To craft a better world, it must first be imagined. On the occasion of the Renwick Gallery’s fiftieth anniversary, this exhibition explores what artists have made in response to the present moment. The first-floor galleries inspire different ways of imagining home, a concept that has taken on new meaning during a global pandemic. Through these objects, artists have crafted spaces for daydreaming, stories of persistence, models of resilience, and methods of activism.

The Renwick Gallery opened its doors fifty years ago on January 28, 1972, to showcase the ingenuity and relevance of craft and design in American culture. Over the years the museum has featured many expressions and definitions of craft. Today, the Renwick continues to showcase the creativity of American artists who push the boundaries of the handmade while making the museum a welcome space for all and one representative of all people.

This anniversary exhibition features more than 170 artworks from the museum’s extensive holdings of modern and contemporary craft, including more than one hundred new acquisitions. The exhibition continues on the second floor with work about the interplay of the past, present, and future.

*This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World* is organized by Mary Savig, the Lloyd Herman Curator of Craft, with Nora Atkinson, the Fleur and Charles Bresler Curator-in-Charge, Anya Montiel, the former American Women’s History Initiative–funded curator of American and Native American women’s art and craft, and Elana Hain, collections manager.

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Maggie and Dick Scarlett
Barbara Tober
Judith S. Weisman
Myra and Harold Weiss
Kelly Williams and Andrew Forsyth
Todd Wingate and Steven Cason

Welcome
Be present here and now.
Please be mindful of your surroundings.

For our house is our corner of the world. . . . it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word.
—Gaston Bachelard, from The Poetics of Space (1958)
Homes for Dreaming: From an Egg to the Universe

A home can be an escape and a shelter for troubling times. There are many scales of shelter, whether beneath the comfort of a handmade quilt or looking up in wonder underneath the Milky Way galaxy. The first-floor galleries explore how craft inspires new ways of imagining the shapes of home, from a protective egg to the expansive cosmos. These artworks favor personal experience and collaboration, convening new conversations on the dimensions of home.

How has your idea of home been reimagined?

The Egg

Toshiko Takaezu created the ceramic sculptures in this gallery. Known as her “closed forms,” the unseen interior cavity suggests the protected space of an egg. To create these forms, Takaezu threw a pot at her wheel, then coiled and hand built the clay into a nearly closed spheroid. She often placed pieces of paper and clay inside before firing that became rattling ceramic beads in the kiln.

Many species of birds, like ducks, communicate with each other before they hatch. They peep and click from inside their eggs to synchronize their emergence, preparing the family to leave the nest together. Like chattering eggs in a nest, Takaezu’s closed forms conjure new imaginings about the tenderness of home.
Bird’s nest with eggs from Toshiko Takaezu’s garden. Photo by Martha Russo, Toshiko Takaezu papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

Toshiko Takaezu walking among her Star Series, 1998. Photo by Tom Grotta

**Toshiko Takaezu**

born 1922, Pepe’ekeo, HI; died 2011, Honolulu, HI

*Anagama*
ca. 1980s
stoneware with glaze
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 2006.26.8

*Canary Yellow*
ca. 1990s
porcelain with glaze
Cobalt Blue
ca. 1990s
porcelain with glaze

Full Moon
1978
stoneware with glaze
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase and gift of the James Renwick Alliance, 1989.36.2

Sophia
2002
stoneware with glaze
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 2006.26.1

Troy
n.d.
stoneware with glaze and gold luster
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 2007.45.1

Untitled
ca. 1990s
stoneware with glaze
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 2006.26.3

Untitled
ca. 1980s
porcelain with glaze
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 2006.26.6

Zeus
2000
Stoneware with glaze
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 2006.26.2

The Nest
The nest is the earliest form to inspire basket makers. Birds busily build nests as homes for care
and comfort from the resources of their environment, making crafty choices in any given
moment. Their nests incorporate discarded material like plastic, ribbons, and nets and are built
on structures intended for human use, like barns, doorways, and mailboxes. The bird’s creativity
encourages new ways of working with materials and with each other.
Like nests, the baskets on view contain traces of their makers and reveal their surrounding environments. The materials and techniques tell stories of the artists’ families and their homes. These basket makers have thrived on the tension between tradition and invention. For many, their practice is a meditation on time, family, and resilience. From the ground up, they weave ever-expanding networks of care.

The warm, calm nest
In which a bird sings

Recalls the songs, the charms,
The pure threshold
Of my old home.

—Jean Caubère, “Le nid tiède” (The Warm Nest), from Déserts (1955); translated from French by Maria Jolas in Gaston Bachelard’s The Poetics of Space (1958)

Polly Adams Sutton
born 1950, Waukegan, IL

Facing the Unexpected
2013
western red cedar bark, ash, spruce root, and coated copper wire
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase with support from Mary Anne Fray and the Decorative Arts and Crafts Endowment, 2021.52A–I
Facing the Unexpected features several baskets woven and slumped together to form one voluminous support system. Polly Adams Sutton arduously strips cedar bark from the logged forests of the Pacific Northwest, and then she weaves to her own rhythm as she goes. “There is no preconceived notion as to the purpose of my sculptural shapes, except perhaps a quest for pleasing curvilinear forms,” she explains. Relieved of their use, the baskets suggest the same ephemeral nature of abandoned nests.

Joanne Segal Brandford  
born 1933, Philadelphia, PA; died 1994, Mill Valley, CA

Bundle  
1992  
rattan, kōzo, nylon, and paint  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Renwick Acquisitions Fund, 1996.58

*Bundle* is a grandiose structure, revealing layers of interwoven splints of rattan, kōzo (mulberry), and nylon. The form suggests a figure in motion, an extension of the artist herself. Joanne Segal Brandford first studied ancient histories of baskets, weaving, and nets. In her studio, she experimented with traditional techniques and provoked new possibilities, ever in search of volume, light, and gesture.

Christine Joy  
born 1952, Ithaca, NY

Small Dark Cloud  
2012  
willow and Rocky Mountain maple with encaustic finish  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mary Anne Fray, 2021.55.2

Inspired by birds’ nests and clouds, Christine Joy developed a weaving technique to convey the movement of nature. The artist works with pliable twigs of willow, harvested from her home in Montana. While her baskets are not functional in the traditional sense, both her process and the work itself contain her thoughts on the passage of time: “The weekly routine, the daily rhythm, the inevitable flow of time from birth to death, mysterious, astonishing, exciting, holding promise of life.”
Susan Kavicky  
born 1953, Riverside, IL  

*Sitting*  
2004  
brown ash, fiberboard, and oak  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mary Anne Fray, 2021.55.1  

The title of this basket, *Sitting*, refers both to its reclining position, balanced on an angled plane of its bottom, and to the artist's introduction to basketry in 1987. At the time, Susan Kavicky was spending long hours sitting on a boat while her husband was fishing, and she sought to create something small and portable. She decided to take classes on the processing and weaving of black ash baskets and soon became hooked. Her baskets draw on her own experiences with relationships, reflecting a balance between collaboration and independence.

