

JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE FOR CRAFT

SUMMER 2023

CRAFT QUARTERLY





A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

It has been over a year since I joined as editor of "Craft Quarterly," and I am grateful to the Editorial Board for their support in bringing forth three issues. We also appreciate you, our readers, and the feedback you have provided as "Craft Quarterly" has shifted its content to focus on JRACraft's commitment to advancing scholarship on contemporary craft.

With this issue on the theme of Changing Climate/Changing Practice, we are humbled to share the work of artists with practices that examine, interrogate, and/or redress the harmful impacts of humankind on the environment. The United Nations has shared recent research that documents landfills as a major source of methane emissions, and the UN Environment Programme notes that these emissions have "a global warming potential over 80 times greater than carbon dioxide," and are "responsible for more than 25 percent of the warming we are experiencing today." These alarming facts about ongoing contributions to warming and atmospheric volatility reinforce the extant worldwide mandates to reduce waste and reuse materials as well as to conserve and restore natural spaces in order to ameliorate the impacts of climate change. Nations with the greatest privileges in terms of resources as well as those contributing most to the emissions per capita must take a major share of the responsibility in rectifying climate change and minimizing further emissions.

Organizations and individuals rely on a variety of terms when it comes to describing the deleterious impacts of humans on the environment. Throughout this issue, authors use "climate change," "climate collapse," "climate crisis," and "climate emergency." Together these designations suggest the struggle to grapple with, and even name, the threat that we face. The artists and organizations included herein all are endeavoring to address that truth and provide a pathway toward a future in which we care for and honor our shared ecosystem as well as one another.

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The Craft Quarterly is published three times a year by the James Renwick Alliance for Craft, a national nonprofit organization that celebrates and advances American craft and craft artists by fostering education, connoisseurship and public appreciation. Although efforts have been made to eliminate errors of fact, spelling and grammar, the editor apologizes in advance for any such errors that may remain.

JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE FOR CRAFT

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CHANGING CLIMATE / CHANGING PRACTICE

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Cover: Laura Petrovich-Cheney, "All the Light Within," 2020. Salvaged wood, 36 x 36 x 1 inches. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Right: Tamara Kostianovsky, "Cow Turns into a Landscape," 2021. Discarded clothing, metal chains, meat hooks, 68 x 16 x 29 inches. Photo courtesy of J.C. Cancedda.

Left: Ann Weber, "Personages, Watch over Me," 2013. Found cardboard, staples, polyurethane, 96 - 110 inches tall. Photo courtesy of M. Lee Fatherree and Wönzimer Gallery, Los Angeles.

WORKING TOGETHER TO REUSE

We connected with artists and repurposing organizations to learn more about the ways in which they are collaborating to recuperate and reuse materials.

COMMON LOOM AND FABSCRAP

(Brooklyn, New York and Philadelphia)

By Mae Colburn, artist and founder of Common Loom

My grandmother, Audrey Huset (1922-2022), collected over 1,000 secondhand wool skirts in her lifetime, 50 boxes of which still live in my parents' garage. Her collection, and others like it, motivated me to begin weaving rag rugs. I appreciate working with personal fabric collections because of the memories evoked, and the collaborative process that ensues. I also source fabric from FabScrap (a one-stop textile reuse and recycling resource), which provides perspective on the scale of industrial surplus, and the panoply of fabric produced today.

For me, design is an assimilative process that occurs in response to materials at hand. I often weave many different types of fabric into a single rag rug and find that subtle variations in color, texture, and luster add interest to the overall effect. Throughout, I keep in mind that a rag rug is just one step in the much longer lifespan of the fabric woven into it. It is a record of a circumstance, and it too will unravel.

REMARK GLASS AND BOTTLE UNDERGROUND

(Philadelphia)

By Michelle White, marketing manager for Remark Glass

Founded in 2016 by glass artists Rebecca Davies, Mark Ellis, and Danielle Ruttenberg, Remark Glass is a zero-waste glassblowing studio. Their team transforms used bottles and jars into beautiful barware, tableware, and lighting. Over time, they recognized the larger systemic problem: the broken



"Shades of Green" chandelier, handmade from an assortment of bottles, in a home in Hudson Valley, New York, 2019. Photo courtesy of Danielle Ruttenberg.

recycling system. In most major cities, bottles and jars collected through single-stream recycling are immediately crushed with the other materials. By the time the glass is separated, it is too contaminated to be usable and goes to the landfill as cover.

