2021 Year in Review

American Craft Council
Our Mission

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

Cover: Stacked Rocks by Spring 2021
American Craft contributor
Michele Quan. Photo by Bobby Fisher.
2021

A year of building on new foundations.

If in 2020 we reimagined how we support the craft community, 2021 was all about refining and expanding our new efforts. We finessed our online marketplaces, shifted the focus of our storytelling, and introduced relevant online programming.

A year of embracing connections.

At the heart of all ACC programs is an affirmation of the human need to connect. Still faced with isolation, we created platforms for discussion, shined the spotlight on artists’ stories, and set ourselves up to return to in-person activities.

A year of taking action toward equity.

With a reaffirmed commitment to equity in our work, we created content and produced events that better reflect our diverse and inclusive craft field. Most importantly, we didn’t do it alone but in a collaboration with the artists, curators, writers, organizers, and more who make up our inspiring community.

Four Pillars Guide Our Work

**Creative Economies**
Investing in makers and their entrepreneurial efforts so they can fully live creative and sustainable lives.

**Public Voice for Craft**
Serving as the nexus of information, content producer, and national network building broader audiences who participate in and support craft.

**Stewardship & Legacy**
Documenting and preserving generational knowledge and supporting new research and scholarship in the field.

**Social Impact & Community**
Investing in and supporting the diverse ways that craft impacts communities and culture, the humanity it connects us to, and the futures it’s creating.

Inclusion and Equity Statement

ACC is committed to justice, inclusiveness, and equity. Drawing on craft’s rich legacy of openness and its deep roots in all cultures, the Council will work to create opportunities for creative people from all walks of life.
Creative Economies

Refining our online marketplace opportunities.

ACC presented Baltimore Craft Week in February and Atlanta/Southeast Craft Week in September. Online marketplace visitors could not only shop from and learn about artists from across the country but also experience content created in collaboration with regional partners. We were able to open these two events to more artists than the previous year, including those from historically underrepresented communities.

In 2021 Atlanta/Southeast Craft Week featured a pop-up and other programming that took place in-person in Atlanta. We look forward to carrying our e-commerce learnings with us as we introduce a hybrid model for our marketplaces in 2022, which will take place online as well as in person.

A new program to help emerging artists cultivate their careers.

In 2021 we piloted the Emerging Artists Cohort, a professional development program for early-career artists. Through facilitated workshops, presentations, and conversations, the program supported 13 innovative artists new to their careers who are expanding craft boundaries and challenging us to new perspectives. We received 185 applications for only 13 juried spots, showing the extraordinary need for this type of program and training.

As a result of our successful pilot of this program, the Windgate Charitable Foundation is now funding the Emerging Artists Cohort for three years, from 2022–2024.

383 exhibitors total (up 88% from 2020)
$403K in artist sales for our two online events
34% BIPOC artists
27% artists new to ACC
98 online articles posted

300,000+ website visitors
Public Voice for Craft

*American Craft magazine, reimagined.*

In spring of 2021 we refreshed and relaunched *American Craft* with a new design and approach to storytelling. We shifted to a quarterly publication that considers craft’s role in culture, celebrates the diversity of American makers and their craft, and shares insights from artists in their own voices. Artist-crafted content is supported by a grant from the Windgate Charitable Foundation. The year’s four issues explored themes that resonate universally—Nourish, Flourish, Kinship, and Wonder.

The diversity of our craft community is reflected in the pages of our magazine, with an average of 65 percent of the editorial pages having been either about BIPOC and/or LGBTQ artists, about craft educational programs serving primarily BIPOC communities, and/or written by BIPOC and/or LGBTQ writers. Additionally, in spring 2021 we launched a new program donating ads in support of BIPOC-led craft organizations and efforts in our community.

*Serving up artists’ stories and craft news online.*

We continued to engage our audience digitally as well as in print through our monthly *Craft Dispatch* newsletter, Q&A blog post series *The Queue*, quarterly *The Crafty Librarian* newsletter, and other ACC-exclusive online content.

1. Clay samples at Studio Alluvium (featured in the Spring 2021 issue of *American Craft*). Photo by Mitch Iburg.

2. April Stone weaves a black ash basket (featured in the Spring 2021 issue of *American Craft*). Photo courtesy of the artist.


4. Matthew Nafranowicz as featured in *The Queue*. Photo by Emily Julka.

5. Bisa Butler (featured in the Fall 2021 issue of *American Craft*). Photo by Nonexitfiction, courtesy of the Claire Oliver Gallery.

6. Tanya Aguiniga (featured in the Spring 2021 issue of *American Craft*). Photo by Katie Levine.
Our publication turned 80 in 2021!  
The ACC Library & Archives preserves this history and more.

In 1941, the Handcraft Cooperative League of America—the organization that would become the American Craft Council—published its first magazine. Since then, our nonprofit has evolved alongside the contemporary craft movement, and today the ACC Library & Archives provides a wealth of resources for anyone interested in studying craft, from historians to curious makers. While the library was closed to the public during the pandemic, we saw increased use of our online resources, with our librarian assisting more than 200 researchers virtually! We celebrated the reopening of our library space to the public in October with an open house event.

You can support this premiere craft resource directly through a new program launched in 2021, the Friends of the ACC Library & Archives. Learn more at craftcouncil.org/LibraryFriends.

Honoring the lives and work of two visionaries in the craft field.

In April 2021, ACC partnered with the Museum of Arts and Design to host an event celebrating the extraordinary life and legacy of our visionary friend and colleague Paul J. Smith, who passed away a year earlier. Paul was a curator ahead of his time who had an enormous influence on the field of studio craft and the history of the Council. More than 150 people joined us for the tribute to reminisce, share stories, and remember Paul.

Lois Moran, the longest-serving editor of American Craft magazine and a monumental figure in the history of ACC, died in late 2020. To honor her tireless devotion to the field, ACC created the Lois Moran Award for Craft Writing, an annual $3,000 juried award recognizing the work of writers committed to moving the craft conversation forward. The award was presented in fall 2021 for the first time to three writers: Velina Robinson Glass, Kelly Pendergrast, and Aram Han Sifuentes. Learn more at craftcouncil.org/LoisMoranAward.
20,000 print publications
4,000 files on craft artists
4 major archival collections
1 robust digital collection

1. Photos taken at the ACC Library open house event in October 2021, with librarian Beth Goodrich leading a tour of the space (left). Photos by Marcus Styles.


6 forums and talks in 2021

27 presenters

52% of presenters were BIPOC

1,228 program participants
American Craft Council

Social Impact & Community

**American Craft Forums—a space to explore new ways of thinking about craft.**

First piloted in 2020, our American Craft Forums program has developed into a quarterly conversation series that ties into each themed issue of *American Craft* magazine. These online discussions feature diverse perspectives from the craft community and provide a space to share ideas about how craft can help us address the issues we face as a society.

**Future Insights—a new series of talks aimed at creating an equitable and thriving field.**

In December 2021 ACC presented Future Insights, a series of three online conversations designed to allow craft organizations to listen to our communities and their needs and develop new solutions. In addition to sharing perspectives from guest speakers, the Future Insight talks provided opportunities for participants to share their views as we worked together to understand what a healthy, equitable craft ecology looks like and how it can thrive.
Thank You to Our Supporters

The people and organizations on these pages have been generous partners in our efforts, and we thank them deeply for their commitment to the continued vitality and growth of the craft field. This report recognizes those who donated to ACC between October 1, 2020, and November 30, 2021, for any purpose including annual giving, project support, sponsorship, and gifts to special funds. Every contribution is important, and all of our supporters have our heartfelt thanks.

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