Ferne Jacobs  
born 1942, Chicago, IL  

*Snow Circles*  
1999  
coiled and twined waxed linen thread  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase, 2001.32
Ferne Jacobs built this sculpture starting from the center of each circle, expanding and shaping the surface into a poignant vessel. She coiled and twined this form while her mother was dying. The title, *Snow Circles*, references a short story by Irish author James Joyce, “The Dead” (1914), that muses on how falling snow indiscriminately covers both the living and the dead. As Jacobs explains, “Stitch by stitch, cell by cell, I'm building a body,” and the circles speak to the cycle of life, from mother to child.

**Dawn Nichols Walden**  
Ojibway descendant, Mackinac Band of Chippewa and Ottawa Indians  
born 1949, Vulcan, MI

*Random Order XIII*  
2006  
cedar bark and roots with beargrass  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Robert and Sharon Buchanan, 2021.41.2

Baskets by Dawn Nichols Walden often comprise two layers. The inner substrate is made with a traditional plain-woven cedar bark sourced in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Walden devised the unconventional exterior pattern: a dense matrix of interwoven cedar bark and beargrass fibers that radiate freely, in a “random order,” from a central cedar root medallion.

**Dona Look**  
born 1948, Port Washington, WI

*Basket 968*  
1996  
white birch bark and waxed silk thread  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Martha G. Ware and Steven R. Cole, 2011.47.42
This basket is made from the bark of a single birch tree. The artist stripped the bark just before the tree was logged in northwestern Wisconsin, and then she meticulously hand stitched the panels together with silk thread. The basket bears the memory of the forest and signals our interdependence with nature. “I want people to see how beautiful these trees are,” the artist notes. “It’s important that we have these trees and indigenous forests for our descendants to see and appreciate.”

**Edith Bondie**
Chippewa
born 1918, Mikado, MI; died 2005, Hubbard Lake, MI

*Porkypine Basket*
1975
woven black ash
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase, 1975.135A–B

Edith Bondie is known for her “porkypine” baskets, a playful name that describes their prickly surfaces. This globular basket is woven from bands of folded black ash splints nicknamed “porcupine quills.” Rather than a vessel to be used in the traditional sense, the basket instead emulates the form of a sassy porcupine or a puffed blowfish.

**Elizabeth F. Kinlaw**
born Mount Pleasant, SC

*In and Out Basket*
1991
bulrush, sweetgrass, palmetto fronds, and pine needles
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Martha G. Ware and Steven R. Cole, 2011.47.32A–B

Elizabeth Kinlaw began playing with sweetgrass fibers when she was a child and eventually learned Gullah basketry skills from her mother, grandmother, and aunt. Gullah artists have coiled sweetgrass baskets for generations in the lowlands of South Carolina, maintaining techniques from Africa where baskets have been used for fanning (processing) rice and storing food.
For Kinlaw, basketry draws on the memory of her ancestors and the process is intuitive. The accordion shape of this basket came to her while she was weaving the base. She explains, “There is no pattern. You can envision it and you can make it out of your mind.”

**Sheila Kanieson Ransom**  
Mohawk, Wolf Clan from Akwesasne  
born 1954, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy), Northeast Woodlands (NY)

*Pope Basket*  
2021  
sweetgrass and black ash splints with commercial dye  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Frances Dubrowski and David Buente, 2021.79.1

Sheila Ransom made this basket to honor Kateri Tekakwitha (1656–1680), a Mohawk woman who was made a saint by the Catholic church in 2012. A prototype of this basket was given to the pope in honor of the canonization.

Ransom learned basketry from her godmother, renowned basket maker Mae Bigtree. The basket, in the traditional purple and white Mohawk colors, is made of sweetgrass interwoven with black ash splints. Black ash trees are currently being devastated by the invasive emerald ash borer, making it increasingly difficult for Native weavers like Ransom to source their wood.

**Leona Waddell**  
born 1928, Cub Run, KY

*Squared Egg Basket*  
2011  
white oak  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Martha G. Ware and Steven R. Cole, 2011.47.68

This egg basket by Leona Waddell has never held any eggs. Waddell learned to craft this traditional form as a child growing up in rural Hart County, Kentucky. In the 1940s, her family made white oak splint baskets for everyday use, like carrying eggs, and traded them for food and clothing. As Waddell grew more skilled, she brought her personal touch—the subtle bands of color shown here—to her family’s traditional style. Now celebrated as the best basket maker in Kentucky, Waddell creates baskets that are collected throughout the world.
Kay Sekimachi  
born 1926, San Francisco, CA

*Leaf Vessel*  
ca. 2012  
big-leaf maple and oak leaves and kōzo paper with watercolor  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Fleur S. Bresler, 2021.48.4

*Leaf Vessel* illuminates a sublime pattern of nature. Kay Sekimachi used kōzo (mulberry) paper to carefully preserve the delicate skeletal structures of maple and oak leaves. The artist has experimented with many unconventional materials, including monofilament (fishing line), hornets’ nests, shells, and antique Japanese paper, to create ethereal artworks.

Pat Hickman  
born 1941, Fort Morgan, CO

*Tyranny of the Shoulds*  
1989  
hog casings  

This work is crafted with hog casings. The artist, Pat Hickman, feels the material expresses the fragility of life. She wrote “should” over and over with a looping technique typically used to make a knotless net. *Tyranny of the Shoulds* contains the agony of regret as well as an opportunity to learn from it and move forward with new purpose.
Linda Sormin
born Bangkok, Thailand; resides New York City

*Ta Saparot (pineapple eyes)*
2019
glazed ceramic with found shards, glitter, and gold leaf
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Dorothy Saxe

Linda Sormin’s abstract ceramic sculptures show the upheaval and chaos that comes with migration. The artist was born in Thailand and immigrated to Canada, then moved to the United States for art school. Moving frequently with her family, she collected keepsakes and found objects, which she weaves into pinched and pulled threads of clay. Here, the artist embellished the surface of the clay with glitter and gold leaf. Sormin feels that her work “is a response to human needs, our loss and our longing.”

**The Home**
A house is a physical place that serves the most basic of human needs. The memories and feelings associated with it, and contained within its objects, make it a home. Certain comforts of home, like a handstitched comforter or a humble teapot, create a place of refuge, where one might curl up and daydream. Such objects often hold the most intimate impressions of its maker. The artworks in this gallery are a window into how artists inhabit space and, in turn, how homes inhabit their creative minds. Many of these artworks are introspective, revealing stories of resilience, endurance, patience, and care.