Recognizing this problem and their opportunity within it, the team founded their non-profit Bottle Underground in 2020. A community-based recycling organization dedicated to reducing glass waste and supporting individuals in reclaiming their livelihood, Bottle Underground partners with workforce development programs to create sustainable job opportunities that support waste diversion in Philadelphia. The team collects bottles and jars from local businesses and community members, then sorts each into their best use - reuse, downcycling, or upcycling. Reusable jars become candle containers for local makers. Beer bottles are crushed into sand for soil conservation projects. The most special bottles are reheated and reshaped into glassware at Remark Glass. Collectively, Remark Glass and Bottle Underground are reimagining glass “waste” as a valuable resource for the glass industry and the planet.

THE WASTESHED (Chicago and Evanston, IL) By Ulisa Blakely, administrative coordinator for The WasteShed

Serving as Chicago’s creative and educational reuse hub, The WasteShed provides camaraderie, workshops, and artist residency programs that encourage connection, sustainability, and inspiration from unconventional materials. While sustainability is our long-term goal, we see reusing and repurposing resources as the fundamental practices that inch us toward a long-lasting tomorrow. By sourcing materials from The

WasteShed, artists and educators are inherently examining and propagating conversations around the things we collect, ownership, and trash. Together, through this kind of discourse, The WasteShed and the artists and educators that frequent our shops, aspire to influence material culture in a positive way.

LEE DAVIGNON AND RECOLOGY KING COUNTY ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM (Seattle) By Lee Davignon, artist

As an artist in residence at Recology King County from September 2021 through April 2022, I was tasked with sorting through the detritus of our disposable daily lives and reimagining it through art. During this residency, I had access to the Material Reclamation Facility. I observed local patterns of consumption as I watched the recycling speed by on the sorting belt and picked items to bring back to the onsite studio. Much of my time was spent gathering, sorting, and washing material. In my practice, I use labor intensive textile techniques to manipulate waste stream materials into sculptural, cloth-inspired works that give new life to discarded materials and speak to the futility of our current systems of commodification and waste. Much of what happens after we throw something “away” is veiled from us. My experience at Recology gifted me with a greater understanding of the complex, precarious reality of our dependence on plastics.

*Founded in San Francisco in 1990, Recology Artist in Residence (AIR) Programs now operate in four cities: San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Astoria.



Lee Davignon at the Recology Material Reclamation Facility, next to “Yellow Mold,” 2022. Unraveled marine rope, salvaged assay trays, fabric, zip ties, thread, plastics, 31.5 x 26 x 11 inches. Photo courtesy of Maria Phillips Ripple.



CRAFTING CARE

By Ruby Lopez Harper, Executive Director, Charity Hall, Communications Manager, and Heather Beffa, Readiness + Relief Coordinator, CERF+

Disaster management in the arts has taken time to coalesce as a practice, and this includes how funders respond to and define disaster. While arts organizations have typically focused on climate- and weather-related events, their definitions of disaster have expanded to include emergencies such as illness, injury and the pandemic. The Craft Emergency Relief Fund began in 1985 when craft artists united to support each other through loss. This community-driven spirit created CERF+ and continues to guide and inform our work and approach. In the past five years, we have provided over \$3 million in emergency relief and preparedness grants to over 2,000 artists.



Cameron Baxter Lewis, Director of Grants and Programs, and Carrie Cleveland, Development and Outreach Manager, at the NCECA conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, 2023. Photo courtesy of CERF+.

In the wake of the pandemic, we have focused our efforts on advocacy, emergency relief, and readiness and recovery; and there still is more work to do as we adapt to changes in the landscape of the craft field. Currently, providing \$3,000 grants for craft artists who experience a career threatening event, such as an illness, accident, fire or climate-related disaster, is central to our work, and we are exploring ways to provide even more substantive support. We also help artists take

measures to strengthen their practices through readiness-training tools and resources, such as our Get Ready grants, which provide up to \$500 for craft artists to safeguard their studios, protect their careers and prepare for emergencies. Applications for this program open twice a year, in the spring and fall, and we encourage artists to use our online Risk Assessment Guide to generate ideas for their grant application.

In addition to financial support, we also provide expertise and guidance to individual artists, arts and culture organizations, and arts service organizations. We often consult with local arts agencies, artist groups, galleries, and art centers to share information regarding emergency preparedness practices, safeguarding techniques and strategies for accessing resources following a disaster. Most recently, we met with craft artists living in areas affected by the flooding that happened in July 2022 and have been collaborating with the Kentucky Arts Council as part of their “Disasters, Emergencies and the Arts” webinar series to share information that will help artists safeguard their practices.

Finally, we lead and support advocacy efforts that focus on craft artists and the craft field at large. These efforts have included providing testimony to the United States House of Representatives Small Business Committee on Power, Peril, and the Promise of the Creative Economy. We are also working with peers in the field through the Cultural Advocacy Group, the National Coalition for Arts’ Preparedness and Emergency Response, and the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums. Policy and practice will always be central to creating better conditions for artists to thrive.





