grandmother’s death as she rolls out cookies with her own children.

As weird and as counterintuitive as it may sound, our relationships within the inanimate world can often offer us a template for ways to absorb experience, conveying and clarifying to us ideas about our own humanity. Another way to think about that is to imagine that our objects can inhabit us, just as we inhabit them. In the course of my own life, an ebony letter opener, a woven shawl, and a lacquer tray have been among the things that qualify both as companions to emotional life and as provocations to thought.

The Letter Opener
Over 30 years ago, a psychiatrist I had been seeing gave me a letter opener as a parting gift. It was carved from ebony, a hardwood, and its blade was all but a knife edge. Its handle was a stylized carving of the long sloping neck and proud head of an antelope, with ears, tiny horns, wide eyes. It was an inexpensive object handcrafted by a local artisan, and I think I remember her saying she had picked it up on a trip to Kenya. But, as perhaps befits recollections with a therapist, the memory of its origins is a little clouded. The wood has become polished to a sheen over decades of use. I don’t think the blade has truly become sharper, though it sometimes seems that way. And the small, carved antelope head is as calm and remote as ever.

This object has grown on me. Out of curiosity once, I looked up ebony online and learned that its denseness makes it very difficult to carve, a fact that also renders it durable, enduring. And every
People write letters less often now, of course, than they once did. Perhaps this is why, on the occasions when I do employ it, I find myself especially attentive to its form, its material, the simple act of using it. When it is a letter I am opening, and not a bill or piece of business correspondence, I think of what it is to enter a thought of another. I note how this slender piece of carved black wood, a tourist item likely picked up at an airport souvenir shop, has come to serve as a kind of accessory for understanding. It reminds me that the things we use come to occupy our imaginations in different ways, and how the material and immaterial worlds coalesce unpredictably and unfathomably. Its meaning here has been derived from a collaboration of random circumstances, the kind of arbitrary and unpredictable conditions under which we form attachments. In this case, it was the durability of the wood itself, the symbol of the wild animal, the woman who gave it to me, all the years it has been on my desk. This is probably the way material things become accomplices in our emotional lives—and the way the lives of things, like the lives of people, can take on unexpected turns, new meanings and values. All of this may be a lot to assume about such a thin whittle of wood, but it is true nonetheless.

The Shawl

When I was in my mid-20s, I spent several months living in the foothills of California's Sierra Nevada in a small town actually called Rough and Ready. My boyfriend and I were on our way to San Francisco but had stopped there so he could help some friends who were building a house. Our stay lasted weeks, then months. I was anxious to get to the city. Living on an unfinished building site was wearing on my nerves, and far too much alcohol was being consumed as well.

At some point during that time, my mother sent me a lush wool and mohair shawl that had been woven in Scotland. Its threads were radiant scarlet, purple, gold, fuchsia, glowing stripes and squares of luminous shades and hues, one laced into another and another. To be clear, these are not my colors, which tend more to dusky blues and grays. Still, the brightness and warmth the shawl lent to that cool California fall was welcome, and I came to love its warm palette, its comfort, its soft texture. It cheered me up greatly, and when we finally got to San Francisco, it was on the bed for the three years we stayed. Now, 40 years later, it is folded across the back of my office chair, thin, frayed, faded, but still shining with its glowing sunset palette.

Not long ago, a close friend sent me another, similar shawl. This one, too, was handwoven in Scotland, was also wool and mohair, and had the same soft feel. But the colors of its yarns ranged from azure to cobalt, with strands of smoky blues and pale grays intertwined. Finally, decades later, a palette of rivers and oceans, of the tides and currents! My colors! And I admire it every time I see it folded at the foot of a guest bed.

But still, the placeholder, the surrogate, the old radiant shawl remains on the back of my chair. It has gotten me to thinking about the value of the stand-in, and how it is possible to learn to live with things that are not our style—and then find suddenly that it, the proxy, has become more real, more central to our experience, than the desired
object. How curious it is that the substitute can sometimes become the thing with which we end up having a deeper rapport, a more lasting affiliation. Which is another one of those things that living with objects can teach you.

