

CRAFT CAN

Craft Think Tank
Oct 20–22, 2021

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Copyediting: Liz Carleton
Graphic Design: Manuel Miranda Practice
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The Center for Craft is a 501(c)3 nonprofit advancing the understanding of craft. Based in Asheville, North Carolina, we identify and convene craft makers, curators, and researchers and match them with resources, tools, and networks to advance their practice.

www.centerforcraft.org



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TABLE OF CONTENTS



OVERVIEW	6
INTERDISCIPLINARITY	10
Who Attended and the Expertise They Brought	
CRITICAL INTERSECTIONS	20
WHAT CRAFT CAN ...	34
APPENDICES A, B, AND C	40

OVERVIEW

The background features a vibrant, abstract composition of overlapping organic shapes. A large, dark purple shape is at the top left, partially overlapping a bright pink shape. Below these, there are several overlapping shapes in shades of blue, purple, and pink, creating a layered, dynamic effect. The overall color palette is rich and saturated, with a mix of cool and warm tones.

The Center for Craft began hosting Craft Think Tank in 2002 with the charge to identify and prioritize initiatives that advance the understanding of craft in the United States. Over the past 18 years, these convenings have resulted in projects that have made significant headway toward placing craft within a larger cultural landscape.

The theme for the 2021 Craft Think Tank was “Craft Can,” with the agenda to explore potential opportunities and directions regarding where craft can go and what craft can do. The 2021 Craft Think Tank took place on October 20–22; due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it was held virtually. Over this three-day period, professionals and thought leaders from a wide range of fields — science, humanities, health, design, and the arts — convened and collaborated with craft leaders and innovators, working together to uncover fresh ideas and perspectives.

The 2021 Craft Think Tank organizers consisted of: Stephanie Moore (Executive Director for the Center for Craft), Marilyn Zapf (Director of Programs and Curator for the Center for Craft), and Dr. Juliana Barton (ACLS Leading Edge Fellow at the Center for Craft). Additionally, the Center for Craft engaged a team of facilitators from the consulting firm Creation in Common. The Creation in Common team worked alongside the organizing team throughout the conception of the “Craft Can” central theme, led the event’s facilitation, and was responsible for the synthesis that followed — culminating in the creation of this report.

The concept of bringing such a wide-ranging group of professionals into the craft conversation was born from a series of four advisory meetings that took place in March, April, June, and July 2021. The advisors¹, seven individuals deeply connected to craft (some to the Center for Craft, specifically), convened in preparation for the Craft Think Tank, and the resulting conversations sought to tease out and discuss the needs of craft, the path it is currently on, and the necessity of other potential pathways. In addition to the advisor meetings, a series of stakeholder engagement interviews were conducted.

The Center for Craft organizers, Creation in Common facilitators, and advisors collaborated to identify seven individuals² whose voices could provide the perspectives of historically marginalized and/or underrepresented individuals/groups/populations and help bring about a more complete understanding of the needs within the craft domain. These individuals were interviewed — a process that helped shape the direction of deeper planning conversations and facilitation decisions, and yielded invaluable insights into how craft is growing and changing.

Throughout the advisory meetings, there was an acknowledgment of the present tendency for craft conversations to take place in an echo chamber — and the desire to break away from this trend by focusing on craft as well as on the adjacent directions that craft is moving in.

¹ See Appendix B

² See Appendix C

Craft is about making and creating — having something that is part of an everyday life, but is beautiful, functional, full of ideas, full of tradition and memories, full of hope. What the Center does is about connecting people to that.

— Participant Stephen Velasquez

Change needs advocacy beyond the imagined bounds [of craft]. Without it, aren't we just going to be talking to ourselves again?

— Advisor and Participant Cindi Strauss

During the Craft Think Tank planning discussions, the idea of facilitating reciprocal and generative interdisciplinary, craft-adjacent conversations came to light. To achieve this goal, the 2021 Craft Think Tank would bring together individuals who showcased expertise in their field and people with connections to craft — those who would cross domains, bringing different perspectives and knowledge of diverse areas of expertise both inside and outside craft. The goal was to intentionally change the inputs that are typically a part of craft conversations to create outputs that foster more expansive thinking and ideas and a greater depth of conversation. Through shared learning and equal exchange of knowledge, these participants could collaboratively build common narratives and visions by engaging in a variety of facilitated discussions and activities. The overriding idea was to change craft’s role in the conversation about the future, welcoming novel thinking and ideas from shared connectivity.

The Craft Think Tank organizers and advisors collaborated to brainstorm about potential participants who could take part in such a conversation — working with great care and intentionality to find a group of people who would:

- **represent a wide range of voices from within craft, in many different roles;**
- **represent a wide range of voices from areas of expertise that are not commonly thought of as connected to craft; and**
- **bring forward perspectives, stories, and experiences that have been historically excluded from the conversation.**

Those who chose to accept the invitation to participate in the 2021 Craft Think Tank were offered a stipend of \$900. Their stipends and the convening itself were funded by a grant from the Windgate Foundation.

The following report, written by Creation in Common, synthesizes and summarizes the 2021 Craft Think Tank participants and their areas of expertise, and details the critical areas of intersection and main themes of the discussions — the resulting ideations of what “craft can.”

INTER DISCIPLINARITY



Who Attended and the
Expertise They Brought

Interdisciplinarity was the strength and foundation of this gathering; the Craft Think Tank was a success because of the diversity of thought and expertise in the room. Participants brought a breadth of craft knowledge and experience, as well as a range of diverse thought leadership and inspiring works from outside fields — some of which were adjacent to craft, and some not.

In advance of the Craft Think Tank, participants were asked to create a short PechaKucha-style presentation of their responses to the following questions:

What is your area of expertise?

What are you working on that is most important right now?

What is the change you are hoping your work and efforts will bring forward?

A PechaKucha is a visual presentation using a predetermined number of slides that automatically advance every 20 seconds. The specific parameters of PechaKucha-style presentations are to encourage the presenter to rely more heavily on visuals than words, as well as keeping the information they share purposeful and brief. The following table provides a brief overview of the participants, as well as insights into their presentations.

Dr. Jono A. Anzalone

he/him

Jono is the Executive Director of the Climate Initiative, a nonpartisan organization in Kennebunk, ME, that aspires to educate, empower, and activate 10 million youth around climate action by 2025. Jono is also Vice-Chair of the CERF+ board, which serves artists who work in craft disciplines by providing a safety net to support strong and sustainable careers.

“Most of what I see in terms of intersectionality with craft has been through impacted communities. What’s most important to me right now, having responded to natural disasters over the last 24 years, is really trying to create the sense of the positive things that come with Silicon Valley. Not the negative, but the sense of purpose and driven expertise by multiple disciplines that really can get ahead of what we’re seeing in terms of the disastrous impacts of climate change.”

“We are trying to use arts as a vehicle to disarm people that may not believe in the science of climate change or are so overwhelmed by the science that it becomes psychologically arming in ways that we think about how to engage and move past, simply talking about sea level rise or rising temperatures using the three buckets that are listed here.”



Anna Burckhardt

she/her

Anna is a curator and writer from Bogotá, Colombia, whose work lies at the intersection of design, craft, and contemporary art. Currently, she holds the position of Neville Bryan Assistant Curator in the Department of Architecture and Design at the Art Institute of Chicago. Before joining AIC, she was a curatorial assistant at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, where she organized and co-organized several exhibitions including *Projects: Carolina Caycedo and David de Rozas* and *Neri Oxman: Material Ecology*.

“Craft practices can help us provide new frameworks for collaboration and knowledge exchange, particularly around themes of nature and ecology.”

“The silk pavilion is basically an exploration of the ways in which humans, robots, and animals can collaborate. One of the things that my work with the silk pavilion continues to explore is: how can we co-create while thinking about the best interest of the silkworm and not necessarily the best interest of humans? How can we really create mutually beneficial collaborations with other species through craft?”



Installation view of the exhibition
“Neri Oxman: Material Ecology.”
February 22, 2020 – October 18, 2020.
IN2444.1. Photo: Denis Doorly.