**Arthur Espenet Carpenter**
born 1920, New York City; died 2006, Bolinas, CA

*Staircase*
1969
hyedua and oak

This graceful structure by Arthur Espenet Carpenter comprises eleven curved, interlocking steps radiating around a center post. As Carpenter intended, the intrinsic warmth of the wood and the organic forms encourage interaction along multiple fronts, including movement up and down the steps and pushing and pulling the propeller-like treads. It is a staircase for imagining: the spiral steps mimic curved forms of nature, pushing against the grain of right angles and square rooms.
Michael Peterson
born 1952, Wichita Falls, TX

*Birdhouse*
1994
Madrone

Michael Peterson hand carved this birdhouse to look like it emerged directly from nature, as a part of tree crafted by wind, rain, and animal activity. Peterson has been turning and carving wood on Lopez Island in Washington state since the late 1970s.

Kevin Pourier Oglala Lakota
born 1958, Rapid City, SD

Valerie Pourier Oglala Lakota
born 1959, Marine Corps Base Camp, Pendleton, CA

*Monarch Nation*
2019
carved bison horn with inlaid orange sandstone and white mother of pearl
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.2

Kevin and Valerie Pourier are Oglala Lakota husband-and-wife artists from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. For twenty years, they have created sculptural forms from buffalo horn, a material used by the Lakota since time immemorial. The Lakota name Pte Oyate translates as “buffalo people,” and the buffalo is respected and integrated into everyday and
ceremonial life. The Pouriers have found examples of historic buffalo horns adorned with beads and inlaid with earth pigments within museum collections.

For Monarch Nation, the Pouriers have inlaid each butterfly in orange sandstone and white mother-of-pearl shell. Depicting the butterflies in flight, they reference the annual migration of the insects from Canada to Mexico. Paying tribute to both the buffalo and the butterflies connects the artists to their ancestors and Lakota lifeways, in which all beings and forms of connections are acknowledged with respect and care.

**Homei Iseyama**
born 1890, Japan; died 1975, Oakland, CA

*Teapot and Cup*
1939–45
carved found slate
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Aiko Iseyama and Family, 2021.75A–C

Homei Iseyama adorned this teapot with pomegranates and leaves that recall his work as a gardener in California when he dreamed of becoming an artist. In 1942, Iseyama was incarcerated at the Topaz Detention Center in Utah, among 120,000 Japanese Americans who were forcibly moved during World War II as part of the federal government’s Executive Order 9066.

While in these bleak incarceration camps, Iseyama and others used scraps and found materials, like this piece of slate, to make tools, teapots, furniture, decor, toys, games, instruments, and more. Through these objects, they endeavored to recreate the comforts of home, which helped many endure emotional trauma. Iseyama’s carved teapot is an example of *gaman,* the Japanese word that means to bear the seemingly unbearable with dignity and patience.

**Tim Jerman**
born 1957, Bellefonte, PA; died 2004, Logan, OH

*Hermit Crab*
2000
flameworked glass
Tim Jerman began his career as a glassblower. In 1981, following a spinal cord injury, he shifted his studio practice to flameworking. With a handheld torch, he shaped colorful canes of glass into fantastical marine life, like this hermit crab, peeking out from its portable home.

Janel Jacobson  
born 1950, Minneapolis, MN  

#505 Oak Savanna Sentinel  
2014  
boxwood with acrylic paint, gold and silver leaf powder, and nail lacquer  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Fleur S. Bresler, 2021.48.13  

This carving of a curious frog perched on an oak branch pulls us from daily distractions and invites a moment of quiet. Janel Jacobson has hand carved wood and porcelain for more than four decades. Her subjects are inspired by observations and daydreams in nature around her home in rural Minnesota.

Linda Sikora  
born 1960, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada  

Faux Wood Group  
2014–21  
wood and salt-fired stoneware with polychrome glaze  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund with support from Clemmer Montague
Linda Sikora created striking surface patterns of woodgrain on this grouping of functional pottery. The work inspires reimaginings of the familiar. As the artist explains, “I am interested in pottery form for its familiarity and congeniality, its ability to disappear into private/personal activities and places. . . [it] can also excite/awaken attention and thereby reflects back to the viewer their own imagination.”

**Syd Carpenter**  
born 1953, Pittsburgh, PA

*Mary Lou Furcron*  
2010  
terracotta with acrylic paint, graphite, and wood  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Renwick Acquisitions Fund, 2010.51

This is a bird’s eye view of a homestead built by Mary Lou Furcron, an older Black woman living in rural Georgia. The view is based on a map from a project that documented farms owned by African Americans in the rural South in the 1980s. Ceramist Syd Carpenter sculpted the tops of trees, curvilinear swaths of garden plots, and the peaked roof of the shack Furcron built with mud, grass, and branches. Carpenter, also an avid gardener, memorializes a home cultivated through resourcefulness and resilience. Such a place provides material and spiritual sustenance to those resisting the harsh realities of deprivation and hardship from systemic racism.
Myra Mimlitsch-Gray  
born 1962, Camden, NJ

Sugar Bowl and Creamer III  
1996  
Copper  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the James Renwick Alliance on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Renwick Gallery, 1997.56A–B

These molds of a sugar bowl and creamer upend the sentimentality of domestic heirlooms. Myra Mimlitsch-Gray renders the objects useless to draw into question the very mission of craft. She notes, “I am motivated by craft’s agency, whether asserted by the maker or instrumental through use; by its potential to cultivate community, and its symbolic resonance garnered across generations.”

George Nakashima  
born 1905, Spokane, WA; died 1990, New Hope, PA

Conoid Bench  
1977  
black walnut and hickory  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Warren D. Brill, 1991.121

The groundbreaking furniture of George Nakashima was included in the Renwick Gallery’s first exhibition, Woodenworks, in 1972. Nakashima trained as an architect at the University of Washington and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He discovered woodworking while incarcerated at the Minidoka Detention Center in southern Idaho, where he was forcibly detained during World War II as part of the federal government’s Executive Order 9066. Following his release, in 1943, he opened a furniture studio in New Hope, Pennsylvania. His artistic philosophy was simple: to maintain the beauty and goodness of a tree. This is an example of a conoid bench, a design first introduced in 1960, featuring the natural “free edge” of a black walnut tree.
Paul Villinski
born 1960, York, ME

_Comforter_
1994
used cotton gloves and cotton thread
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 2021.70

Paul Villinski began making this comforter while recovering from drug and alcohol addiction. He recalls, "I needed a way to sit still, especially at night, so I spent multiple hours hand-stitching most evenings for about six months. I was coming to understand that I had been taking the comfort needed to survive from drugs and booze, but I was learning in sobriety to find that comfort in other human beings." The artist often held hands with others during recovery meetings. He stitched together these used work gloves, found on the city streets, to suggest the warmth and stability of a community wrapping its arms around him. Each stitch reflects the journey of his mind and hands and his restoration and connectedness. Though they began as melancholic, they are now hopeful.

The Home
Domestic objects—a pot, a bowl, a quilt, a cabinet—can spark imagination and transformation beyond the home. Drawing from personal experience and memory, artists in this gallery subvert expectations about use. Some artworks are fantastical repurposings of appliances and tools. Others radically break with tradition, opening doors to new ways of seeing the world and furnishing a new sense of being in the everyday.