**The Lacquer Tray**

Information comes to us in layers. Painters come to know this with the application of pigments, and writers, too, with the way words collect on a page; but then I suppose that anyone who has ever worked to master any discipline knows this as well. Lacquerwork, though, may be the discipline that expresses this truth most explicitly. The process requires that a coat of resin, extracted from the sap of a particular tree, be applied in layers, each one dried and polished to a high gloss before the next coating is applied. If there are to be images in the composition, the pigment is added in during the process. But it is the series of carefully prepared layers, 10, 12, 15, that give the piece its durability, its shine, its depth.

The small kitchen tray I have propped up on the counter is a product of this protracted process. There is something in the sequence of layers that gives the surface a genuine sense of dimension, and the five goldfish in the composition appear to be streaming not *on*, but *in*, the dark shining water suggested by the black surface of the tray. The sense of immersion is real.

And yet, in my well-lit kitchen, the images look a little garish—obvious, gaudy, a little too showy and loud. Of course it is so. Lacquerware was not made for bright rooms, and in such spaces it loses its beauty. In his celebrated essay, *In Praise of Shadows*, the Japanese writer Jun’ichirō Tanizaki writes that the value of lacquerwork is in the way it brings a glow to rooms with muted light. “Darkness is an indispensable element in the beauty of lacquerware,” he writes. “Artisans of old, when they finished their works in lacquer and decorated them in sparkling patterns, must surely have had in mind dark rooms and sought to turn to good effect what feeble light there was.” It is easy to imagine that in a dusky, shadowy room, the sheen of the goldfish in their opaque pond could suggest flickers of light that become apparent only in obscurity. The tray is among those things that come to life only in darkness, a circumstance useful to remember.
But there is something else that comes to mind when I look at this small tray on the kitchen counter. The layering of the resin coatings is, of course, not visible to the eye, yet one knows it’s there, or intuits it. Tanizaki writes that lacquerware “should be left in the dark, a part here and a part there picked up by a faint light.” I glance again at the tray and cannot help but wonder, is it also a diagram of human perception, a little sketch for how we take in our impressions of experience? Clarity and obscurity alike come in incremental degrees; just as it is possible to gain knowledge about some things, others only become more perplexing over time. And the five goldfish, glowing and fluttering in their deep, black current, remind me that whether it is mystery or lucidity, the knowable and the unknowable both arrive in shades and gradations.

Akiko Busch is the author of several essay collections, most recently Everything Else Is Bric-a-Brac. She was a contributing editor at Metropolis magazine for 20 years, and her essays about design, culture, and nature have appeared in national magazines, newspapers, and exhibition catalogues.
Karen Collins made these dioramas to teach kids about African American history—and they invite all of us into important cultural moments.

BY LENA CROWN
THE LIVING ROOM OF CRAFT ARTIST and educator Karen Collins’s Compton, California, home is stacked with the dioramas she has constructed over the past 27 years. They show moments from her personal history, as well as that of Black America. In one triptych depicting stages of the Black Lives Matter movement, Trayvon Martin stands in a hoodie with his hands up, followed by a funeral scene and, finally, a protest in which the impassioned figures hold signs, one reading “Hands Up Don’t Shoot.” In another diorama, a representation of the 1960 Greensboro sit-in, four Black students face a tiny white employee, who wields his pointed finger like a knife. The scene is complete with a miniature jukebox and a tiny “WHITE ONLY” sign above the restaurant counter.

“My aim is to teach children the whole story,” says Collins, who sometimes takes her African American Miniature Museum on the road to schools and libraries. “History teaches them to be ashamed, but it’s an education that happens by omission. It’s the shame of, ‘everybody else helped build the nation,’ and there’s no mention of you.”

Collins’s singular work has earned an enthusiastic following. Recently, she created a series of dioramas depicting Black cowboys and scenes from the life of an early Black U.S. Marshal for the Autry Museum of the American West. Her dioramas—each intricately constructed within a rectangular “shadow box” with shallow wooden walls—capture dozens of pivotal moments rendered in three dimensions. Most contain miniature clay renderings of influential Black activists, entrepreneurs, and political leaders, as well as families enjoying hard-won victories in the face of widespread abuses.