Alison Croney Moses

she/her

Alison is the Associate Director at the Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts in Boston, MA, where she founded the Teen Bridge and Artist in Residence programs to help cultivate the current and next generation of artists and leaders in art and craft. Her work is in the collections at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and has been featured in *American Craft* magazine.

"I want access to arts education for all the folks that have not been historically included in these spaces."

"There is a thread between all of my practices — I keep coming back to pushing the limits and boundaries of how we could envision and build spaces and systems differently. I am driven to think about how we work with community and engage cross-generationally, and how these could come together to create better futures."



Woodworking student using a hammer to attach two pieces of wood during a class at a partner school. Photo Credit: Craig Bailey/Perspective Photo.

Pearl Dick

she/her

Pearl is the Artistic Director of Firebird Community Arts and co-founder of Project FIRE, a program designed to promote healing through glassblowing for young people who have been injured by gun violence. A glass artist and community builder based in Chicago, IL, she was recently a visiting artist at the Museum of Glass hot shop, while her work was included in *Transparency*, a group show at the museum composed of LGBTQIA+ glass artists.

"I create artwork that explores our human connection and the relationships we form with one another. My interest in the subject matter, as well as the collaborative nature of creating these pieces, is inextricably tied to my passion for teaching and community."

"We are working to broaden the depth of voice of people in historically underrepresented groups — so they are not only part of the cultural narrative, but integral to it. Our particular path is the arts as a way in and as a way through."



Dr. Nettrice Gaskins

she/her
2017 Craft Think Tank attendee

Nettrice is an African American digital artist, academic, cultural critic, and advocate of STEAM fields. In her work, she explores “techno-vernacular creativity” and Afrofuturism, and has authored her first full-length book, *Techno-Vernacular Creativity and Innovation*. Currently, she is a resident in the Autodesk Technology Centers Oversight Network, as well as the Assistant Director of the Lesley STEAM Learning Lab at Lesley University in Cambridge, MA.

“My work amplifies creative and cultural practices of underrepresented ethnic groups by addressing historical and persistent omission in Western school, in context of scientific histories, theories, contributions, or ways of being that belong to these groups. It demonstrates activities that are context bound — tied to everyday experiences of cultural practitioners and constructed using their tacit social knowledge that is rooted and the contemporary, culturally relevant making practices.”



Cannupa Hanska Luger

he/him
2020 Craft Research Fund Artist Fellow

Cannupa is a New Mexico-based multidisciplinary artist and an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold (Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Lakota and European descent). He is a recipient of a 2021 United States Artists Fellowship Award for Craft and was named a 2021 GRIST Fixer. He is a 2020 Creative Capital Fellow and a 2020 Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow.

“A lot of the work that I’ve been doing of late, or at least a major focus in it, is these projects that are close to transistor technology and Indigenous futurism. I am beginning my participation in something that’s much older than me in my lifetime, and it’s an extension of my ancestors and working in a science fiction kind of realm. It’s also a contribution to ancestors who are not yet born.”

“We had tons of allies, but an ally is not what we need. We need accomplices. We need people to participate and invest in something that they believe in, for them to even have a stronger return on their participation. So, a lot of my work looks at: how do you transform an ally into an accomplice?”



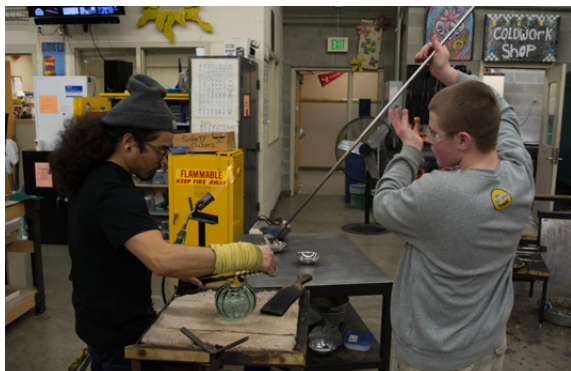
Dr. Kimberly Keith

she/her

Kimberly is the Executive Director of Hilltop Artists in Tacoma, WA. She currently chairs the Arts and Culture Coalition of Pierce County; serves on the Leadership Team of the Out of School and Summer Learning Collaborative Action Network at the Foundation for Tacoma Students; and is on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee for Pilchuck Glass School.

“The mission of Hilltop Artists is the most important thing to me right now—using glass arts to connect young people from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds to better futures.”

“I am making the world a better place, one person at a time. I’m creating the neighbors I want to live next to, the community members I want to hang out with, the people who will take care of me in my dotage, and the community I want to live in. I want it to be the best for my students — the best education, the best skills, and the best futures.”



Aaron McIntosh

he/him

2006 Windgate Lamar Fellow; Center for Craft Board Member

Aaron is a cross-disciplinary artist whose work mines the intersections of material culture, family tradition, sexual desire, and identity politics in a range of works including quilts, sculpture, collage, drawing, and writing. He is currently an Associate Professor in the Fibres and Material Practices program at Concordia University in Montreal.

“I create artwork that explores our human connection and the relationships we form with one another. My interest in the subject matter, as well as the collaborative nature of creating these pieces, is inextricably tied to my passion for teaching and community.”

“We are working to broaden the depth of voice of people in historically underrepresented groups — so they are not only part of the cultural narrative, but integral to it. Our particular path is the arts as a way in and as a way through.”



Al Murray

they/them

Review Panelist for 2020 Craft Futures Fund grant

Al is an artist and social justice organizer who uses creativity and connection to work toward equity and justice, with a strong focus on queer and feminist activist art. They are the Director of Relationships and Special Projects at the Campaign for Southern Equality in Asheville, NC.

“We are sort of a ragtag group of folks from all walks of life, working on behalf of the lived and legal equality of LGBTQ folks across the South. We do that with community health initiatives, policy, and legislative work, and by telling the story of our work. I tell the story of our communities, of queer folks, Southerners, poor folks, organizers, and makers. What is most important is connecting Southern queer folks and creatives with resources and each other.”

“The most important work I do will be anti-racist and collaborative, and I hope that work will lead to a shift from competition to collaboration and cooperation for folks seeking to resource queer people in creatives. I want to help tell a new story about the LGBTQ South — one that is triumphant and progressive.”



Photo: Liz Williams.

Gabriella Nelson

she/her

Gabriella is a mother and city planner, possessing a strong interest at the confluence of urban development, wellness, and critical pedagogy. She currently works in Philadelphia, PA, as the Associate Director of Policy at Maternity Care Coalition, advocating for policies that uplift caregivers and their families.

“My experiences working in city planning are a reflection of a very white, male-dominated perspective. So, while I absolutely consider myself a city planner, I don’t consider myself an expert in the professionalization of it because it historically hasn’t really made room for my truth. For me, city planning is about creating inclusive spaces in cities. It’s about disrupting power struggles involved in building and controlling space and allowing for a design to be an intersectional reflection of different classes, races, immigration statuses, abilities, and genders.”

“One of the most important projects I’m working on is Designing Motherhood. The future of motherhood, in whatever form that comes in, is communal and is strengthened by sharing our stories and listening to each other’s stories. I want to amplify the stories and voices of people that are most impacted by sexual reproductive oppression. I want to turn to them as the experts and compensate them for their expertise — because you don’t need a degree or a big title to participate in and deserve to be compensated for this work.”



Gabriella feeding her son, August.

Photo: Dr. Gayle Nelson (my mommy 😊).

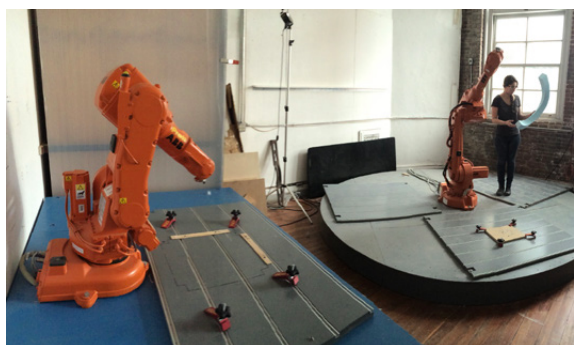
Mark Parsons

he/him

Mark is an artist, entrepreneur, designer, educator, and technologist. He is the founder and Executive Director of the Consortium for Research and Robotics in New York City, the Director of the Science and Technology Entry Program (NYSED + Pratt), and the Director of Production Technologies for Pratt Institute Architecture.