Left: Wood pile burning, 2021. Photo courtesy of Scott Parady.
Right: Anagama woodfire with Scott Parady's "Large Basin" (top shelf), 2021. Photo courtesy of Scott Parady.



CLIMATE COLLABORATION: THE EMERGENCE OF COBB MOUNTAIN ART & ECOLOGY PROJECT

By Nancy M. Servis, author, curator, educator, and historian specializing in Northern Californian ceramics

California has been in the midst of a climate crisis for years. Wildfires are a part of the state's ecology, and have been documented in newspaper reports since the late 19th century. According to the state agency CAL FIRE, which began tracking fires in earnest in 1932, eight of the state's 10 largest wildfires have occurred in the last five years. Moreover, two of the state's worst wildfires on record were in Northern California. The August Complex Fire in 2020 and the Dixie Fire in 2021 burned a combined total of 2 million acres, leaving ecological and economic devastation. Wildfires destroy everything in their path, denuding vegetation, killing wildlife, and wiping out homes and businesses. Charred soil and burnt timbers remain only to wash away during the annual spring rains, furthering erosion and the scope of the environmental tragedy. California has been at the forefront of climate change, experiencing its impact and forging solutions.

In 2000, sculptor and potter Scott Parady purchased 80 formerly-logged acres 100 miles north of San Francisco with a plan to develop a wood-firing program while applying sustainable land practices. Over the years, he established an ecologically sensitive settlement with active kilns, residents' housing, and a homestead. His resourceful environmental approach purposefully addressed the severe dryness in Northern California, which leads to more extensive burning as fires quickly consume tinder-dry vegetation. In the tradition of other Northern Californian artists

like J.B. Blunk (1926-2002) in nearby Inverness and Marguerite Wildenhain (1896-1985) near Guerneville, whose historic potteries and studios were sites of cultural influence, Parady constructed and renovated buildings while attending to the land acre by acre. Cobb Mountain Art & Ecology Project emerged, supporting ceramic artists while reinvigorating the climate-challenged region.

Parady has experienced firsthand the devastation wildfires cause. In 2015 the Valley Fire rapidly swept through a corner of his property, threatening his homestead and all he had built. Cobb Mountain Art & Ecology Project survived in part due to Parady's proactive measures, like establishing firebreaks and, as he describes, "burning ahead of the big burn" as a part of adapting to new climate realities. Whereas Blunk and Wildenhain could reliably develop their remote art practices in the 1940s-1980s without wildfire threats, similar art ventures today face an uncertain ecological future.

Parady collaborates with many organizations including the Forest Stewardship Committee, Lake County Prescribed Burn Association, and the Clearlake Environmental Research Center, which uses his property as an example of good resource stewardship. All of these organizations are important in developing informed responses to climate-induced fires and floods. He also consults with registered foresters, biologists, and Native Pomo leaders regarding their successful fire resiliency practices. He strives to nurture a



Scott Parady, "Tree Tumblers," 2015. Stoneware, 6 ½ x 3 inches diameter (each). Photo courtesy of Scott Parady.

place, "where the ideas of the ancient past meet the intentions for the distant future," an idea borrowed from Robert Smithson, sculptor of "Spiral Jetty," 1970. Parady prepares the land by burning miles of firebreaks and extensively thinning trees. Reforestation of endangered native flora like the Indigenous Cobb Mountain Lupine also contribute to land regeneration and natural biodiversity.

This ecologically-centered mindset influences his work as a ceramic artist. Six kilns operate on the property, the largest being his well-protected anagama which he built with artists in residence. Drought-stressed trees killed by beetle infestation provide much of the wood fuel needed to stoke an eight-day firing. This stewardship of materials and land also reflects Parady's respect for traditional Japanese ceramics and wood kiln practices. In discussing his art practice, he has noted, "For me, [the work] has to reflect the experiences of the maker and the place that inspired it." Renderings of specific trees from Parady's property appear on his tumblers, illustrating this idea. Imperfect, leaning conifers and their weathered lifecycles are visually commemorated on clay. The wall sculpture, "Gravity Feed," 2021, conveys a resilient ecology through the wood-firing process and the deliberately charred and unexpected imperfections in the sculptural form. Both his wood-fired vessels and sculptures embody Parady's symbiotic process. The volatile tool of fire, for both forestry care and ceramic practice, has aligned his pursuit of creativity with sustainability.

As an insightful steward, thoughtful leader, and prolific artist, Parady engages with Northern California's changing climate and addresses environmental truths in his ceramic practice. He is an accomplished artist and steadfast environmentalist who also heads the ceramic department at California State University, Sacramento, where he shares his methodology with future generations of artists. His blended approach to art and ecology fosters biodiversity while sustaining artistic practice.