Born in 1952, Collins came of age on Indiana Avenue, the center of Black life in 1950s Indianapolis. She remembers strolling with her siblings down the avenue on Saturdays and taking in the smell of barbecue, the sound of live music, and the hubbub from various Black-owned businesses. Across the street from Collins’s home in Lockefield Gardens, one of the nation’s first public housing projects, stood the manufacturing plant belonging to Black hair mogul Madam C.J. Walker, one of the most successful female entrepreneurs of her time. Collins remembers wandering the Walker Building’s commercial area, which included a beauty salon, an auditorium, a drugstore, and a restaurant. “It was all open inside,” she says. “You could see inside the salon; you could watch the women with their shampoo bowls tending to their clients. It was an opportunity to see Black professionals at work, contributing to the neighborhood.”

Photos by Ryan Schude.

LEFT: Black Lives Matter, 2022, commissioned by the Los Angeles Public Library, includes Sculpey and Fimo clay, pipe cleaners, yarn, various fabrics, and a wooden coffin by Eddie Lewis. ABOVE: Celebration, 2020, featuring Kendrick Lamar, was commissioned by the Los Angeles Public Library and the Andy Warhol Foundation.
Collins celebrates and perpetuates Walker’s legacy through her work. Two distinct shadow boxes—now housed in the Madam Walker Legacy Center at the former manufacturing plant—commemorate Walker’s journey from rags to riches. One shows Walker standing proudly before a fireplace and gilt-framed flower print, wearing an elegant dress made of fabric and lace, a tiny string of pearls around her neck.

Collins’s love of miniatures developed early and flourished under constraint. “My mother couldn’t afford a dollhouse, so I would build them out of cardboard boxes for me and my sisters,” she says. “I would repurpose White Castle carrying cases for the furniture and tear off squares of toilet paper to make the beds.” Dolls, too, were expensive, so she cut them out of paper, along with the clothing she designed.

Collins participated in much of the history she now teaches through her work. She attended meetings at the Black Panthers’ Midwest headquarters. When she protested her high school’s restrictions on cultural expression, she was jailed with other students. She was elected president of the NAACP youth council in Indianapolis, which afforded her the opportunity to travel. “That gave me a sense of us as a people,” she says, “of where we’d been, of how far we had come and how far we had yet to go.”

“In 1971, Collins followed her family to Compton, where she met her husband and collaborator, Eddie Lewis. Her obsession with miniatures intensified when, in the 1990s, her son was arrested just before his high school graduation. “I began creating these scenes because I wanted another chance to teach children about their worth as human beings,” she says.

At first, she and Lewis put scenes inside wooden cigar boxes. “It was just furniture then, no people,” she says. “Maybe...
somebody played cards and the cards were lying on the table. I’ve seen miniatures that are exquisite, but they don’t have people in them. If I’d studied interior design, maybe I’d feel differently. But for me, they need to have people to tell the story.”

One of Collins’s first dioramas depicts Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivering an impassioned sermon to an enraptured congregation. “That was when I knew I simply had to learn how to make dolls, because this required a whole crowd,” she says. She used the materials she could find in her home after years as a preschool teacher: polymer clay, pipe cleaners, and tacky glue. The dozen or so churchgoers are seated in profile on wooden pews, all sharply dressed—the men in textured suits, the women in elaborate hats, the babies in white lace bonnets. Some have silver strands glinting among the black yarn Collins uses for hair. Their facial expressions range from plaintive to peaceful to exuberant, while Dr. King gestures authoritatively from behind a red lectern. A choir in purple robes looks on, framed by a faux stained-glass window achieved through slick washes of paint.

When Collins ran out of cigar boxes, Lewis taught himself to build the wooden shadow boxes that would become a staple of her practice. Originally, each scene was contained within four opaque borders of wood. Then a friend suggested inserting a strip of glass along the top to allow light to enter. “That made all the difference,” she says. “Everything just took off from there.”

Collins’s dioramas invert what we think we know about the miniature, the shrunken, the condensed. What might be perceived as cute, dainty, or cursory becomes even more potent in its compression by the act of leaning in, of looking closer. We can’t help but consider what falls beyond the margins of the shadow box. And what has been included takes on the glow and weight of the sacred. “I’m just scratching the surface of our history,” Collins says with a wave of her hand. “What I want to do is endless.”

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africanamericanminiaturemuseum.com

Lena Crown has published work in The Millions, Guernica, Gulf Coast, and more. Previously, she wrote for St. Louis’s ALIVE Magazine. She now lives in Washington, DC, and writes for Folklife Magazine at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.