“We’re bringing in all these technologies and it is changing the way people are thinking about design and representation. Ultimately, with digital manufacturing, it’s changing the way they’re thinking about making. Collaborative practices, art, ethical approaches to innovation with technology — it’s ultimately a conversation about how people come together in an authentic space.”

“What we are doing is bringing people together and lowering the bar of access to extraordinary technologies.”



Dr. Kayleigh Perkov

she/her

2015 Craft Research Fund grant recipient; 2020 Curatorial Fellow

Kayleigh is a historian who studies the intersection of craft and technology. Her work has been highlighted, nationally and internationally, in publications and exhibition catalogs. She is currently working on a book project that extends her research into the impact of information-age technology upon craft practices.

“My work really looks at craft in a variety of guises: the embrace of the handmade and the counterculture, the hidden histories of skilled craft, knowledge in histories of industrialization and technology, and looking at the ways in which craft can really give us an alternative view of contemporary technology.”

“My projects are always seeking to question: how do we look to craft to give us different visions of a technological future, but also engage with reckoning? How do we not lapse into romanticization through our engagement with craft history?”

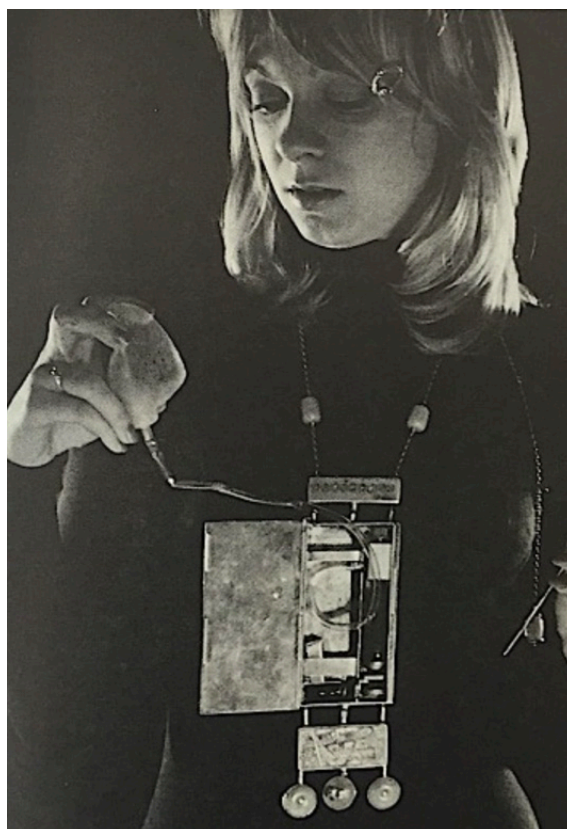


Photo of model wearing Mary Ann Scherr’s ‘Electronic Oxygen Mask Pendant’ (1972) M-86 Portable World (October 5, 1973 – January 1, 1974) Museum of Contemporary Crafts – Main Gallery Exhibitions, American Craft Council Archives. Courtesy American Craft Council Library & Archives.

Sarah Shaw

she/her

Sarah is a labor organizer with AFSCME District Council 47 in Philadelphia, PA, with a strong focus on building unions with museum and cultural workers. Sarah also engages and leads museum education and social justice work for K-12 students as a collaborator at, most recently, the Delaware Art Museum.

"I see my role as scaffolding a constructive learning process and doing much more listening than talking. Not so much delivering content, but sort of midwifing understanding of our construction of knowledge. The unique thing about the organizing conversation is that understanding isn't the end point. The goal is to move from understanding to action."

"The most important work that I'm doing right now is supporting worker activists, mostly in museums, organizing and unionizing their workplaces, and helping them to win strong contracts."



Cindi Strauss

she/her

2005 Craft Research Fund grant recipient;
Center for Craft board member

Cindi is the Sara and Bill Morgan Curator of Decorative Arts, Craft, and Design and Assistant Director of Programming at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, TX — responsible for the acquisition, research, publication, and exhibition of post-1900 decorative arts, design, and craft. She recently coauthored the book *In Flux: Contemporary Jewelry and the Counterculture*.

"It's one of the great pleasures of my job to be able to contextualize craft, not only within my discipline, but also with other art in the museum."

"The lines between craft and design in the past two decades have blurred and continue to blur. This is an area in which we can introduce visitors to many different types of ideas."



The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Craft Galleries, 2021.
Photo: Thomas R. DuBrock.

Sarah Turner

she/her

Sarah is President of North Bennet Street School in Boston, MA, which trains students for careers in traditional craft and trade, helping them achieve meaningful lives and livelihoods. An educator and artist, Sarah has worked at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, the Rhode Island School of Design, the State University of New York at New Paltz, and the Oregon College of Art and Craft.

“I’m leading a school that merges these things — usefulness, directness, time, and sentiment — and craft is intersected with trade and with regional American history. It’s orienting toward employment, jobs, and work. I am helping this school be a place that welcomes and listens to both the expert and novice — helping to make shifts that are going to outlast me and ones that will tell the next history of a place that can broaden the idea of expertise and who gets to imagine themselves as an expert.”

“The most important thing we are working on is skill building, training, and making things by hand. Our expertise is sometimes in slowness and in care. It’s an expertise around histories and tradition — we’re experts in things happening behind the scenes. Our expertise is in repair and then historical methods.”



Photo: Emily Alexander.

L. Stephen Velasquez

he/him

L. Stephen Velasquez is a Curator for the Division of Cultural and Community Life at the National Museum of American History in Washington, DC. He is currently involved in the exhibition *Entertainment Nation*, as well as a research project on Mexican vineyard workers in Napa and a future exhibit on lowriders.

“I’m passionate about telling those stories of Latino history and immigrants. I’m involved with food, activism, religion — all things that help tell the story as curators. My job is interpreting what people, like yourselves, do as artists.”

“I’m really excited about working on the intersections of labor, immigration, and Latino representation. Who is included, who is equal, and whose stories we tell. It’s about listening to the people in their own voice and what they have to say, learning from them, and appreciating that they are the experts — the idea of craft can take on very many different forms.”



CRITICAL INTERSECTIONS



The Craft Think Tank participants represented a wide array of areas of expertise, both within craft and outside it. Throughout the three days, they engaged in a number of discussions and exercises that facilitated an exploration of the connections and intersections that exist between these areas.

The following seven themes capture the essence of these conversations:

Circulating vs. Harvesting Value

Community Building

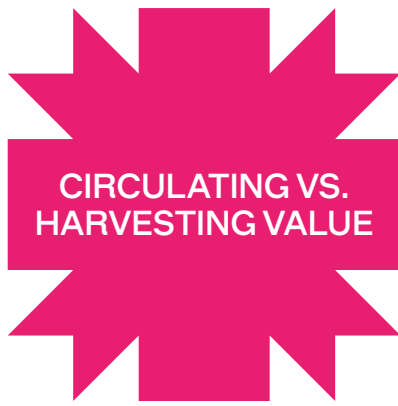
**Empowerment through
Agency and Accessibility**

**Construction and
Deconstruction of Systems**

Craft as Technology and Innovation

**Embracing the Expansiveness
of Craft**

**Telling More Inclusive
Craft Histories**



CIRCULATING VS. HARVESTING VALUE

The theme of Circulating vs. Harvesting Value spoke to the need of returning value to communities, as opposed to a community's created objects, traditions and cultural practices, and stories profiting someone or something else that does not have direct communal ties. In these discussions, "value" was defined in several ways:

- as an object or creation that brings about monetary gain or tells a cultural or ancestral story;
- as people (in terms of their knowledge, skills and abilities, culture, stories, heritage, etc.); and
- as resources (such as funding, opportunities, basic necessities, and support by and inclusion into community and communal knowledge sharing).