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Cherry, mahogany, mulberry, handmade paper, lead type,
insect amber, antique fountain pen; 18½ inches long

CRAFTING THE ANTHROPOCENE: ARTISTS AND MATERIAL REUSE

By Caroline Kipp, artist, curator and doctoral student in art history at the University of Maryland, College Park

Scientists argue that we have entered a new geological era, the Anthropocene. Viewed as the epoch during which human activity on Earth has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment, the Anthropocene is leading humanity to an uncertain future. With the growing, unavoidable realities of climate change, and the ubiquity of man-made materials generated through extractive processes, artists of all genres are increasingly grappling with the ethics of using virgin materials in the creation of artworks. For craft artists, whose traditional media are directly tied to natural sources, these questions are unavoidable. In glass, ceramics, and metals, resources are diminishing, prices are skyrocketing, and common materials are disappearing. The materials needed for fibers and wood likewise come with a web of ecological costs.

Craft-based artists are uniquely suited to respond to this crisis. With their attunement to materiality, and their skills in manipulation, they are perhaps most capable of transforming existing products into new forms. By turning their attention to the growing problems of disposability and waste, artists transform pre-used objects into reflective

meditations on the conditions of the 21st century. Creating art from pre-used textiles, wood, and less traditional materials like cardboard, plastic, and rubber inner tubes, the artists featured here present a way forward with studio practices that center pressing ecological and social concerns.

In **Susie Ganch's** work, issues of waste and cultural habits of consumption imbue her wide-ranging practice, which centers plastic and metal reuse. Ganch and her collaborative project the Radical Jewelry Makeover reclaim abandoned material culture both as both a medium and a conceptual

Susie Ganch, "Drag," 2013-2014. Collected detritus and steel, 36 x 36 x 132 inches. Smithsonian American Art Museum, gift of the James Renwick Alliance in honor of Robyn Kennedy, 2021.81. Photo courtesy of Susie Ganch, © 2014.



starting point for considering the “complex relationships we have with our jewelry and the way materials are sourced.” When working in plastics, Ganch retains the marks of the materials’ previous uses — lipstick, coffee, and other stains — which the artist considers to be vital points for viewers’ reflection on the fact that discarded objects continue to live on after they have served their initial function. At once durable and fugitive, plastic is a complicated material for museum conservation efforts as it will eventually disintegrate; a fact the artist loves and actively incorporates into her concepts. For Ganch, nothing is meant to last forever, including her own artwork.

Tamara Kostianovsky is a Latinx artist whose work amalgamates ideas about the environment, violence, and neoliberalism. Often employing discarded clothing, she creates visceral and intricate sculptures and installations that resemble taxidermy and slaughtered animals. Yet Kostianovsky’s sculptures are oddly decorative, clothed in patterns of luscious florals that are reminiscent of verdant gardens and jungles. These places of projected fantasies seduce viewers into deeper engagement with the complicated legacies of imperialism within contemporary consumerism.



Likewise, Massachusetts-based artist **Laura Petrovich-Cheney** transforms found and re-purposed materials into sculptures that bridge quilting and woodworking. In her most recent work, a focus on environmental issues intersects with her own intimate challenges and losses. In 2012, Hurricane Sandy's impact on the East coast resulted in the loss of thousands of dwellings and buildings, including Petrovich-Cheney's childhood home. The aftermath of cleanup resulted in monumental amounts of debris and refuse, which



Laura Petrovich-Cheney, "Entanglement," 2019. Salvaged wood, 48 x 48 x 1 inches. Photo courtesy of Jerry Russo.

sparked the artist to consider these abundantly available materials which now carried so much emotional weight, that of beloved houses, objects, and their loss. Taking this refuse, Petrovich-Cheney began creating patchwork wooden quilts that speak to the dichotomy of feelings embedded in this material, and create an assessment of the real-world impact of climate change.

During the course of her doctoral archaeology research, **Alysia Fischer** became fascinated by middens (the archaeological term for trash or garbage heaps) and the enduring nature of discarded fragments, which reveal a huge amount of information about earlier people and cultures. This naturally led to considering current ways of consuming and discarding. She began working with recycled materials in order to demonstrate that unassuming materials have a use-life extending beyond their original function, and was ultimately



Alysia Fischer, "Cascade," 2020. Hand cut upcycled rubber, 124 x 36.5 x 8 inches. Photo courtesy of the artist.

seduced by the possibilities they presented. In her artwork, Fischer hand-cuts lace-like forms from discarded rubber inner tubes, creating an engaging tension between the delicate imagery and the industrial nature of the material's origin.