The child in each of us
Knows paradise.
Paradise is home.
Home as it was
Or home as it should have been.
—Octavia Butler, from Parable of the Talents (1998)

David Gilhooly
born 1943, Auburn, CA; died 2013, Newport, OR

Eight Bean Stew
1982
white earthenware with glaze
Promised gift from the collection of Colleen and John Kotelly

David Gilhooly had a penchant for inserting funky frogs in everyday objects. Here, his frogs add extra flavor to a pan of eight-bean stew, offering a surprising slant on comfort food and, more broadly, challenging the seriousness of the art world. This pan is an example from Gilhooly’s FrogWorld, a place of his dreams that he realized with clay.

Wendy Maruyama
born 1952, La Junta, CO

Patterned Credenza
1990
painted poplar
Promised gift from the collection of Colleen and John Kotelly

Wendy Maruyama loves to break the rules of furniture making. In the 1980s, she introduced “loud brash colors” and “weird shapes” into her functional forms that refuse to blend into the background. “I think the directions I have taken with my work are profoundly impacted by my own lived experiences as a Deaf woman in a male-dominated field, with my own insecurities, personal history, ethnic background, and personal passions.”

In the early 1970s, she embraced woodworking at San Diego State, as one of the few women in the field at that time. Her persistence and unique vision have made her a revered artist and an influential educator who has opened doors for many other artists.
Lisa Holt  Cochiti Pueblo  
born 1980, Cochiti Pueblo, NM

Harlan Reano  Santo Domingo/Kewa Pueblo  
born 1978, Kewa Pueblo, NM

**Untitled Pot**  
2021  
earthenware with acrylic paint  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Howard Kottler Endowment for Ceramic Art, 2021.96

Lisa Holt (Cochiti Pueblo) and Harlan Reano (Kewa/Santo Domingo Pueblo) have been collaborating on pottery since 1999. Both artists are from Indigenous pueblos in northern New Mexico, and they gather and process natural clay from Cochiti Pueblo. Holt shaped the clay in the shape of a water jar and Reano painted the surface, often combining motifs from both pueblos and then adding his own design elements. The bright, pulsating color palette accentuates the repeated floral pattern that mimics the wildflower blooms in New Mexico.

L. J. Roberts  
born 1980, Royal Oak, Michigan

*The Queer Houses of Brooklyn in the Three Towns of Breukelen, Boswyck, and Midwout during the 41st Year of the Stonewall Era* (based on a 2010 drawing by Rosza Daniel Lang/Levitsky with 24 illustrations by Buzz Slutzky on printed pinback buttons)  
2011  
Poly-Fil, acrylic, rayon, Lurex, wool, polyester, cotton, lamé, sequins, and blended fabrics with printed pinback buttons  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Elaine Reuben, 2012.43

L. J. Roberts knitted and sewed this map of queer community building in Brooklyn, New York. The map is based on a drawing by Rosza Daniel Lang/Lvitsky made in honor of Brooklyn’s 2010 Queer House Field Day. Roberts’s large-scale work is a vibrantly colored collage of knitted rectangular poufs, reminiscent of both handmade patchwork quilts and the brickwork of Brooklyn brownstones. Hot pink triangles (a symbol of LGBTQ self-identity) mark the homes with open doors. *Queer Houses* continues the work of radical community organizing that changes the home, not the inhabitants.

These are reproductions of the buttons originally made by L. J. Roberts in 2011. Please take one to keep.
Micah Evans  
born 1975, Cashmere, WA

*Raphine*  
2015  
lampworked borosilicate glass  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Fleur S. Bresler, 2021.48.27

The title of this artwork, *Raphine*, comes from the Greek word *ράβω*, meaning “to sew.” With a repetitive technique comparable to hand-stitching, Micah Evans joined together thin strands of borosilicate (heat-resistant) glass with a torch into the shape of a nineteenth-century Wilcox & Gibbs sewing machine, the first single-thread chain-stitch machine invented for domestic use. *Raphine* celebrates the historical tool that affected everyday life. It also reveals an unexpected, contemporary use as a water bong. In this way, Evans shows the changing perceptions of tools over time.

Gwendolyn Yoppolo  
born 1968, Redwood City, CA

*scoopbowl service*  
2010  
porcelain with microcrystalline glaze  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Rebecca Anne Sive, 2021.74

Serving vessels often take center stage in a social gathering. Gwendolyn Yoppolo’s *scoopbowl service* encourages mindful interaction: as people share from this bowl, they also share space and each other’s attention. Yoppolo developed an opalescent glaze that varies under different lights, creating ever-changing perceptions of the artwork and perhaps encouraging the same of each other.
Laura Andreson
born 1902, San Bernardino, CA; died 1999, Los Angeles, CA

*Bowl*
1939
earthenware with uranium glaze
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Forrest L. Merrill, 2021.98.2

This relatively simple form shows off the mustard-yellow glaze, made brilliant by uranium (a radioactive element no longer used in ceramics). Laura Andreson boldly experimented with glaze formulas in the 1930s, when there was scant documentation on the chemistry. She founded the ceramics department at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1933 and taught thousands of students until her retirement in 1970. The surface of this bowl suggests the crackled texture of the California desert.

Cliff Lee
born 1951, Vienna, Austria

*Imperial Yellow Dish with Pedestal*
1988
porcelain with glaze
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Carol and Bill Wright in memory of Dr. Edward L. Katz, 2010.36.2A–B

Cliff Lee is renowned for his complex glazes. It took the artist seventeen years to perfect the Imperial Yellow (also known as Chicken Fat Yellow) glaze on this serving dish. The color recreates a famous porcelain finish from the fifteenth-century Ming dynasty of China.

Trained as a neurosurgeon, Lee brings his extensive knowledge of the sciences to concocting ambitious glaze recipes. In the broader history of American studio craft, once separate disciplines like science and art have been brought together by shared passions for curiosity and mastery of skill.

Elsa Rady
born 1943, New York City; died 2011, Culver City, CA
Porcelain Bowl with Green Glaze
1979
porcelain with glaze

Elsa Rady transformed her bowls into sculptures. Inspired by modern dance, she carved elegant shapes into the rim, invoking twirling, lifting movement. The grass-green matte glaze imbues the form with a sense of softness, even restraint.

Silas Kopf
born 1949, Warren, PA

Founding Fathers Writing Table
2010
wood from historic estates of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Patrick Henry, and James Monroe
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Fleur S. Bresler, 2021.48.11

Silas Kopf made this writing desk with timbers from the historic estates of past US presidents. Among the fifteen species of wood, the most significant to the artist is the horse chestnut from a tree planted by George Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia, more than two hundred years ago.
The marquetry desktop is intended to conjure an idea of Thomas Jefferson drafting the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia in 1776. The artist chose to represent “We hold these truths to be self-evident” from the document. Jefferson’s household included female relatives and enslaved workers, but the truths of “certain unalienable rights” in his draft did not extend to African Americans, Native Americans, or women.