One of the Craft Think Tank participants, Dr. Nettrice Gaskins, expressed the sentiment of this theme:

Instead of going into a community and extracting knowledge and talent and leaving them with nothing, why not support, lead, and fund projects that circulate value back into communities?

It's not about going in and taking, appropriating, or seeing what you can get. It's about going in and working with the makers, the community builders, the community members, and making sure there is a true cycle of production and value. Generate value and then put it right back into the community.

Another participant, Alison Croney Moses, offered an example of value harvesting when she spoke of Indigenous woven baskets being put on display in a gallery — this benefits the institution it is showcased in, but not the maker's community (nor, more often, the maker themselves). Further highlighting how the objects of creation are often used as a tool of value harvesting, participant Cannupa Hanska Luger noted:

We have to interrogate the value of objects as 'artifacts,' which references process and people. Certainly, that has been co-opted by monetary value, institutions, and galleries because it takes all the attention off process and people and embeds it in object — which I can now sell to you for some exchange value rather than cultural or storytelling value.

Even this storytelling value that a person or object holds can become a central way that value is either harvested from or circulated within a community. Whether it harvests or circulates is dependent upon who has agency over the story and ownership of the object. Communities who have regained agency and ownership over their stories and objects are empowered to cultivate and circulate

their own value, as opposed to being stripped of it.

Other prominent areas of discussion within this theme included the following reflections:

- **Communities need monetary and organizational support in their efforts to share resources with one another.**
- **Community members should be recognized for the value they add to the environment around them, as well as to society as a whole. Strong communities amplify those who are a part of them through trust, safety, and/or affinity groups.**
- **Craft and society need to reflect upon how craft, society, and power structures currently recognize the value within communities and those who build them, and how they should be recognized.**
- **What must be deconstructed so the systems that harvest value from communities are broken down? What needs to be built up and put into place as safeguards against value harvesting and the tendency of the system (and the people within it) to resist change? What is craft's role in this, both in perpetuating these systems and in being a part of changing them?**



The idea of prioritizing value circulation vs. extraction is inherently linked to a

prioritization of community building. Participants leaned into this, and many discussion points could be linked back to the need for this to be central to the way craft and greater society function — not just as a potential fringe benefit. Participants recognized that, historically, community builders have not been prized as highly within craft and greater society as those who make beautiful and profitable objects. Success and value have been defined as contributing through the generation and circulation of goods or creations, capital, and expertise. Participant conversations spoke to movement toward a widening recognition, within craft and society, that community builders and cultivators are indeed vital value generators — central to the success of their communities and our shared society. This recognition signals a changing of focus to beyond the object and its perceived value.

One example of this was expressed by participant Mark Parsons, who runs an organization that prioritizes education, mentorship, and increased access to technology, and not just as an added benefit of other profitable connections. Mark offered this as a model that exemplifies how centering human beings and communities over capital is truly possible, speaking to a mindset shift that is occurring throughout, toward the ideal of centralizing community.

As participant Pearl Dick explained:

In the past, it seems like craft was often thought of more in terms of what it creates — the object. But more and more now, we are seeing that craft is community building — they are inherent to one another. Sometimes what is being

made is a physical object and sometimes it is community. Both are absolutely vital and serve very real, tangible purposes.

Craft Think Tank participants discussed their understandings of some of the underlying motivations that have driven previous generations of craft and how these underpinnings are being built up and expanded upon by a newer generation. These new makers are creating a craft environment that is less restrictive, less siloed, and more expansive and community focused. While activism-driven making has long existed within craft communities, differentiating features of “the now” are indicated in the large scale of this shift, as well as the timing of it — how it connects to the nationwide moment of reckoning that is occurring.

Cindi Strauss spoke to this relationship between making and community when she articulated how fellow Craft Think Tank participant Aaron McIntosh identifies building and strengthening the LGBTQIA+ community as central to his practice:

There is a through line as he moves from project to project, one that persistently centralizes those core values, beliefs, and areas of exploration that drive his work. I think, as an artist, it would be hard to continually grow and regenerate while always remaining true to a set of principles because of the forces in the marketplace and art world that are constantly wanting to pull you away.

Another participant, Sarah Shaw, made note of the connection between individuals becoming plugged into communities and the power of change that can wield:

Through my work, I've had the privilege of seeing profound transformations, personal and collective — there has been such a movement from thinking of ourselves as individuals to thinking of ourselves collectively and changing the way we relate to each other. Seeing folks go from feeling isolated and disempowered to feeling strengthened and connected to each other — really becoming activists and makers in their own spaces. And it's not just on an individual level. Big, institutional change is coming.

Participant discussions explored the notion of whether craft can become an entry point for people into community, and how it can prioritize the creation of spaces where people can feel included and connected through the process of making and having a place to gather. Doing so can support people in becoming empowered to step into the world of craft in a way that is true to their authentic selves and that speaks to their personal connection to craft and art. Participant Dr. Kimberly Keith shared how her organization works to do this through connecting young people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds to a better future, using glassblowing as the entry point.

They [the students] come together in a common space and create — showing up and being accepted for exactly who they are that day, that moment. These kids aren't used to seeing other people who look like them doing things like this because glassblowing is very white, so Hilltop had to get the ball of representation rolling. Then people begin to see themselves there.

These issues of representation are just so, so important because once we can see it, we can believe it, and we can achieve it.



Agency is defined by the *Open Education Sociology Dictionary* as “the capacity of individuals to actively and independently choose and affect change; free will and self-determination.” In large part, the “who” of agency in the Craft Think Tank conversations refers to makers and communities, especially those who have been historically oppressed and devalued.

Participants frequently spoke about the power of storytelling and truth-sharing, and the fight for reclaiming who has the platform to speak these stories and truths. Historically, the voices of many communities — Black, brown, and Indigenous communities; women; LGBTQIA+ communities; those with disabilities; and others — have been marginalized and silenced by the dominant culture of patriarchal and heteronormative white colonialism. Throughout many areas of craft and society, these communities are advocating for and working to reclaim the power to write and tell their own stories — to control the greater narrative

of their own cultures, histories, and creations.

Speaking to this need to self-advocate and take charge of one’s own narrative, participant Gabriella Nelson questioned:

Who is usually telling the stories? Who is the audience? What are the stories getting to? Craft can be used as a tool for community cohesion and building community, but it can also be used as a weapon. The storyteller’s identity and their connection to the story is ultimately what dictates the outcome. Who is telling the story and what their connection to it really dictates the outcome? There is power when people can tell their own stories that dictates who learns about the connections between themselves and their culture to craft creations.

Speaking further to the narrative of creations, participants raised questions and lines of discussion that centered on the objects that makers produce. Cannupa Hanska Luger said:

Nowadays, we have a completely different way of engaging with what is created. We have a very limited definition of what craft and artifact is in relation to sharing ideas and what materials are being used in the creation of that. But there is something missing from that conversation — what is the agency of the artifact, the object, the craft? More often than not, its production serves a purpose — whether that is storytelling, communication, or a physical purpose and function.

That agency is something that we need to consider in relation to it [the object or creation]. How is the maker’s agency affected by how we treat the agency of the object?

Alongside this is an overarching prioritization of sharing and hearing “the whole story”—learning to sit with the discomfort of what it means to hear stories from perspectives that challenge the dominant culture’s version and seeking to add authenticity and honesty to the way society learns about, talks about, and interacts with these communities. As an important aspect of the storytelling conversations, participant Sarah Turner made a crucial point when she brought forward the importance of recognizing the fear and suspicion of institutions that may exist within systemically harmed communities. With so much discussion centered around increasing access and agency, it cannot go unrecognized that significant trust building is likely to be necessary before individuals and communities feel comfortable enough to share their stories and engage in new ways. As part of learning to sit with discomfort and challenging prevailing narratives, there is a responsibility to reexamine who gets to label themselves or be labeled as an expert or professional, with the recognition of the ways that expertise has historically been exclusionary. As Gabriella Nelson put it:

If you are a master weaver who learned the craft from your mother and grandmother, do you have any less of a right to be considered

an expert or professional than someone with a fiber arts degree?