Though not a traditional craft medium (unless you consider it a papermaking art!), **Ann Weber** employs used cardboard as her basketry material in large-scale and free-standing sculptures. With all of its imperfections and wear, Weber finds beauty in this mundane but abundant material and is



Ann Weber, "You're My Butterfly," 2012. Found cardboard, staples, polyurethane, 88 x 30 x 20 inches and 88 x 36 x 23 inches. Photo courtesy of Sibila Savage and Wönzimer Gallery, Los Angeles.

endlessly inspired to expand its formal possibilities beyond immediate recognition. For her, the staple holes and folds present as a puzzle waiting to be solved. This enthusiasm and inventiveness is a vital impulse to her art and being – illustrating that humankind's creativity is our greatest resource no matter the circumstance.



Amber Cowan, "Hummingbirds Feast on Helio and Lavender," 2021. Glass and mixed media, 20 x 15.5 x 7.5 inches. Photo courtesy of Matthew Hollerbush.

Glass is often considered a very recyclable material, making it a mainstay of reusability efforts at industrial and domestic scales. But as anyone who's ever spent some time in antique, and second-hand stores knows, for all of its possibility there sure are a lot of glass objet d'art sitting around gathering dust. These repositories of outdated decoration sustain **Amber Cowan's** practice, supplying her with pressed glass objects that compose what she describes as the "aesthetic dustbin of American design." Through repurposing relics of consumerism, Cowan ties disparate time periods to the present moment, illustrating that the economic, the aesthetic, and the environmental have been intertwined within industry and domesticity throughout America's history.



Amber Cowan, "Hen Collecting All Her Ova," 2020. Glass and mixed media, 18 x 20 x 9 inches. Photo courtesy of Matthew Hollerbush.

Page 10, Top: Tamara Kostianovsky, "Tropical Abattoir" (installation image), 2021. Discarded upholstery fabrics and other textiles, acrylic nails, chain, motor, dimensions variable: each approx. 68 x 16 x 29 inches. Photo courtesy of J.C. Cancedda.

Page 10, Bottom: Susie Ganch, "Drag" (detail), 2013-2014. Collected detritus and steel, 36 x 36 x 132 inches. Smithsonian American Art Museum, gift of the James Renwick Alliance in honor of Robyn Kennedy, 2021.81. Photo courtesy of Susie Ganch, © 2014.

HOW TO SURVIVE: THREE ARTISTS ON CLIMATE, CARE, AND THE FUTURE

By Francesca DuBrock, Chief Curator of Anchorage Museum



Activist and philosopher Grace Lee Boggs once said, “The only way to survive is by taking care of one another.” Opening this fall at the Anchorage Museum, “How to Survive” is an exhibition that examines how an ethic of care can help us face interlocking crises stemming from climate change. Here, three artists featured in the exhibition respond to a query from curator Francesca Du Brock.

Gaye Chan is a conceptual artist who works between solo and collaborative activities that take place on the web, on public streets, and in galleries as well as through publications. She was born in Hong Kong and is based in Kāneoh‘e , Hawai‘i.

Erin Ggaadimits Ivalu Gingrich is an artist of Koyukon Athabascan, Inupiaq, and settler heritage. Her carved, beaded, and painted work honors ancestral practices of gathering and harvesting, paying tribute to the wild beings that sustain Indigenous lifeways.

Amy Meissner is an Alaska-based artist of Swedish descent who combines traditional handwork, found objects, and abandoned textiles to reference the literal, physical, and emotional work of women. She also teaches classes on garment and textile repair.

CAN ART HELP US FACE THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE COLLAPSE, AND WHAT ABILITIES DO WE NEED TO NURTURE AS WE CONTEMPLATE UNCERTAIN FUTURES?

AM: My work doesn’t exist without the labor of other women, the majority of whom I’ve never met or who are gone and can’t tell me why they made these textiles or what their hopes were while they made them. But I find them incredibly hopeful objects. Why would you imbue something with thousands of hours of attention if there wasn’t hope for the future potentiality of that object?

We need to make things for next generations and infuse those things with

the kind of care that allows them to last for the next receiver, the next owner, or the next encounterer. This needs to extend to everything we make or generate—however temporary—and this includes our ideas, too. We need to fill all those things with an ethic of care for those complete strangers. They might be our family. I have future grandchildren I've not met but hope that are coming. So how can I receive them through objects that show how much I care? This means making things perhaps from materials or with materials that aren't just sustainable, but also regenerative. I think a lot about how my art practice can be regenerative, and that's where teaching comes in. That regeneration component of practice does address climate collapse. Information must be shared freely and generously.

starting in turn to ask others. Do you know where you are? Won't you get to know where you are?