This article, here in abbreviated form, was coproduced by the Smithsonian’s African American Craft Initiative and American Craft. You can find the full-length version of the text at Folklife Magazine: folklife.si.edu/magazine.
2022 Lois Moran Award

Meet the Award Winners

_American Craft_ and the American Craft Council are pleased to announce the winners of the 2022 Lois Moran Award for Craft Writing, held each year to honor the memory of a celebrated, longtime editor of this magazine.

This year our panel of jurors included Hrag Vartanian, editor in chief and cofounder of _Hyperallergic_; conceptual artist and writer Charisse Pearlina Weston; and Emily Zaiden, director and curator of the Craft in America Center. The jurors chose three winning stories this year, from a field of over 60 submissions and nominations. Each award recipient receives a $1,000 prize, one-third of the total prize money.

The award recognizes excellence in craft writing and encourages writers to explore new topics and avenues of thought. The jurors had this to say about the 2022 winners: “Each writer deals with very distinct subject matter. Each presents areas within the field of craft writing which have long required more rigorous research, exploration, and citation.”

And without further ado, the winners are...

**Anya Montiel**
“Respect, Reciprocity, and Responsibility: A Way Forward”
*This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World* exhibition catalog

**From the jurors:** “‘Respect, Reciprocity, and Responsibility’ starts with artists and objects and moves into an entirely new outlook, while being informed by the lessons of the pandemic and the broader implications of craft and art in our culture.”

**Shannon Stratton**
“Whose Haunting Who?”
_Dilettante Army_, Spring 2022

**From the jurors:** “‘Whose Haunting Who?’ is an ambitious article that focuses on some difficult questions and attempts to address some foundational issues in the field of craft.”

**Sebastian Grant**
“Explorations in Black Jewelry: Politics”
_Metalsmith_, March 2022, Vol. 42

**From the jurors:** “‘Explorations in Black Jewelry: Politics’ makes important connections between politics and jewelry as a vehicle for exploring Black identity, while highlighting some interesting recent work in the field.”

Visit craftcouncil.org/LoisMoranAward to find the winning articles.
In March of 2022, Warren Wilson College in western North Carolina announced the pending closure of its MA in Critical Craft Studies. This came after only a handful of years since its founding in 2017, which, despite its relatively short lifespan, was felt by many in the craft world with a sense of overwhelming loss. It echoes the recent closing of the much older but similarly aligned Oregon College of Art and Craft in 2019, which sent the same waves of concern through the craft world as Warren Wilson’s announcement has now.

These degree-offering schools and programs are not alone either, as many other academic departments across the country or independent programs with a scholastic interest in craft have been either shuttered or restructured to sideline craft in recent years, along with countless museums and art spaces that have done the same. It’s understandable to look at all of this from a distance and feel worried, especially when considering the many individuals put in professional or financial jeopardy as a consequence.

It also seems clear that engaging craft solely through academia and museum structures is, for now, quite perilous, but what does the difficulty of this say about craft today as a distinct entity from art? If organized knowledge production on craft is to continue to exist, what exactly does it need to look like to survive? And who would these new understandings of craft need to serve?

To start, what exactly do we mean by craft? This is a question that has many answers for many different people, but here, craft will refer to the interconnected array of schools, galleries, publications, councils, and other organizations in this country that self-describe craft as their purpose. For this, think of sites like Penland School of Craft in North Carolina, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Maine, the American Craft Council in Minneapolis, or the Center for Craft in Asheville, to name only a few. In this sense, craft is simply a series of places and people who feel themselves to belong to a group called “craft,” of which there are a great many.