**Roberto Lugo**

born 1981, Philadelphia, PA

*Juicy*

2021

stoneware with glaze, enamel paint, and luster

Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the James Renwick Alliance for Craft in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Renwick Gallery and the 40th anniversary of the Alliance, 2021.68


The title, *Juicy*, comes from Biggie’s first single from his debut album “Ready to Die” in 1994. The song tells the rags-to-riches story about Biggie’s childhood in poverty, his dreams of musical greatness, his time dealing drugs, and how he transformed the music industry. The song resonates with Lugo’s own life story. Born in Kensington, Philadelphia, to working-class Puerto Rican parents, Lugo began his creative career tagging the walls of the city. Then, as the artist often recalls, ceramics saved his life, reorienting his priorities toward art, social justice, and community service.

**Roberto Lugo**

born 1981, Philadelphia, PA

*Frederick Douglass and Anna Murray Douglass Vase*

2021

ceramic with glaze and enamel paint

Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center
“I put these stories on pottery because pottery lasts forever. It is how we know about cultures past, and I refuse to have our stories forgotten. We are here and demand to be seen as sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, and not dispensable beings.” —Roberto Lugo

This vase celebrates the contributions of abolitionist Frederick Douglass and his wife, Anna Murray Douglass. While Frederick Douglass’s life story is well known, Anna Murray more quietly supported her husband’s projects, their growing family, and local anti-slavery causes. When the family lived in Rochester, New York, Anna Murray opened the family home to freedom seekers as part of the Underground Railroad. The Douglass family later moved to Washington, DC, and in 1877 they purchased Cedar Hill, a home in the Anacostia neighborhood, where Anna Murray died in 1882.

Chawne Kimber
born 1971, Frankfurt, KY

still not
2019
machine-pieced, hand-quilted, hand-bound mid-century fabric, quilting cotton, and denim with cotton sashiko thread
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Nedra and Peter Agnew in honor of the James Renwick Alliance for Craft, 2021.83

Chawne Kimber stitches her experience as a Black woman in the United States on her monumental quilt, still not. The backdrop of Kimber’s text is a body of bluesy denim patches, framed by pops of colorful fabric—all sourced from mid-century textiles. Kimber’s choice to use vintage cloth and improvisational patterns draws on her memories and family history. Many of her enslaved ancestors in rural Alabama cultivated and ginned cotton. Her great-grandmother, Mamo, and other relatives expressed themselves through quilting. The family participated in quilting circles to chat, cry, laugh, think, and mend—to create a home together. Mamo’s story was told through her quilts, and Kimber continues the thread.
The backside of this quilt is lined with a pattern of the Declaration of Independence printed on commercial fabric. To view the back, scan the QR code with your smartphone camera.

Chunhi Choo
born 1938, Inchon, Korea

*Blooming Vessel*
2004
copper with silver-plating
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the James Renwick Alliance, 2007.1

“I find inspiration from wherever or whatever comes to my mind. It could be a form from nature, a flower, and, most of the time, I take risks and venture out and sail from whatever is there. Some of the better pieces I produced this way contain a spark that brings the pieces to life.” — Chunhi Choo

Chunhi Choo’s vase suspends the moment just before a flower fully blooms. She achieves organic, spontaneous forms in metal with an electroforming process adapted from industrial design, in which copper adheres to the surface of a wax mold in an acid bath. The wax melts and leaves the hollow copper form. Choo then uses a similar process to plate the copper surface with silver.
Jiha Moon
born 1973, Daegu, South Korea; based in Atlanta, GA

Yellowave (black) 1
2020
black stoneware with underglaze and glaze
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the Alturas Foundation, 2021.50.2

Jiha Moon brings together inspiration from unexpected sources, like the stylized brushstrokes of Pop art painter Roy Lichtenstein, classical Korean calligraphy, Fu Dogs from traditional Chinese architecture, and even banana peels. “I am a cartographer of cultures and an icon maker in my lucid worlds,” the artist explains. Here, presented in the universal shape of a vase, she nimbly combines all these elements to upend perceptions of time and place.

Maria Martinez
born 1886, San Ildefonso Pueblo, NM; died 1980, San Ildefonso Pueblo, NM

Julian Martinez
born 1879, San Ildefonso Pueblo, NM; died 1943, San Ildefonso Pueblo, NM

Bowl
n.d.
blackware
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of International Business Machines Corporation, 1966.27.14

Maria Martinez and her husband, Julian Martinez, broke away from the polychrome-style wares popular in the 1970s with this black-on-black stylized design. They were inspired by ancient pots excavated near the San Ildefonso Pueblo in Santa Fe, New Mexico, between 1907 and 1909. The geometric shapes resonated with the Art Deco movement of the 1930s and ’40s. In this way, the Martinezes revitalized their ancestral pottery tradition from a modern vantage point.

Margarita Cabrera
born 1973, Monterrey, Mexico; resides Arizona

White Coffee Maker
2011
vinyl, copper wire, and thread
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment, 2012.35.2A–D
Brown Blender  
2011  
v vinyl, copper wire, and thread  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment, 2012.35.1A–D

Black and Grey Toaster  
2011  
v vinyl, copper wire, and thread  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Frank K. Ribelin Endowment, 2012.36

Margarita Cabrera’s faux-leather appliances are reminders that many household electronics are made in factories in Mexico. The obvious craft process of sewing—emphasized by the exposed threads—symbolically makes visible the exploited human labor involved with mass production. Cabrera, who was born in Mexico and lives in Arizona, relates the sagging vinyl forms to the underpaid workers who help provide basic comforts in American homes.

What if this flag of truce was the flag we knew, instead of the Confederate battle flag?  
—Sonya Clark

Sonya Clark’s Monumental

Sonya Clark weaves stories that celebrate Blackness while interrogating the historical roots of racial injustice in the United States. Monumental was inspired by objects in the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History. During a visit to the museum, Clark discovered the white dishtowel waved at Appomattox Court House in 1865 to signal the Confederate army’s surrender in the American Civil War. It made her wonder, “What if this flag of truce was the flag
we knew, instead of the Confederate battle flag?” Clark set out to create a monumental version of the symbol. The scale and presentation intentionally reference the *Star-Spangled Banner*, another iconic object in the National Museum of American History’s collection.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the paths toward emancipation and reconstruction were violent. The legacy of slavery—the core issue of the Civil War—continues to trouble the political, cultural, and social landscape into this present moment. *Monumental* holds the self-evident truths of American history in its humble threads and offers a different perspective: “Imagine if each time we reached for the dishcloth by our sinks, we recalled the war waged by yesteryear’s enemies of the country and their surrender,” reflects Clark. “Are we creating the future we desire through what we do, how we are, and what we make?”

**Sonya Clark**
born 1967, Washington, DC
in collaboration with The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia

*Monumental*
2019
woven linen with madder dye and tea stain
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the American Women’s History Initiative Acquisitions Pool administered by the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative, the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment, and the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund

This towel was used as a flag of truce by Confederate troops during General Robert E. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865. It was preserved by General George A. Custer, who was present at the surrender.