When people talk about Alaska, I keep hearing this, and I keep thinking about it: "untouched wilderness." It's such a hilarious notion. A place where my ancestors have lived for thousands of years, to say that it is "untouched." It has been touched. It has been lived with. It has been touched so gently and with such care that you don't know someone has lived with it. And I think about that a lot lately. If we want to honor that, we need to learn from those histories because they exist, and we should be aware of them.

GC: I'm still thinking about what Erin said about untouched nature. Nothing is untouched. That

phrase is so myopic and insulting in every possible way. In my practice, I think of everything as a found object. We go to the art store or wherever to buy supplies, thinking as if these things are new. And I have come to realize that everything comes into being because of so many forces: technology, capitalism, nationalism, colonialism, labor, exploitation.



Amy Meissner teaching "Craft of Repair" at the Anchorage Museum's Seed Lab, 2022. Photo courtesy of the Anchorage Museum.

EG: Artistic creation has always been a form of adaptation. It has been a knowledge system, and it has been about survivance. I've been aided by the act of rooting myself in the reality of being, and for me that means being aware that my body is made of the land and wild resources I feed it with. It also means acting in care and respect for the autonomy of these beings that we share our land with. We are not entitled to what we have in any way.

The land asks me the simplest and realest questions like: are you warm enough? Are you fed? Do you have enough sunlight? Are you moving? Will you be ready for winter? Will you be ready for the fishing season? Do you know who you are? Once you get to know where you are, these are all the kinds of questions that the land asks, and I'm



Salmon sculptures in Erin Gingrich's studio, 2022. Photo courtesy of Brian Adams.

I started making baskets ten years ago when I found a bunch of plastic baling straps outside a distributor. Since there are few recycling opportunities for that kind of material, I learned how to weave baskets with the straps. I have been teaching others, doing demonstrations and online tutorials, and training teachers. I'm coming at this material not only to get it out of the waste stream, but to ask why we end up with all this crap in the first place.

I like thinking: How do we come to have these ideas about what is trash and what is worth lots of money? The work that I do is about pausing and looking at a material, thinking about it, interacting with it in this way.

As people trained in both artmaking and teaching in the arts, we are unique in the sense that we get to ask questions that people in other fields don't. It's not so much the art itself that does anything. It's our experience and skills in asking different questions that a marketing person or a linguist would not ask. That's our inheritance, and that's how we can hopefully best contribute.



Group weaving project led by Gaye Chan with University of Hawai'i at Mānoa students, Honolulu, 2018. Photo courtesy the artist.

Page 13: Amy Meissner, "Mother Thought of Everything," 2020. Pandemic suits made from used Tyvek, abandoned quilts, and used household protective equipment. Collection of the Anchorage Museum. Photo courtesy of Brian Adams.

Below: Gaye Chan collecting baling straps Kāne'ohe, Hawai'i, 2021. Photo courtesy of Rae Huo.



WEAVING THE PAST INTO THE PRESENT TEACHINGS OF THE WOODS

By Tahnee Ahtone, museum director, curator, and scholar of material culture, art and textiles.



An artist and knowledge keeper from the Match-e-bench-she-wish Pottawatomi of Odawa and Ojibwe descent, Kelly Church holds crucial insight into environmental preservation and the ongoing impacts of climate change. A black ash basketmaker, her access to lessons in harvesting materials comes from generations of seed sharing and cultural upkeep. Her first mentor, her father, Bill Church, gave his daughter the generosity of gift-giving through basketry by teaching her how to gather materials and weave baskets. Her mentor, John Pigeon, a Pokagon Band tribal member who is a Michigan heritage fellow for black ash basketry and a nationally recognized artist, devoted a year to the Church family, teaching them the necessities of black ash tree harvesting. These relationships fostered Church's acute awareness of the environment.

In her baskets, Church incorporates reverence for the seeds, the matrilineal lines of care regarding biochemistry and forest management, and hereditary lines of connection to the landscape. Church shares that caring for the black ash trees conveys how we prepare for the future; "We do seed saving for future generations. The seeds in our cache last for up to 25 years. I will replant other tree species until the emerald ash borer is gone." A black ash tree will seed only every five to seven years, and the tree takes two years to germinate after the seed falls to the ground. The emerald ash borer, an invasive insect, can decimate the entire tree stand in three to five years. The individual seed carrier thus plays a crucial role in working with plants, the environment, and ecological reciprocity. In her basketry work, Church will use up to two logs per year coming from one tree. With a treaty agreement and sovereign right to cultivate materials, she is one of the few basketmakers who rely entirely on what she calls the ecological traditional teachings. She views the seed collecting and replanting as important ways to help the climate crisis and looks to future generations to continue the work to protect, preserve, and replant black ash seeds, and to sustain the teachings: "If we collect and preserve seeds for generational access, we provide trees to supply oxygen for all."