This way of seeing craft, as a real-time collection of self-organizing and self-defining entities, for now, centers not so much a set of romanticized ideals, but instead simply how craft already functions in this country. It not only acknowledges craft’s different histories, goals, and governing structures but activates them. Moreover, it shifts the question away from what is craft? toward what does craft do? And, still more importantly, what should craft be doing that it isn’t already? If this ecosystem of sites feels like an unnatural way to consider craft, remember that the art world works in much the same way: it too is comprised of schools, galleries, publications, and councils, and without needing to coordinate any further than in name alone—much like a religious doctrine—produces a complex, tangible, and coherent social object. And this comparison to the art world is appropriate, because in craft’s enduring outsider status to the art world lies its most important quality and potential, and is precisely where craft must pick up what remains of its scholastic strategy.
If you happen to agree with writers such as Gene Ray that the art world is “a social sub-system of capitalism,” and that, like all capitalist systems, it only really manages to “neutralize” the desire to enact social change, then the specter of an alternative world such as craft—imperfect as it may be—should interest you greatly. Craft has its own economy, set of sites, significant figures, history, rules, trends, and goals. The discrete space created and kept by craft, relatively unburdened by the demands of the larger art world, make it an ideal place for building and launching new social strategies. However, if you still agree that the art world, again, as an extension of capitalism, will take every chance it has to absorb all messages of dissent into its own aesthetic landscape and power-sustaining logic (i.e., bringing all would-be opposition over to its own side like a generation-spanning game of Red Rover), then an alternative force like craft should be very intentional about the way it interfaces with art.

This absorption is what has already been happening for the last several decades, as the art world has steadily opened its doors to the idea of craft. Art programs across the country now widely advertise courses that include the materials and techniques of what is either remembered as the country now widely advertise courses that include the opened its doors to the idea of craft. Art programs across the country now widely advertise courses that include the materials and techniques of what is either remembered as the country now widely advertise courses that include the opened its doors to the idea of craft. Art programs across the country now widely advertise courses that include the materials and techniques of what is either remembered as the country now widely advertise courses that include the opened its doors to the idea of craft. 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Art programs across the country now widely advertise courses that include the materials and techniques of what is either remember...
new craft writing should concern itself less with what craft is and where it has been and instead should act instructively about where craft could lead us and who craft is for.

and public messaging? The simplest answer, aside perhaps from a wide mixture of individual motivations and actionable conclusions, is just that the writing has yet to really target the working class directly and to functionize itself with any real purpose. This is why new craft writing should concern itself less with what craft is and where it has been and instead should act instructively about where craft could lead us and who craft is for.

Still, what would this realignment and intellectual “break” from past systems look like? Here, the craft world should continue, in part, what it already does very well—to exist as a long-form project of alternative educational and creative spaces in this country but to layer on top of its current ambitions a focused, class-conscious scholarship that is developed and circulated in-house. Craft’s most urgent responsibilities are to communicate and convince both itself and working-class people that it can offer tools of resistance to capitalism (and the art world) that nothing else can.

Organizational messaging and mission statements should move away from the neoliberal focus on the growth of individuals (their skills and singular practical well-being) and move briskly toward the development and fostering of shared radical knowledge: to know and actively speak on why it matters to continue teaching new generations how to literally, nonmetaphorically, rebuild the world. There is an extraordinary, revolutionary potential in the knowledge [required] to make clothes, to build dwellings, to fabricate tools, and to grow food. This is not to preclude the artistic and poetic potential of these skills as well, but to never forget what makes them truly unique in the first place. It can and should become commonplace for craft’s constituents to ask why? and commonplace for craft’s institutions to offer answers.

This radical course change, however, will be easier said than done. Currently, contemporary craft’s Achilles’ heel—its desire to resemble contemporary art and envy of its social position—is on full display when what currently passes for its journalism now takes the form of feature articles on the work of seemingly heroic individuals (past and present) and placid trends in its own myopic aesthetics. This implied goalpost to become-as-art-is is similarly telegraphed when programs like the ones at Oregon College of Art and Craft and Warren Wilson both open and close. But craft does not need to wait for academia or the art world to make room. With the structures it already has in place—its tight network of known entities, brick-and-mortar buildings, and active publication subscribers—the craft world can choose to pivot toward new and robust oppositional dialogues immediately.

To be clear, craft should not emulate a system of semesters or official degrees and certifications. It merely needs to express to its own present and future constituents—through books, lectures, writing residencies, podcasts, mission statements, and whatever other means are necessary—the simple message that contemporary art as it is will never be fully accessible to, or fully serve, everyone. Craft, however, could approach much closer to that role, as a potent anti-hegemonic project and long-term threat, but only if it is willing to shed an all-too-obvious desire to become like art, or worse, a desire to replace art altogether as the leading authoritarian structure on aesthetics and the decoration of power itself.