Division of Political and Military History, National Museum of American History, Bequest of Elizabeth B. Custer, 1936, PL.039765
The Nation
Nations are defined by their borders, the dividing lines between lands and people who are contained or excluded. The first barriers between the United States and Mexico were installed in the early twentieth century. During the 1990s, the looming fences separating California from Tijuana were constructed with surplus corrugated steel used as helicopter landing pads in the American war in Vietnam.

Border politics remain a deeply divisive issue in the United States. Many artists have used their creative practice to critique and challenge the utility of these boundary lines and anti-immigration rhetoric. The artists in this gallery open up the borderlands as spaces for reflection, resistance, and convening.
Consuelo Jiménez Underwood  
born 1949, Sacramento, CA  

*Run, Jane, Run!*  
2004  
tapestry-woven cotton, linen, and other fabric with barbed wire and caution tape  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the Alturas Foundation, 2021.51  

Fiber artist Consuelo Jiménez Underwood has made weavings about immigration at the US-Mexico border for much of her career. Her father was an undocumented field worker in California, and her family regularly crossed the border. In the early 1990s, while driving along the 405 Freeway in San Diego, Jiménez Underwood became distraught at the sight of an “Immigrant Crossing” sign of parents running with a small child. She began depicting this motif threaded with barbed wire, caution tape, and yellow cotton into many of her weavings. This tapestry pays homage to the families killed on the highway and emphasizes their humanity. The title, *Run, Jane, Run!*, references the *Dick and Jane* reading primers for young children.

Ronald Rael  
born 1971, Conejos County, CO  

Virginia San Fratello  
born 1971, Savannah, GA  

*Bad Ombrés v.2*  
2017  
six 3D-printed ceramic vessels  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Howard Kottler Endowment for Ceramic Art  

Ron Rael and Virginia San Fratello created these vessels with two different clay materials—one from each side of the US-Mexico border—to form an ombré effect, a gradual blend of one color to another. In early 2017 President Donald J. Trump called out “bad hombres” along the border as part of his campaign to expand border fences. Popular media pointed out that his pronunciation of the Spanish word *hombre*, which means “man,” sounded more like ombré.

With *Bad Ombrés v.2*, the artists wish to affirm that, in many ways, the term ombré can refer to a richer understanding of the borderlands, where there is no clear distinction between Mexico and the United States. There is a gradient of languages, cuisine, flora and fauna, and art that is shared across the political boundary.
Tanya Aguiñiga performing *Metabolizing the Border* along the US-Mexico border fence, 2020. Photograph by Gina Clyne

**Tanya Aguiñiga**  
born 1978, San Diego, CA

*Metabolizing the Border*  
2018–20  
analogue VR headset, breath distiller, sound amplifiers, Maglite border torch, “Saint Juan Diego and Our Lady” border cloak, water backpack, and huaraches made of blown, cast, and sculpted glass with rusted metal pieces of US-Mexico border fence, leather, and cotton twine; neoprene wetsuit  
glass components made in collaboration with Pilchuck Glass School artisans  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Joint museum purchase with the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, through the American Women’s History Initiative Acquisitions Pool, administered by the Smithsonian American Women’s History Initiative

*Metabolizing the Border* explores the physical and psychological experiences migrants face while crossing the borderlands. In 2019 Tanya Aguiñiga gathered rusted fragments of the steel fence between Tijuana, where she grew up, and San Diego, where she traveled to school every day. Aguiñiga brought the fence fragments to an artist residency at the Pilchuck Glass School in Washington state and embedded them in several blown glass and mixed-media wearable elements for a 2020 performance at the border fence. The wearables processed the border through the five senses to help her make sense of a lifetime of memories.

**The Wearables**  
The headpiece, inspired by a virtual reality headset, focuses the sense of sight through the ocular lens, the sense of sound through the ear amplifiers, and the senses of taste and smell through the breath distiller. Huaraches (sandals), a border torch, and a “San Juan Diego and our Lady” cloak exaggerate the sense of touch and movement. The glass huaraches, modeled
after tire-soled sandals worn by Indigenous Peoples in Mexico and Central America, were
designed to break during the performance to symbolize the failed journey of many migrants. The
cloak references the tilma of San Juan Diego, a significant spiritual and national symbol of
Mexico. The backpack contained water as an offering to the migrants who perished while
crossing the desert. The artist also wore a neoprene suit for protection.

The Journey
In January 2020 Aguiñiga walked along the US-Mexico border wall wearing the suit. The
performance was arduous and intimate. Thirty minutes into the performance, her glass
huaraches began to break beneath her feet, and she felt that each step offered a new path
toward justice. Aguiñiga believes the histories of craft, many learned from her family, pave the
way for collaboration and regeneration. Metabolizing the Border embodies many of the
struggles and perils migrants face throughout their journey for a better home.

The Universe

_There was a startling recognition that the nature of the universe was not as I had been taught. . .
. I not only saw the connectedness. . . I was overwhelmed with the sensation of physically and
mentally extending out into the cosmos._


Perhaps the only constant of the universe is that there is no constant. Always expanding, it is an
infinite exhale into immeasurable space and time. Many artists draw inspiration from the poetic
and scientific expanse of the cosmos. The artists in this gallery have used the language of light
to characterize the night sky and beyond. They show how the universe is as intimate as it is
immense and how all beings are made of the same cosmic dust. We are all connected by the
universe, our universal home.
Dale Chihuly
born 1941, Tacoma, WA

*Mottled Blue Black Float with Silver Leaf, Garnet Black and Mint Green Float with Dimple, and Snow White and Gold Leaf* from the series *Nijima Floats*
blown glass

Dale Chihuly is an incandescent figure in the American studio glass movement. He began to work with glass in the 1960s, fascinated by its potential to shape light and space. In the 1990s, he began a series of *Nijima Floats* inspired by glass orbs used by Japanese fishermen to hold their nets in place. The *Floats* were among the largest glass orbs ever made by inflating molten glass with an artist’s breath. The spellbinding surfaces recall swirling currents of water and gas—wonders of earth and beyond.
Howard Ben Tré  
born 1949, Brooklyn, NY; died 2020, Pawtucket, RI

Wrapped Light #3/2  
2008  
cast glass with gold leaf and pigmented wax on metal base  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Wendy MacGaw, 2021.42

Howard Ben Tré’s Wrapped Light seemingly transcends time and space. Light diffuses through a column of semiopaque glass and gold-leaf surface, casting a transfixing glow—an allusion to the mystery of life beyond the ordinary. Ben Tré achieves this effect by pouring molten glass into molds, a process he engineered in the late 1970s.

Hiroshi Sueyoshi  
born 1946, Tokyo, Japan; active in Wilmington, NC

Iridescent-Faceted Vase  
1977  
colored porcelain with glaze  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 1985.1

Hiroshi Sueyoshi uses the nerigae technique of stacking and kneading bands of colored porcelain then carving out facets to reveal marbleized patterns. This petite vase assumes a shimmering, otherworldly character.