Describing her art practice, Church states, "I like to use my teachings from the past to create work that expresses my voice and experiences as a Native American woman artist living today." She speaks with strength and serves as a reliable beacon within the Native art community, providing directions and sharing knowledge of her process from beginning to end, emphasizing the significance



Kelly Church, "Sustaining Traditions, Digital Teachings," 2018. Black ash, sweetgrass, copper and Rit dye; medicine pouch containing sage, tobacco, sweetgrass, and cedar; glass vial containing emerald ash borer and isopropyl alcohol; USB flash drive, 7.75 x 4 inches. Art Institute of Chicago, 2020.389a-d. Photo courtesy of Richard Church, Odawa-Pottawatomi. (Left, detail above).

of these steps for the maker. Church gathers materials to keep track of and be in touch with the forests that provide for her. She can recognize when a forest is struggling. She knows the importance of going to the woods to prepare the materials and weaving them into the baskets for the gift giving. The act of giving is the highest form of generosity within the community, a thanks for their teachings and life as Native peoples.

The Art Institute of Chicago recently installed Church's work "Sustaining Traditions, Digital Teachings," 2018, in the newly redesigned American Galleries. Made from black ash, sweetgrass, copper, and Rit dye, the basket contains a glass vial with an emerald ash borer preserved in isopropyl alcohol and a USB flash drive. As a purposeful gift to future generations, Church included basketry teachings on the drive as a way to continue black ash traditions should they skip a generation due to the emerald ash borer. Written in her Native language, the teachings are intended for a specific audience. Museums like the Art Institute of Chicago have a responsibility to address the concerns and hopes that artists like Church have for the future. They can collect, store, and care for works that interpret the reality of climate change. The basket's intertwined design includes copper as a reference to the copper belly of the emerald ash borer. Church used sweetgrass to represent the purification achieved through smudging and incorporated newer artistic materials, such as store-bought Rit dye that produces vibrant color, as a way to meld the past, present, and future. To explain the ecological network of belief, care, and change, the mastery of Church's art goes back to the gift of generosity and care for her people and how she commits to community-based histories and understanding.



JRACRAFT HAPPENINGS

There is always something interesting happening at JRACraft! We host trips, talks, tours, and tons of other programs. Learn more about upcoming events and register at jrecraft.org.

ON VIEW / WHAT'S NEW

Thank you to all of our members and friends for a memorable Spring Craft Weekend honoring Roberto Lugo, Kristina Madsen, Carolyn Mazloomi, and William Gudenrath and Amy Schwartz for the Studio of the Corning Glass Museum. The weekend featured four events in three days including a panel discussion about craft in the 21st century, a symposium featuring our 2023 honorees, an "I Spy" Gala at the Luce Foundation Center for American Art's visible storage and a heartwarming brunch where we learned about the impact of our honorees.

NEW: CLASSES

Have you heard about our new offering? JRACraft will host craft history and appreciation classes every summer. The inaugural class will be taught by our very own Craft Quarterly editor, Erica Warren! The demand has been so great that we filled two classes within two days.

Pictured above (left to right): Honorees Carolyn Mazloomi, Kristina Madsen, Roberto Lugo and William Gudenrath and Amy Schwartz for the Studio of the Corning Museum of Glass. Smithsonian American Art Museum, May 6, 2023. Photo courtesy of Elena Volkova Photography.

CHRYSALIS AWARD

2022 Chrysalis Awardee Morgan Hill visited Washington, DC in March to give a presentation about her artistic journey, career and influences during our Distinguished Artist Series featuring Jack Mauch. The Chrysalis award is given to an emerging artist and includes a \$5,000 award. In June, our Honorable Mentions for the Chrysalis Award, Emma Senft and Aspen Golann joined us online for a Coffee & Conversation. See the recorded programs online on our YouTube page.



JRCraft President, Rebecca Ravenal, presents the award to Morgan Hill following her lecture at the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center March 26, 2023.

TRAVEL WITH JRACRAFT

JRCraft Members and friends enjoyed an amazing 5-day trip to the Boston area featuring visits to 10 artist studios, 5 museum visits, 4 private collections, 2 art centers, a sculpture garden, gallery, gift shops and more. JRCraft hosts 2 - 5 trips a year with our next one scheduled for New Zealand, February 13 - 24, 2024. See our website for more information.



Trip guests with glass artist Sydney Hutter in his Boston studio. Photo courtesy of Jaimianne Jacobin. The trip was organized by Laura Petrovitch Cheney, featured on page 11 and on the cover of this issue.