Parallel to this reclamation of personal and communal agency is a tangible urgency to prioritize increasing the accessibility of craft by promoting and amplifying those who have been historically excluded from the Studio Craft movement as well as recognizing the importance of making craft more available to young people.

Participant Alison Croney Moses underscored this when she said:

I don’t want to lose sight of the fact that there is an inherent, human rights element to every child being exposed early on in life to opportunities to experience craft and work with their hands.

Another participant, Mark Parsons, aptly summarized the discussion:

So much of what I’m hearing that we are all working on is tied to access — making spaces for people to gather and create, creating opportunities and spaces for young people to access craft and the arts, lowering the bar of access to cutting-edge technologies, and the need to find ways to ensure that youth have access to ways of learning how to work and solve problems with their own hands.

As these shifts in viewpoints on storytelling, agency, and access occur within craft and society, Craft Think Tank participants

raised an important question: as empowerment through community and personal agency and accessibility continues to become more highly prioritized, what systems within craft are being constructed and deconstructed?



The United States was created upon a foundation of systems that foster and perpetuate inequity and a concentration of power amongst the few. As the nation wrestles with how to move forward — what to preserve, what to alter, what to tear down and rebuild — so too does the world of craft. Participant Dr. Kayleigh Perkov noted that the productive and progressive aspects of craft will likely not be able to move forward in a significant way until it grapples with the very real harm that it has perpetuated in the past, citing craft's historical roles in the experiences of enslaved people, colonialism, and union busting. A clear, succinct point was made throughout these conversations: craft is not neutral, inherently “good,” or immune to systems of structural inequality.

The previously referenced community builders and activism-driven makers play a large part in driving forward this quest for change — often holding catalyzing roles

in the conversations and actions that have been happening in craft. Sarah Shaw homed in on the heart of this critical intersection when she said:

What we are really doing is dismantling systems of oppression. Through these iterative conversations, we are helping folks to see more clearly the systems that they're part of — to see the oppressive nature of the systems and to move them toward action in deconstructing those systems.

Examples highlighted throughout these conversations included:

- **the system of education that our country's youth must navigate and how it upholds cycles of oppression and harm;**
- **the lack of resources that are systemically allocated to supporting these youth, the role that craft plays in providing safe spaces for healing, and the ways that craft can do and be more for them;**
- **the structures of organizations and government and how they continue to perpetuate the concentration of power amongst a small demographic of people;**
- **the current way that craft functions and how it often does not support (or even allow for) historically excluded populations to tell their own stories or determine their own value and the value of their creations; and**
- **the craft community's lack of universal acknowledgment of the fact that many materials used to create are products of stolen land and/or cultures.**

In addition to this metaphorical deconstruction, literal deconstruction was a point of discussion in the examples of taking down statues or renaming schools and parks that pay homage to representatives of discriminatory movements or events — relics of the systems that continue to oppress and consolidate power. Aaron McIntosh illustrated the connection that can exist between craft, literal deconstruction, and systemic deconstruction when he spoke of his Invasive Queer Kudzu project — his craft being part of a larger movement and collective pressure that eventually resulted in the physical removal of the Jefferson Davis monument in Richmond, VA, another small step forward in the effort toward righting systemic wrongs.

Interwoven through this conversation was a recognition of the need to mindfully avoid becoming lost in nostalgia or romanticization of the past. Participants spoke to the dangers of allowing that to happen—how such nostalgia, at best, detracts from the urgency of change that is needed in society and, at worst, lulls or actively encourages people to turn away from these necessary changes. Sarah Shaw highlighted the importance of individual role and responsibility when considering the potential for becoming lulled into inaction:

Social change begins with change at a personal level. Once we start really understanding the nature of this, that it is not just a process of learning, but also actively unlearning, dismantling habits of thought, action, and interaction — we can begin to construct new ways of knowing and learning

and being with each other in the world.

The systems and historic placeholders that emerge to replace the ones that are deconstructed must be focused on increasing access and opportunity (specifically within the world of craft), strengthening communities, and striving for equity and inclusivity as a wider, societal change. As Craft Think Tank participant Anna Burckhardt put it, “We need to ask how we might redesign and rebuild to make systems fairer for all species, humans, and beyond.”



CRAFT AS TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Connecting to the idea of rebuilding, rather than repurposing or reusing, was a thread of discussion that centered on how this connection is already happening in the world of technology and innovation as it relates to craft, as well as the need to continue pushing progress forward in order to stay relevant in a rapidly changing world. Dr. Nettrice Gaskins spoke to this necessity:

It is important to note and continue onward with building the technology from the ground up, as opposed to appropriating from others or using the existing technologies.

This need for original technologies is rooted in the emerging dominance of multidisciplinary and speaks to the need for consideration of what craft's potential is within those sectors. Anna Burckhardt explained her work and how it stands at the cross sections of previously defined fields, as opposed to fitting squarely within one:

This work I'm doing, Material Ecology, is defined as the study and design of products and processes — integrating environmental awareness, computational form generation, and digital fabrication. The field is, by definition, multidisciplinary, and it stands really at the intersection of computer science, digital manufacturing, computational design, and materials engineering. This process and matter-centered approach to and of making and creating is craft.

Fresh technologies, ideas, and areas of intersection can be leveraged for innovation within the world of craft — creating new opportunities for the craft community to play integral roles in creating a more ethical, sustainable future. A possible outcome of craft's intentional integration into these multidisciplinary spaces would be an increase in access to the craft world through the creation of jobs and/or new academic programming.

Emerging technologies and innovations can also be a force that draws new people in, helping them to see themselves as a part of craft in ways they possibly had not been able to before.

Mark Parsons spoke of how he could see that leveraging occurring within his

own field of practice:

I've spoken before about the importance of collaborative practices, art, and ethical approaches to innovation with technology. It's ultimately a conversation about how people come together in authentic spaces and what they can create together. We're bringing in all these technologies, and it's changing the way people are thinking about design and representation and it is definitely changing the way they're thinking about making.

Dr. Nettrice Gaskins shared an example of a recent project that showed how her work with cutting-edge technology helped engage the young people who were involved:

This is a Making Liberation project done with high school students in the Boston area. They were using the hip hop cipher, which is a kind of kinship building that is done in both the dance and vocal performances. What was new and innovative was how they applied it to physical computing, where they had a glove that they made called the 'Rainbow Glove' which basically converts colors to sound.

Throughout these discussions, participants consistently considered aspects of craft, technology, and innovation that tied back to the following questions:

- **How is technology truly defined, and who gets to decide that?**
- **Does an object have to be handmade to**

be considered “craft”?

- **Where does the line get drawn for when something can be seen as handmade?**
- **As the digital world increases in complexity, what is AI’s place in craft and creating?**

Participants discussed the fact that, at times, there is a perception of one-dimensional “oldness” or tradition that it is somehow antithetical to newness or innovation. But the shifting frames of thought and wider definition of craft’s technologies and innovations that the newer generations of craft are ushering in also bring opportunity for people to see craft in a new light, as a more inclusive, open world that makes space for and recognizes the need for growth and change.



An important line of discussion that was interwoven throughout the Craft Think Tank focused on how craft is experiencing a moment of expansion and widening.

One way this is happening is through a “de-siloing” of how craft is understood and defined. The Studio Craft movement

took hold in the United States following World War II and has since come to be seen by many as the country’s dominant craft methodology. During this time, craft was incorporated into many fine arts programs in higher education and a proliferation of individual craftspeople produced bespoke sculptural objects. These works were primarily valued for their aesthetic, rather than their functional or community value, and were collected by individual consumers and museums through new markets and galleries. The Studio Craft movement emphasized the singular maker, their creativity and individuality. The result of these shifts was a more siloed, categorized craft environment (often rooted in maker media) and a hyper-fixation on the created object and its value. Craft Think Tank participants spoke of a need for continued movement away from object fixation and toward higher valuation on the maker themselves and the process of creating.