For those of us invested in the writing on, and the knowledge production surrounding craft, from here, let us consider this alternative path: to let the sleeping dog of Art Under Capitalism lie, and to do a 180 back toward not a romanticized past that never was, but instead to a future that celebrates craft as the collectivized outsider—the failure. Let’s continuously position craft as the threat of the ever-waiting alternative to things as they are and craft as an essential tool for intersectional class struggle. To seek not the unification of some perfect, single, craft-encompassing art world (an impossible, authoritarian fiction) but to further splinter these spheres into finer and finer parts, so that they may better reflect things as they are, and better serve the people as they are.

Autumn Gnadinger (they/them) is an artist, writer, and educator from Louisville, Kentucky, who currently resides in Philadelphia. L is an editor and cofounder of the journal Ruckus, which engages art in the American mid-South and Midwest. This article was originally published in Ruckus and is reprinted here with permission of the author. It will also soon appear in NCECA Journal.
On the east side of Asheville, North Carolina, an organization called BeLoved Asheville is building 12 affordable tiny homes for people experiencing housing insecurity. The 440-square-foot houses, built largely by volunteers and furnished by local artisans affiliated with the Furniture Society, will be clustered along a walkway and painted in bright colors. Called BeLoved Village, the project is the brainchild of Amy Cantrell, a Presbyterian pastor who understands the impact of the housing crisis on low-income residents. Through a series of community conversations, Cantrell learned what people want in a home. “People told us that the kind of housing they get put into isn’t the kind of housing they want,” she says. “We began to think seriously about how we could connect not only with carpenters … and the building industry, but also with folks who understood energetically what makes a space feel like a home, where people can belong and feel their worth.”

That’s where furniture maker and sculptor Ellie Richards came in. It was the end of summer 2020 and Richards was settling into her position as a resident artist at the Penland School of Craft in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. The excitement of organizing her new studio was tempered by the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Richards is a member of the Furniture Society, a national organization that advances the art of furniture making. The society had recently launched an initiative called Craft for a Greater Good (CGG) as a way to give back to the cities that hosted their annual conferences.

The 2020 conference was scheduled to take place in Asheville. Craving a way to make a positive contribution during an isolating time, Richards and her close friend and fellow furniture maker Annie Evelyn applied for and received funding from the Furniture Society to develop CGG programming in conjunction with the upcoming conference.

Like most in-person events during the pandemic, the conference was canceled. But there was opportunity in that loss. A founding Furniture Society member named Brent Skidmore, who is also the director of Craft Studies at the University of North Carolina–Asheville, told Evelyn and Richards about BeLoved Village.

BeLoved’s mission to create a sense of home for the housing insecure was a natural fit with CGG. “We wanted the new residents to feel like they were coming home to a place that isn’t furnished with benign, mass-produced objects that have no connection to the place itself,” Richards says.

Working with Skidmore’s university students, Richards and Evelyn created a built-in entertainment unit for BeLoved’s model home, which went up in the fall of 2020. That project led to classes in upholstery, where students could learn for free if they donated the chair they worked on to BeLoved.
Richards also taught a workshop to rehab Appalachian wooden chairs and make new seats with Shaker tape. Each chair has a hidden message of hope and good fortune tucked inside the weaving. “No one is ever going to see the messages,” says Richards. “But it brought us together in that moment to remember why our hands were doing this work.”

This summer, BeLoved broke ground on the project’s other 11 homes. Tenants, who will be chosen through a public application process, are scheduled to move in in early 2023. CGG is partnering with organizations across the country, including the California College of the Arts in Oakland and Berea College in Kentucky, to provide beautifully crafted homewares, such as bottle openers, drinking glasses, cutting boards, and quilted pillows. Residents will be able to choose which items they want, according to their needs and tastes.

Until the homes are finished, the furnishings are collected in a warehouse.

“We want to be very intentional about what the home environment looks like when people move in,” says Cantrell. “Handmade items are really important because they say somebody took the time to make something. That is a very clear message of love and that you are important, that you matter.”