AN INTERVIEW WITH 2022 CHRYSALIS AWARDEE MORGAN HILL

Tell us a little bit about you and your practice.

I am a sculptor originally from Arkansas, now living and working in Spruce Pine, North Carolina. I create objects, installations, and jewelry using primarily wood. There are two major parts of my studio practice. One part is a wooden jewelry line called "Bad Habits" by Morgan Hill. This part of my practice is focused more on production, although each piece is unique. I make jewelry because it balances my studio practice, keeps my hands moving and allows for exploration of new forms and ideas. It is playful, fun, colorful, and light. It is also my primary business which allows me to make a living and connect with a broad audience of amazing people who use my work to express and indulge themselves, hence the name "Bad Habits."

I also create larger, more conceptual work in various forms from functional objects, installations, and sculpture to wearable, performance, and experiential pieces. Decisions about this work are conceptually driven, so although I work mostly with wood, I prefer to use materials and processes that are appropriate for the idea at hand. This has led me to learn many techniques in the past from neon tube bending to embroidery. Ideas are readily available, so I like to stay in a constant state of learning. Currently, I am honing my 3D modeling skills in order to make more work using a computer numerical control or CNC router. Because of this tool's versatility, I am expanding the possibilities of my sculpture. The piece I am currently working on is 3D modeled, cut on the CNC, then cast in glass and combined with sculpted wooden elements.

You often create work around culturally censored topics, what draws you to that conversation in your work?

This is a question I'm asking myself all the time and the answer has changed throughout the years.



Morgan Hill, "Bad Habits by Morgan Hill," a collection of jewelry works. Holly wood and paint. Photo courtesy the artist.

Heavy topics about death, abuse, depression, etc were often avoided in my childhood, so when those things came up for me in life, I created work to better understand them. I work through trauma and grief by making art. It is my way of connecting with others and myself. I have also always been attracted to the more macabre stories and transgressive art and media. I tend to lean into darker subjects because it's where the mystery is, making it endlessly interesting for me. Making this type of work is therapeutic, but also emotional and exhausting at times, so having the balance of my jewelry practice has been essential to my wellbeing. I'm a Libra... balance is major.

Can you tell us about Treats Studios and the influence of your community?

Treats Studios is an artist-run cooperative studio that six of my colleagues and I founded in Spruce Pine near Penland School of Craft. A few of my friends from Penland were in need of a shop space a few years ago. Some of us had equipment and some of us just needed a place to work. We ended up renting a space together and much more. We now own a three-story building that houses our wood shop, studios for more than 16 artists, and an artist community center in downtown Spruce Pine. It's been a huge, but fulfilling undertaking. Working with other artists renovating a studio building and working beside them each day on our own projects continues to unfold into the most incredible collaboration I've ever been a part of. Not to mention, just outside of our building, there is a whole community of thousands of local craftspeople we get to learn from whenever we want. It's an exceptional place to be an artist.

How do you think receiving the Chrysalis Award has affected you?

At this early point in my career, this type of validation is incredibly helpful to keep me motivated and know that I'm heading in the right direction. I will always be an artist because it is who I am, but making it into a career is difficult. It's so meaningful to find out that other people find merit in what I am making. Also, any type of funding at this moment is crucial for me to continue

practicing. This is a hard time financially for me as a first-time business owner. There's been a lot of investment of money and time. Getting started as a creative in this world that is full of images and sharing and competition feels impossible. The rejection and pressures are immense, so any form of validation and encouragement seem so important to emerging artists during this sensitive time of their careers. It has meant the world to me to be rewarded in this way. Thank you James Renwick Alliance for Craft for this honor.



Morgan Hill, "Attend," 2022. Carved poplar, paint, various hardwoods, resin, mirror, upholstery thread, steel, 82 x 28 x 2 inches. Photo courtesy of Loam.

SAVE THE DATES

JUNE 22 - AUGUST 10

"A History of Craft in the United States," Online Zoom Class

AUGUST 24

Coffee & Conversation

AUGUST 25

Application due: 2023 Chrysalis Award for emerging artists working in fiber

SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 1

Distinguished Artist Series featuring Debora Moore

DECEMBER 2

JRACraft Day artist showcase and sale

FEBRUARY 13 - 24

JRACraft Caucus Member Trip to New Zealand



Above: Amber Cowan, "Art Nude and Argonaut," 2023. Glass and mixed media, 22.5 x 17 x 7.5 inches. Photo courtesy of Matthew Hollerbusch.

Left: 2023 Chrysalis Awardee Morgan Hill, Brooch from the "Mega Millions" series. Photo courtesy the artist.



LEARN MORE

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WWW.JRA.ORG