Craft practices are more frequently being recognized as a part of everyone’s life—even those who do not think of themselves as makers or craftspeople. Participant AI Murray shared their thoughts on this:

People are doing craft and don’t always even know it. They might not recognize its relevance in everyday life and the way it can impact, help, and support people in actual, real physical ways in their day-to-day lives. How can we help translate that for folks — them see that craft is what they are doing, that they are artists and craftspeople too? It’s so important for us to find ways to help people understand that what they are feeling

and taking part in is part of a bigger picture — part of a much wider community of craft than they might have thought even existed.

This is a microcosm of what is happening across craft in general, which is a widening recognition and embrace of the expansiveness of craft — expansiveness that holds all facets of craft equally. The definition of what makes someone a craft expert is loosening in a way that recognizes the many ways of knowing and participating in craft practices. This recognition is key to developing deeper understandings of and reestablishing connections to communities that were excluded by studio-focused crafting. Alison Croney Moses shared insights into the way she and her community see craft and the disconnect she has felt in relation to Studio Craft centralization:

Folks that look like me and share my background haven't really been part of traditional craft settings or institutions. Craft was just part of our lives. We sewed clothes, we cooked, we gardened, we drew, and we built furniture. We never called ourselves crafters — it was just how we existed.

To build trust and strengthen the relationship between the world of craft and harmed communities, it is imperative that this widening, more inclusive understanding of craft continues to develop. Referencing fellow Craft Think Tank participant Pearl Dick and her program, Project FIRE,

Al Murray spoke to how they see this currently taking place:

The work that she is doing really ties together the community work and her place as an artist within a larger context of not just access, but how the work that we are doing speaks to where we are going as a field. It's not just about the making process or what gets made anymore; it's about how that process or that creation affects communities.



Another critical intersection of discussion was that of telling more accurate, inclusive craft histories. Though this theme was a common thread throughout the Craft Think Tank as a whole, it was truly showcased on day two when the participants engaged in an especially thought-provoking discussion — exemplifying many of the ways this theme had emerged. The conversation was rooted in a need to examine the collective narrative we hold about craft, about this country, about history — as well as individual narratives. For too long, the burden and struggle of striving for

How do we learn to accept our histories and our legacies, to embrace the wholeness of the past?

How do we move from the binary of Black or white, good or bad, truth or lie to instead embody an understanding and acceptance of nuance and wholeness?

What can we do to move craft toward taking responsibility for its place in these histories?

unredacted, unrevised historical stories, of craft and the country as a whole, have rested upon the shoulders of those who have been silenced and pushed out of the conversation by predominantly white, patriarchal, colonialist systems of power. The moment we are in as a country is one of reckoning, forcing us to consider:

One example of craft's place in these histories can be found in the reality that many crafting materials and techniques were learned or stolen from Indigenous peoples. Acknowledgment and acceptance of these truths is long overdue, and craft will not be able to move forward in an inclusive, non-harmful way without committing to them. The

following are excerpts from the discussion on day two that provide a clear, succinct outline of the conversation.

All of this conversation is a bunch of weird dots but if we step back from it, we can see that it is actually developing something that might not be relevant to us right now — but will be down the road, to future generations. They'll be able to gather something from all of this, and what they learn is going to be a lot more honest about our present experience than the history books of previous generations. Honesty leaves room for all of our stories and experiences.

— Cannupa Hanska Luger

It is really at the root of our identity in the United States and in craft — most of what we make and build on was made by enslaved folks. What we learn, the music that we like, our ways of making — the craft of our society is made by folks who haven't been part of the publicly told story.

— Alison Croney Moses

Slavery, for Black people, that's our history, our story — but it's never the burden of the people that did the enslaving. I never hear anyone other than Black people talk about slavery as part of their lineage. Black folks hold that burden as part of who we are, but nobody else is. What does that mean for us? What does it mean to have the privilege to say, 'We're all one human race, one humanity' when the load is not being shared? What does it mean for patience? We're talking about going slow and steady and the importance of that, but how much longer will it be for Black folks who have been going slow for generations?

— Gabriella Nelson

How do we go forward and turn all of this fertile minutia into something more complete, whole, and consistent to our individual experiences and a collective narrative? How does that move us closer to holisticness — with ourselves, our environment? Craft material was grown on stolen land; we can't decolonize this. How do we transform what we're already working with? Because we can't change it back or undo those things. We need to fully acknowledge it and be held accountable. The challenge as we are developing this new narrative is

to not allow those with power and privilege to forget. How do we take our individual and collective redacted stories and erase those smudge lines to create a more complete and whole conversation around the inception of America? Around the inception of craft?

— Cannupa Hanska Luger

We get history, but we don't get the full picture. We don't understand it as a system — not just as a system in the United States, but as systems that began on other shores. Learning to see that has changed the way I understand 'the story' and history; it's helped me to connect it to a larger narrative. History, as I understand it, has changed — and that's what can happen [to history] if you allow it. You can add to it, expand on it. If given the time and space, it can become flexible.

— Dr. Nettrice Gaskins

Decolonization is exactly what we're grappling with now. It's asking: What is everyone's responsibility to tell full, honest stories? Historic storytelling has been one-sided, but collaborative storytelling allows space for all our paths to exist. This is a conversation we're having across the United States and across many communities and spaces.

— Alison Croney Moses

WHAT CRAFT CAN...



On the third day of the Craft Think Tank, participants split into small groups to discuss what “Craft Can...” — basing their conversations on the depth and richness that had emerged from the previous two days of discussions. The intent of this exercise was to identify various ways that “Craft Can...” persist, change, create, impact, grow, be utilized, and so on.

Sarah Shaw’s PechaKucha presentation on Day One brought forward the concept of “multipotentiality.” Originally spoken of in reference to the “multipotentiality of personal abilities and intelligences,” the idea evolved into a way of describing the expansiveness and flexibility that craft can cultivate and embody. It became a lens through which the group viewed interactions with each other, further guiding the discussions and driving conversations about the multifaceted nature of craft and the need for the craft community to view it as such. The “Craft Can...” discussion was a testament to the power of this lens and the participants’ creative collaboration that it facilitated. The group recognized that Studio Craft has had a substantial impact on how craft has developed and grown in the United States, resulting in both positive and negative changes and outcomes. Throughout this discussion, the goal was to acknowledge the multipotentiality of craft and recognize the various aspects of discussion that had grounded the participants throughout the Craft Think Tank.

The following quotes capture some of the elements of this conversation.

I feel like craft can move past its past. We are always going to honor important figures. We are always going to honor important events, traditions, and skills, etc. I'm not talking about throwing everything out, but what has been so inspiring to me over the past two days is that there haven't been any conversations here that are the same conversations that started 30 years ago or rehashing sayings that we can move past the limiting definitions. We can move past the siloing of communities.

— Cindi Strauss

Craft can be portals into different worlds (cultures, practices, traditions, etc.): "I was thinking about craft as objects, but I think it can also apply to the idea of practice as a portal. We — the participants of the Craft Think Tank — were thinking about how an object in an exhibition gallery can be easily fetishized and conceptualized. How can curators or people at the helm of these exhibitions show these objects as doors to different worlds? If we are thinking about artists or artisans who are working within Indigenous practices of making and materiality, how can that allow us to step into different ways of collaborating or different ways of knowing that Western or Western adjacent communities are not familiar with? How can craft allow us to open a door into different ways of collaborating — whether it is with materials or with other species?"

— Anna Burckhardt

Craft has the capability for both tangibility and intangibility, to be incredibly traditional and futuristic in its media and material. Craft can stretch us to share our heritages and cultures, our common humanity, and can really expose the threads that run between and connect us all.