Rick Dillingham  
born 1952, Lake Forest, IL; died 1994, Santa Fe, NM

Large Silver Globe  
1978  
reassembled raku-fired earthenware with glaze and silver leaf  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Robert and Sharon Buchanan, 2021.41.4

Rick Dillingham carefully hand built and fired this large clay globe. And then he shattered it. He glazed and raku-fired the shards, then he just as carefully rebuilt it. The repaired pot revels in its imperfections, highlighted by the strips of silver leaf, strokes of blue glaze, and cloud-like spots and speckles. Dillingham developed this intense process after years of studying and restoring ancient Pueblo pottery. The shimmering, imperfect globe reflects Dillingham’s idea that “no one is a master of ceramic arts, it’s just a matter of how much you can cooperate with the elements at the time.”

This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World
Lanny Bergner  
born 1952, Anacortes, WA  

*Celestial Body*  
2005  
bronze, brass, and aluminum  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Judith S. Weisman, 2021.62  

Celestial bodies—like stars, planets, asteroids, and nebulas—are as wide-ranging as the entire universe. Many bodies are known; many others exist that we may never discover. Lanny Bergner weaves the wonder of the universe with common materials found in a hardware store: mesh screens of bronze, brass, and aluminum. The artist cut and pieced the metal to form this ethereal hanging sculpture.

Robert Sperry  
born 1927, Bushnell, IL; died 1998, Seattle, WA  

*Ceramic Wall Mural “#988”*  
1991  
stoneware with slip and glaze; steel rim mounted on plywood  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Patti Warashina, 2021.86.2  

Robert Sperry defined creativity as an “expression of the universe to complexify, to elaborate, and to challenge the unknown . . . to create the unknown.” This monumental wall mural breathes life into his words. The black-and-white striations, swirling and scrolling waves, and crackled surface patterns are revelations of the artist’s creative universe. Sperry achieved this
texture by painting thick brushstrokes of slip (a mixture of clay and water) onto the ceramic surface before firing.

**Ruth Duckworth**  
born 1919, Hamburg, Germany; died 2009, Chicago, IL

*Untitled (Mama Pot)*  
2007  
Stoneware  
Promised gift from the collection of Colleen and John Kotelly

Ruth Duckworth made this monumental pot as part of her *Mama Pots*, a series of vessels characterized by hand-shaped slabs and bisecting blades of stoneware. The interior cavities absorb light and cast evocative shadows across its sleek lines. Duckworth often lingered on core dualities in her creative practice: the interaction between visible and invisible, interior and exterior, and a discrete sculpture and infinite space.

**This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World**

How is craft relevant in your life?

Handcrafted objects like quilts, bowls, utensils, and masks are seemingly everyday, useful comforts. They can also be crafted to show us a deeper, wider perspective of the world around us.

The galleries on this floor, a continuation of the Renwick Gallery's fiftieth anniversary exhibition, respond to the once unimaginable circumstances of this present moment. The artworks on view provide profound moments of reflection—prompting questions on the very meaning of craft and its influence, now and over the long term.

Some artworks, like masks and protest banners, serve the immediate needs of the present. Others cast new light on the past, sharing previously untold stories and reframing histories. Many artworks inspire a responsibility to the future, showing how craft can restore relationships to the environment and build coalitions across differences. Every object offers the presence of the artist, revealing the radical and tender possibilities of the hand to craft a better world.
The anniversary exhibition was marked by an ambitious acquisitions campaign focused on increasing representation by women and artists of color. More than one hundred works on view are new additions to the museum’s collection.

*There was a time before us.*
*There was a time before the time before us.* . . .

*And our now will soon be long ago.*

—Amy Ludwig VanDerwater, from “There Was a Time” (2019)

**Alicia Eggert**
born 1981, Camden, NJ

*This Present Moment*
2019–20
neon, custom controller, and steel
edition 2 of 3
neon produced by Amy Enlow, fabrication assistance by Teresa Larrabee, Paolo Tamez-Buccino, Jaelyn Kotzur, and James Akers
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Renwick General Acquisitions Fund, 2021.4

“Time itself cannot be made, but if time is a medium, what can be made present with it? Can it be stretched and compressed like clay? Can it be turned like wood, carved like stone, bent like glass, or woven like twine? If we use time to make new forms, perhaps those forms can help us tell stories that have previously gone untold.” —Alicia Eggert

Sculptor Alicia Eggert creates immersive experiences of time. This neon billboard casts a brilliant pink light throughout the Renwick’s Octagon Room, prompting us to become more present in this very moment. Eggert illuminates a quote by revolutionary futurist Stewart Brand, from his book *The Clock of the Long Now* (1999), a manifesto for living intentionally with a ten-thousand-year-old clock in mind. The pink is a call out to the Me Too movement of 2017, a once unimaginable social reckoning that empowered people to share past stories of sexual harassment and assault, demand accountability, and make possible safer conditions for all.
Echoes of the Past

Wendy Stayman
born 1945, Philadelphia, PA

Tall Case Clock
1992
poplar, Baltic birch plywood, curly sycamore veneer, Macassar ebony veneer, and ebonized cherry with slate, brass, azurite, malachite, hematite, enamel, sterling silver, and glass
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the artist in memory of her brother David, 2008.34

Wendy Stayman crafts a long view of time. This design, made with contrasting colors of curly sycamore and Macassar ebony veneers, recalls a djed, the ancient Egyptian symbol for stability. The pillar-like djed features prominently in Egyptian art, especially on carved sarcophagi, to symbolize the backbone of Osiris, the god of the afterlife. Stayman joined this ancient motif with the future-forward finesse of Art Deco style, characterized by the opulent materials and curved ornamental elements.

Karen LaMonte
born 1967, New York City

Vestige (Pleated Dress)
2000
cast glass
Promised gift from the collection of Myra and Harold Weiss

This vestige of a woman asks, Who was she? How did she see herself? How did others see her? The translucent glass illuminates more questions than answers.

This glass dress marks a breakthrough in Karen LaMonte’s creative career. In 1999, she traveled on a Fulbright Fellowship to experiment with glass casting techniques at a foundry in Prague. Her first tests were, as she recalled, total catastrophes. LaMonte persisted and after eight months of repeated attempts—and living off cheap cabbage—she successfully cast each element of Vestige (Pleated Dress). Her rigorous technique makes possible the delicate folds of a dress.
Olga de Amaral  
born 1932, Bogotá, Colombia

*Montaña #13*  
2001  
handwoven linen with gold leaf and gesso  
Promised gift from the collection of Robert and Sharon Buchanan

*Montaña #13* evokes the mountainous terrain of Colombia, where textile artist Olga de Amaral grew up and lives today. To achieve the radiant effect, she layered gold leaf and gesso onto woven linen. Amaral began to incorporate gold into her weavings in the 1980s after she learned about *kintsugi*, the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with gold lacquer. The applied gold glorifies imperfection. Amaral observed that “gold has such a way of reflecting light, it’s magical, mysterious even, though I don’t like to use those words to describe it.” To the artist’s point, the alchemy of gold and fiber in *Montaña #13* summons a feeling of living in the moment, even amid disruption, that cannot be captured with language.