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.
Internalized Landscapes

_A queer Nigerian American artist and architect reflects on how inhabiting mind, body, space, and Yoruba cosmology informs her practice._

BY ADEJOKE ADERONKE TUGBIYELE

**As I inhabit the studio,** I often consider differences between what we call art and design. Design emerges as a combination of intuition and function, whereas great art can emerge incredibly from trusted intuition alone. However, if one considers that both art and design carry a spiritual function, we begin to move into the creative space occupied by Indigenous societies and cultures around the world—a creativity that is aligned with nature and carries, by extension, the freedom to express one’s essential nature.

I have always inhabited the mental space that views art and architecture as a single entity. It could be my roots talking. West African Yoruba culture has for millennia established a highly developed cosmology and social architecture, which is not overtly apparent from its physical architecture. Perhaps this is why I find it so important to pull elements from one discipline to inform the other. Internally, I am always engaged in cross-disciplinary conversations in the studio.

However, the processes of both are very different. With the exception of some mixed-media works on canvas, which I have formed as sculptural reliefs from drawings, I do not produce any working drawings in my art practice, as I do with architecture. Certainly, never for the sculptures. It is pure intuition pouring forth.

When I look back at artworks I’ve created over the years, I always find threads that speak to architecture. Similarly, now that I am re-engaging with architecture, my artistic background shines through very clearly.

Within my multidisciplinary practice, I explore hybridity in terms of balancing masculine and feminine energy, or sexuality, but also when it comes to duality with my materials. Merging natural and industrial forms, I draw inspiration from Yoruba spirituality and cosmology as it flows with universal links that also seek to bridge and weave African, African American, and diaspora concerns.

My architectural design, _Visible/Invisible_, is informed by a sacred symbol of interlocking links within Yoruba culture. To help the understanding of those not familiar, I call it an “African Yin-Yang,” through which I invite visitors and audiences to seek reconciliation within themselves. I encourage them to ask deeper questions, such as, “What is your destiny or purpose?” Essentially, it’s about developing a worldview or deeper sense of the environment that permeates all aspects of life.

**Where I’m From / What I Explore**

Seven or eight years of my childhood were spent living in Lagos, Nigeria. Some of my time there involved yearly trips to Igbajo—located in Osun State—to visit my grandparents and extended family relatives. Those long trips out of the highly populated megacity, through the tropical rainforest, and then up into the hilly, mountainous terrain of Igbajo, made a sound impression on me that remains to this day.

In 1988, my family returned to Brooklyn, New York, where I’d been born. Soon after, I enrolled in the architecture program at the specialized High School of Art and Design in Manhattan. From as early as age five, I was exposed to highly diverse landscapes and environments, which became internalized over time.

This early foundation, coupled with my travels as an adult to different parts of the world within Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and various regions of the United States, means that today, I have the ability to navigate different types of cultures, areas, environments, and cities with relative ease. I understand how all human beings are linked in nuanced ways, beyond identity. And so my work explores the concept of transformation toward transcending identity, while simultaneously queering dominant space.
Tis es aut omnisim conecaborro que cupta incitaquia im reperrore des.
Inhabiting the Body / Honoring the Studio
The way I inhabit my body and space is by looking “beneath the surface.” In essence, it is a spiritual journey which then manifests physically in the work. I believe that within the studio, it is important to inhabit mind, body, and spirit simultaneously so that the artist can be a master of her domain and operate with a sense of balance and sovereignty.

It has taken time to arrive at true balance, simply because of the spiritual discord taking place within my own physical body—difficult years of “coming out” as a lesbian much later in life—and to come to a place of acceptance as I occupy my body and environment.

I believe in the power of art to transform us, both physically and spiritually. I thus view the studio as sacred space, whereby artmaking is a form of meditation and prayer. I work best in complete silence most of the time.

What I Observe / How I Create
I try to spend much time observing nature. I also have started merging art and architecture in new and profound ways, thanks to my recent enrollment in the Design Discovery program at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design in Cambridge, Massachusetts. While there, I stayed in a lovely home in Watertown that had beautiful front and rear gardens filled with a diversity of plants and flowers, along with a few sculptures of the sacred Buddha. I love to enter a garden studio with a sense of wonder, magic, and anticipation.

I approach nature with the open willingness to discover a newly emerged branch, the beginnings of a new stem, perhaps the opening of a flower. The abundant fresh air, the morning sunlight, and the chirping of birds are invigorating. Within a seed, a plant, or a flower are miraculous creative forms with their own unique order. A tree is a structure with deep, strong roots beneath the ground's surface that render it able to withstand storms. From this, we can draw metaphors about our own cultural roots and how they anchor and guide us.