— Al Murray

Once you open up, so the technical narrative becomes a model or a lens, sometimes a way of looking at engagements with technology that are not seen in the mainstream or dominant culture at all, but at the same time amplifies those practices that sometimes have been there for many generations." Craft can be a lens for us, amplifying practices that have been around for generations and cross-disciplinary boundaries.

— Dr. Nettrice Gaskins

Craft isn't neutral and the process of making and the spaces where we make can uphold the systems of oppression that exist. We often have assumptions that we're all coming from the same place and that we're all supporting the same goals—but in some ways, craft can hide what our actual values are, what the goals are that we are individually working toward.

— Alison Crony Moses

Craft is intangible, which is interesting in that it creates tangible things. It creates materials and ideas, but the craft itself is not something that is necessarily held in your hands. It is held in your heart and your mind and your genes probably.

Craft can create things that are tangible (materials, objects, ideas) through its intangible connections to our inner selves.

— Cannupa Hanska Luger

“Craft, for its qualities and materiality, is a physicality of practicality and can make a profound and positive impact on people’s lives. But also, those same exact qualities have harnessed or perpetuated a lot of evil in the world—and it is not just institutions; it is the physicality of craft. This slowness and learning and embodiment were used to attempt to create docile subjects in the colonization of America, specifically in American Indian boarding schools.” The physicality of craft can also be used to perpetuate evil and can have profoundly negative impacts.

— Dr. Kayleigh Perkov

Craft can help us understand deep time — a sense of time that is much larger than our individual lives. There are practices that have been passed down, practices that will always be relevant to the present, but were initially created by ancestors distant into the past. That will continue into the future.

— Cannupa Hanska Luger

Craft can be a point of entry for folks into community, creating a space where people can feel included and connected with each other through the process of making and having a space to come to that supplies so much more than the physical activity of whatever is being done there.

— Pearl Dick

Craft can be a bridge to dealing with some of our colonial past. It is this bridge of the century point to talk about some of these things. It is about people. It is about objects. It is about physicality. I think we as progressive members of the craft community need to have people think about that as a way to connect the field with the larger worlds in which we live. Craft can make people think about ideas, people, objects, physicality — all of these things at the same time.

— Stephen Velasquez

The closing of the “Craft Can...” discussion marked the end of the 2021 Craft Think Tank. The gathering was a highly collaborative, interdisciplinary examination of craft, its current needs and direction, its place in the wider cultural and societal movements that are occurring, and its multipotentiality. The world of craft will surely benefit from the meeting of these incredibly intelligent, generative minds. Dr. Jono Anzalone’s words provide a perfect Craft Think Tank summation and parting message:

There’s something truly special about the way that craft and the arts help to create a sense of hope and how it can be a vehicle for so many messages. Craft has power to be and make change — it’s the collective, us, that need the will.

CRAFT CAN...

**... connect
communities.**

— Participant
Dr. Jono Anzalone

**... be brave
enough to sit in
uncomfortable
spaces of growth
and change.**

— Dr. Kayleigh Perkov



... help us solve problems.

— Dr. Kimberly Keith

**... connect us to the
earth, to the
natural world.**

— Sarah Turner

**... center and
connect people,
creating connection
in a physical
space.**

— Pearl Dick

APPENDICES A, B, AND C

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of overlapping geometric shapes. At the top, there are sections of green and pink. Below these, a large blue area dominates the middle, with a dark blue zigzag pattern on the left side. At the bottom, there are sections of orange and red. The overall style is modern and colorful.



Appendix A: Full Participant Bios

Dr. Jono A. Anzalone

(he/him)



Jono is the Executive Director of the Climate Initiative, a nonpartisan organization that inspires to educate, empower,

and activate 10 million youth around climate action by 2025. Jono held a long tenure at the American Red Cross, where he started as a youth volunteer in 1994 and most recently served as Head of Disaster and Crisis, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Jono is Vice-Chair of the CERF+ board, which serves artists who work in craft disciplines by providing a safety net to support strong and sustainable careers. Jono graduated from Creighton University with a BA in political science, the University of Nebraska with an MS in economics, and the University of Nebraska with a doctorate in educational leadership and higher education at the University of Nebraska. Jono and his husband Andy, Associate Director of Gender Equality at Save the Children, live in Maine with their Goldendoodle, Penni.

Anna Burckhardt

(she/her)



Anna is a curator and writer from Bogotá, Colombia, whose work lies at the intersection of design, craft, and contemporary art. Currently,

she holds the position of Neville Bryan Assistant Curator in the Department of Architecture and Design at the Art Institute of Chicago. Before joining AIC, she was a curatorial assistant at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, where she organized and co-organized several exhibitions including *Projects: Carolina Caycedo and David de Rozas* and *Neri Oxman: Material Ecology*.

Alison Croney Moses

(she/her)



Alison has worked over the past 15 years in alternative education settings to build out education programs that center the

communities in which they take place. In her parallel artistic practice, she finds the moment in time, space, and community where there is balance, and in that balance, finds the critical moment of transformation — transformation of wood, a person, an organization, a city, and ultimately of a society. Her work is in the collections at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and has been featured in *American Craft* magazine. She is currently the Associate Director at the Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts, where she founded the Teen Bridge and Artist in Residence programs to help cultivate the current and next generation of artists and leaders in art and craft. She holds an MA in sustainable business & communities from Goddard College, and a BFA in furniture design from Rhode Island School of Design. Photo by: Craig Bailey/Perspective Photo

Pearl Dick

(she/her)



Pearl is a glass artist and community builder based in Chicago, IL. She is the artistic director of Firebird

Community Arts, and co-founder of Project FIRE, a program designed to promote healing through glassblowing for young people who have been injured by gun violence. Pearl has been working with glass for over 20 years and shows her work in galleries and museums around the country. She was honored to have recently been a visiting artist at the Museum of Glass hot shop while her work was included in *Transparency*, a group show at the museum comprised composed of LGBTQIA+ glass artists. Along with creating artwork that speaks to human connection, Pearl is a dedicated teacher and activist advocating for greater access, diversity, and inclusion in the glass community.

Dr. Nettrice Gaskins

(she/her)



Nettrice is an African American digital artist, academic, cultural critic, and advocate of STEAM fields. In her work she

explores “techno-vernacular creativity” and Afrofuturism. She teaches, writes, “fabs,” and makes art using algorithms and machine learning. She has taught multimedia, computational media, visual art, and even Advanced Placement Computer Science Principles with high school students who majored in the arts. She earned a BFA in computer graphics with Honors from Pratt Institute in 1992, an MFA in art and technology from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1994 and received a doctorate in digital media from Georgia Tech in 2014. Currently, Dr. Gaskins is a resident in the Autodesk Technology Center’s Oversight Network. She is the Assistant Director of the Lesley STEAM Learning Lab at Lesley University. Her first full-length book, *Techno-Vernacular Creativity and Innovation*, is available through the MIT Press. Gaskins served as Board President of the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (The Alliance) and was on the board of the Community Technology Centers’ Network (CTCNet). She is currently on the board of Artisan’s Asylum.

Cannupa Hanska Luger

(he/him)



Cannupa is a multidisciplinary artist and an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold (Mandan, Hidatsa,

Arikara, Lakota and European descent). Through monumental installations and social collaboration, Luger activates speculative fiction and communicates stories about 21st-century Indigeneity, combining critical cultural analysis with dedication and respect for the diverse materials, environments, and communities he engages. He lectures and produces large-scale projects around the globe and his works are in many public collections. Luger is a recipient of a 2021 United States Artists Fellowship Award for Craft and was named a 2021 GRIST Fixer. He is a 2020 Creative Capital Fellow, a 2020 Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow, a recipient of the Center for Craft’s inaugural Craft Research Fund Artist Fellowship for 2020, and the recipient of the Museum of Arts and Design’s 2018 inaugural Burke Prize, among others.

Dr. Kimberly Keith

(she/her)



Kimberly was appointed Executive Director of Hilltop Artists in May 2017. She is a Tacoma, WA, native who has

worked in the arts and culture sector since 1992. Kimberly earned her PhD in sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London, researching how US and UK museum practitioners develop and engage diverse audiences in relation to disparate organizational cultures and strategic policies. She also holds a master's degree in nonprofit leadership from Seattle University and a BA from The Evergreen State College with a focus on art history and studio art. Kimberly worked in museums developing and delivering educational programs, most specifically for at-risk youth and diverse audiences, at the Children's Museum of Seattle and the Museum of Glass in Tacoma. She was a Trustee on the board of Black Cultural Archives in the Brixton area of south London and served on its capital project board to raise seven million pounds to build the UK's first national Black heritage center, which opened in July of 2014. Kimberly currently chairs the Arts & Culture Coalition of Pierce County; serves on the Leadership Team of the Out of School and Summer Learning Collaborative Action Network at the Foundation for Tacoma Students; and is on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee for Pilchuck Glass School.

Aaron McIntosh

(he/him)



Aaron is a cross-disciplinary artist whose work mines the intersections of material culture, family tradition, sexual desire, and identity politics

in a range of works including quilts, sculpture, collage, drawing, and writing. As a fourth generation quiltmaker whose grandparents were noted quilters in their Appalachian communities, he uses this tradition of working with scraps as a primary platform from which he explores the patchworked nature of identity. Since 2015, McIntosh has managed Invasive Queer Kudzu, a community storytelling and archive project across the LGBTQ South. As an educator, McIntosh is committed to transforming and diversifying the next generation of fibre/textile artists. Since 2010, he has taught in the Fiber Arts programs of James Madison University, the Maryland Institute College of Art, and Virginia Commonwealth University. Currently, he is an Associate Professor in the Fibres & Material Practices program at Concordia University.

Al Murray

(they/them)

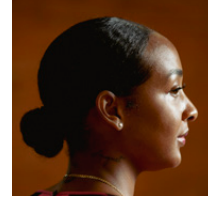


Al is an artist and social justice organizer who uses creativity and connection to work toward equity and justice. With a focus

on queer and feminist activist art, they earned a MA in art history from the University of Connecticut and have spent the last 15 years working in non-profits in the South. Al is now the Director of Relationships and Special Projects at the Campaign for Southern Equality in Asheville, NC. At home they operate a metalworking studio and have adventures with their wife Rebecca and kids Sam and Starr. They also really love pizza.

Gabriella Nelson

(she/her)



Gabriella is a mother and city planner, possessing a strong interest at the confluence of urban development,

wellness, and critical pedagogy. She currently works as the Associate Director of Policy for Maternity Care Coalition, advocating for policies that uplift caregivers and their families. Gabriella lectures widely on topics of maternal-child health, city planning and advocacy, including at TEDxPhiladelphia. Gabriella is interested in redesigning cities, systems, and policies that work against the liberation of those historically left behind. She identifies as a problem-solver, an inquisitive thinker, and a creative whose beliefs are deeply rooted in her womanhood, motherhood, and Blackness.

Mark Parsons

(he/him)



Mark Parsons is an artist, entrepreneur, designer, educator, and technologist. He is the founder and Executive

Director of the Consortium for Research & Robotics in New York City, the Director of the Science and Technology Entry Program (NYSED + Pratt), and the Director of Production Technologies for Pratt Institute Architecture. Parsons sits on several industrial and educational advisory boards, including a 2019 appointment by the US Department of State as a US Speaker on creativity, innovation, and technology.

Dr. Kayleigh Perkov

(she/her)



Kayleigh is a historian who studies the intersection of craft and technology. She received her PhD from

the Department of Visual Studies at the University of California, Irvine. Her dissertation, "Giving Form to Feedback: Craft and Technology circa 1968–1974," examines the impact of information-age technology upon craft practice, arguing that the projects that emerged serve as important precursors to the personal technology we know today. She is currently working on a book project that extends this research. Her work has been published in *Art in America*, *Art Jewelry Forum*, and the *Journal of Modern Craft* as well as in exhibition catalogs from the Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles), the Museum of Art and Design (New York), and the Museum Frieder Burda (Baden-Baden, Germany), among others.

Sarah Shaw

(she/her)

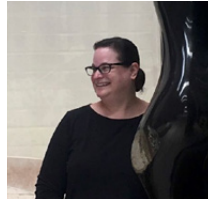


Sarah is a labor organizer with AFSCME District Council 47 in Philadelphia. Having come to organizing as a worker-activist

at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, she now focuses on building unions with museum and cultural workers in the Philadelphia area. A former Philadelphia public school teacher and museum educator at the PMA, Sarah also continues museum education and social justice work for K-12 students as a collaborator at, most recently, the Delaware Art Museum. Sarah received a Bachelor of Arts from Oberlin College and a Master of Science in elementary education from the University of Pennsylvania.

Cindi Strauss

(she/her)



Cindi is the Sara and Bill Morgan Curator of Decorative Arts, Craft, and Design and Assistant Director, Programming

at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. She received her BA with honors in art history from Hamilton College and her MA in the history of decorative arts from the Cooper-Hewitt/Parsons School of Design. At the MFAH, Cindi is responsible for the acquisition, research, publication, and exhibition of post-1900 decorative arts, design, and craft. She has authored or contributed to numerous catalogs and journals on decorative arts and design topics and has been a frequent lecturer at museums nationwide. Most recently, she coauthored the book *In Flux: Contemporary Jewelry and the Counterculture*.

Sarah Turner

(she/her)



Sarah is President of North Bennet Street School, which trains students for careers in traditional

craft and trade, helping them achieve meaningful lives and livelihoods. An educator and artist, Sarah has worked at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, the Rhode Island School of Design, the State University of New York at New Paltz, and the Oregon College of Art and Craft. Born and raised in Ohio, Sarah received a bachelor's degree in sociology from Smith College and a certificate in metalsmithing from the Oregon College of Art & Craft. She earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art.

L. Stephen Velasquez

(he/him)



L. Stephen Velasquez is a Curator for the Division of Cultural and Community Life at the National Museum of

American History. He was co-curator for *Food: Transforming the American Table 1950-2000* and *Many Voices, One Nation*. He is currently involved in the exhibition *Entertainment Nation* as well as a research project on Mexican vineyard workers in Napa and a future exhibit on lowriders. He is also a member of the Food History Initiative. Past projects include the *Bracero Oral History Project* and associated traveling exhibit, *Bittersweet Harvest: The Bracero Program 1942-1964*; *Mexican Treasures* at the Smithsonian; *AZUCAR! The Life and Music of Celia Cruz*; *A Collector's Vision of Puerto Rico*; and *Julia Child's Kitchen at the Smithsonian*, as well as many other exhibit cases and special projects. He holds a master's degree in anthropology from The George Washington University, and a bachelor's degree from the University of Missouri.

Appendix B: Advisory Committee Members

Tanya Aguiñiga

Artist, Designer, Craftsperson; 2020
Craft Futures Fund Recipient

Bernie Herman

George B. Tindall Professor of Southern
Studies, UNC Chapel Hill; Center for
Craft Board of Directors

Ayumi Horie

Potter

Anya Montiel

Curator, National Museum of the
American Indian, Washington, DC

Jenni Sorkin

Associate Professor, History of Art &
Architecture, University of California,
Santa Barbara; Center for Craft Program
Advisory Committee

Cindi Strauss

Curator for Modern and Contemporary
Decorative Arts and Design at the
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Center
for Craft Board of Directors

Nate Watson

Executive Director, Public Glass; 2021
Craft Research Fund Artist Fellow –
Related Tactics

Appendix C: Craft Think Tank Planning Process Interviewees

Fabio J. Fernández

Director, Greenwich House Pottery

Hope Huskey

Associate Director, The Sequoyah Fund

Phoebe Kuo

Studio Woodworker and Design
Ethnographer

Helen Lee

Associate Professor and Head of Glass,
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Al Murray

Director of Relationships and Special
Projects, Campaign for Southern
Equality

Nifemi Ogunro

Furniture Designer

CRAFT CAN
Craft Think Tank
Oct 20–22, 2021