The smell of fresh grass and plants is a delightful natural intoxicant, which feeds into the energy I need and desire for my work. In the garden, creative ideas come to mind rapidly and spontaneously. So,
It is important to inhabit mind, body, and spirit simultaneously so that the artist can be a master of her domain and operate with a sense of balance and sovereignty.
when I begin producing sculpture, a great flow is already established that lends itself quite well to my overall process.

Among the primary materials I use in the studio are palm spines (*igbale* in Yoruba), bundled to form traditional African brooms. Palm carries a social and political charge related to the multiplicity of its uses over millennia: spiritual, medicinal, industrial, and cultural. My sculpture *The Road to Divinity*, which depicts two female bodies intertwined, weaves palm spines with wire and metal, combining natural and industrial elements.

**Who Inspires Me / My Royal Family**

I draw inspiration from my contemporaries in the visual arts, especially queer and female artists, and artists of African descent. My practice has been enriched by so many, including Sokari Douglas Camp, Zanele Muholi, Rotimi Fani-Kayode, Yinka Shonibare, and El Anatsui, a sculptor from Ghana who lives and works in Nigeria. Anatsui’s work, a sort of cloth made of aluminum bottle caps and copper wire, seemingly insignificant materials, carries with it loaded history while presenting as pure poetry. It speaks, so that when we “wear” it we are speaking as newly transformed beings.

Much of my work similarly speaks to the idea of interwoven histories, both materially and formally, across different contexts in time and space. Yoruba cosmology and aesthetics understand that all life is interconnected.

My first interaction with Anatsui was during the construction of his pyramid structure at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African Art, during its *Earth Matters* exhibition. I recognize that my background as an architect was central to how I approached the installation of Anatsui’s incredible work. This led Anatsui to invite me to manage his subsequent installation at Amsterdam’s *ArtZuid* exhibition. The cross-disciplinary approach of art and design found a common language that we both recognized.
I also am inspired by ancestors and elders within my royal family, including my grandpa, Chief Emmanuel Akande Tugbiyele (a Harvard Graduate School of Education alumnus), who laid strong foundations for my growth and development, and my paternal grandmother, Princess Ruth Adetutu Tugbiyele. However, I understand the responsibility that comes with privilege. As the saying goes, “To whom much is given, much is expected.”

At this time, I am revisiting a mixed-media fabric work called Ellen that brings many of the themes of my life and artistic practice together. The piece is an attempt to capture the profile of love at a distance. It is inspired by the general sensibility of the original image, which I read as bridging Eastern, Western, and African aesthetics. There is a sense of meditation and ritual in the woman’s face, and a heightened self-awareness. I have delicately applied palm spines to her cloak. Ultimately, with Ellen, I have romantically queered traditional royal regalia within Yoruba culture. The woman’s quiet and contemplative demeanor resonated so strongly with me that I am reinterpreting the work with a personal photo.

Ellen is personal to me for another reason: it employs as canvas a Dutch wax fabric, a piece of the actual family cloth I wore at my grandpa’s funeral. In revisiting this work, I am crossing a new threshold of inhabiting mind, body, and spirit simultaneously.

Adejoke Aderonke Tugbiyele is an award-winning visual artist and architect living in New York City. Her work is included in public, private, and corporate collections around the world.
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Come In, Sit Down. Wood sculptor Ido Yoshimoto’s Inverness, California, cabin exudes comfort and welcome. When Yoshimoto, godson of legendary sculptor J.B. Blunk, acquired the 1980s-era structure, it was abandoned and in rough shape. He remade the cabin using wood scraps from his art studio and filled it with handcrafted furniture and objects he collected while traveling or that were made by artist friends and family. The result is a dwelling that’s deeply inviting, with warm wood playing a central role. Yoshimoto, who began as an arborist, showcases various grains throughout, from the floor to the window frames to the tables and benches. In addition, he’s filled his living room, pictured here, with homey necessities like textiles, books, candles, ceramics—some by his father, Rick Yoshimoto—and a fluffy rug. The cumulative result is a room that invites visitors to enter, look around, and stay a while. —The Editors

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