Donté K. Hayes  
born 1975, Baltimore, MD

*Initiate*  
2020  
handbuilt black stoneware  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.5

With a needle tool, Donté Hayes meticulously scratched the surface of this clay sculpture to emulate the exterior texture of a pineapple. Today, the pineapple is recognized as a symbol of hospitality, appearing on door knockers and other household decor. Hayes’s experience as a Black man in inhospitable spaces led him to study the history of the prickly fruit. As he learned, pineapples were luxury commodities in the colonial era, intertwined with the brutality of the Caribbean fruit plantations that relied on the enslaved labor of Africans.

“The artwork I create suggests the past, discusses the present, and explores future’s interconnectedness to the African Diaspora, while examining deeper social issues that broaden the conversation between all of humanity.” —Donté K. Hayes
Marvin Oliver
Quinault/Isleta Pueblo
born 1946, Seattle, WA; died 2019, Seattle, WA

*Salish Clam Basket*
2008
blown glass with etched image
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Sharon Karmazin, 2021.28

Marvin Oliver created this glass basket to resemble the open-weave clam baskets made by the Salish peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast. The open form allows sand and water to pass through while retaining the clams. Oliver, from the Quinault Indian Nation of Washington state, incorporated Northwest Coast designs into his art, which ranged from carving and sculpting to glass and printmaking. Staying true to the original basket form, he nestled clear and opaque glass clams in the bottom. Likewise, Oliver paid tribute to the basket artists of the region by adding a glass etching of a Salish woman with her baskets.

Cristina Córdova
born 1976, Boston, MA

*Araña*
2004
handbuilt ceramic with glaze and stain
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Lorne E. Lassiter and Gary P. Ferraro, 2021.59

Cristina Córdova shapes earthly matter into mythic figures. This uncanny *Araña* (Spanish for spider), with its androgynous human torso on seven spindly legs, startles all sense of reality. The artist, who currently lives in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, grew up in Puerto Rico, where she was drawn to the prevalent icons of Catholicism—figures that bind together the contradictions of agony and ecstasy, corporeal and magical. Here, Córdova has begun a story and invites you to finish it.

Einar de la Torre
born 1963, Guadalajara, Mexico

Jamex de la Torre
born 1960, Guadalajara, Mexico
both active in Baja California, Mexico, and San Diego, CA
Ohio Goza y Mas

2013
blown glass, resin castings, and mixed media
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Todd Wingate and Steven Cason, courtesy of the artists and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, 2021.84

Einar and Jamex de la Torre are brothers and glass artists. They made this wall sculpture after an Aztec calendar, a visual dating system adapted by many ancient Mesoamerican nations. The Spanish title translates to “Ohio Enjoy and More,” and, when pronounced, sounds like “Good Morning” in Japanese. It represents their humor, where the piece was made (Ohio), and their multifaceted view of people and time.

The brothers gather countless motifs into a celebration of blended cultures: Kewpie dolls, with surprising objects in their bellies, invented in the early twentieth century by American Rose O’Neill and popularized in Japan; Mano poderosa (the all-powerful hand) from Mexican Catholic devotional imagery; sonrientes (grinning figures) from Mesoamerican ceramics; and golden tumis, ceremonial knives with semicircular blades, from the ancient Andean Moche culture. Casts of butterflies and insects symbolize transformation and migration.

Richard Cleaver

born 1952, Camden, NJ

Head and Shoulders

2007
handbuilt ceramic with freshwater pearls, garnets, Swarovski crystals, carnelian sapphires, bronze wire, metal, gold leaf, and oil paint
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Robert and Sharon Buchanan, 2021.41.3

Richard Cleaver grew up within a devout Catholic family. Spending hours in church, he was fascinated with the rituals and the objects held in ornate drawers and tabernacles. He recreates these mystical spaces in this ceramic self-portrait, embellished with crystals, gems, and a golden flame representing the presence of the Holy Spirit. Beneath the cheerful veneer, doors open to reveal Cleaver’s true self as a gay man. The work speaks to his longing to reveal himself, to be able to metamorphize like the butterfly on his shoulder.
Ron Ho
born 1936, Honolulu, HI; died 2017, Seattle, WA

Necklace Made for Patti Warashina
n.d.
silver, leather, and Plexiglas with two wood carvings by Julie Harrison and one carved wooden Japanese mask
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Patti Warashina, 2021.86.1

Jeweler Ron Ho made this necklace for his cherished friend, ceramist Patti Warashina. Both are celebrated artists in the Pacific Northwest. Ho typically incorporated found objects in his signature pendant necklaces. He thoughtfully harmonized disparate objects—gathered during his world travels—with his architectural designs in metal. This necklace pays homage to Warashina’s Japanese heritage with a vintage carved Japanese mask, juxtaposed with contemporary carvings by Seattle artist Julie Harrison.

Jon Eric Riis
born 1945, Park Ridge, IL

Heart of Gold, Female #2
2002
tapestry-woven silk with metallic thread; custom mount
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the Jerome A. and Deena L. Kaplan Collection, 2021.49.1

What do we express to the world with our clothing—our second skin? And what do we conceal?

Clothes offer a protective barrier, and they also tell others more about our unique selves. Tapestry artist John Eric Riis depicts the exterior of a woman’s chest on a shimmering silk coat to imply her heart of gold. And yet, the interior reveals just the vulnerable viscera, bones, and muscles of a human body.

Kukuli Velarde
born 1962, Lima, Peru; based in Philadelphia, PA

Santa Chingada: The Perfect Little Woman
1999–2000
ceramic and mixed media
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift from the collection of Clemmer and David Montague, 2021.61.5
Kukuli Velarde portrays her inherited memories and emotions. Her series of squatting ceramic figures, called Isichapuitu, were inspired by a Peruvian myth about a priest who used vessels called Manchaypuitu (male) and Isichapuitu (female) to summon spirits from the past. This Isichapuitu embodies a “Perfect Little Woman,” after the Virgin Mary of Sorrows, a mournful figure with seven daggers piercing her heart. This woman has no power over her own body: she is pregnant but wears a chastity belt, and she wears a mask of an idealized white woman. Velarde crafts a charged moment, as if the woman has woken up and realized her confinement. She removes the mask to show herself as a fierce Indigenous woman.

Velarde wrote the text around the sculpture’s edge: *I open my arms to you, saying “I am yours.” Nail your thorns on me. I will be the one who heals your wounds and relieves you from your sorrows. I do not ask for anything in return. If something, maybe a little of your love . . . If something, maybe just to know I am your savior, the sacrificed mother of your children . . . Any offense you inflict on me is welcome as my token . . . For your veneration . . .*

**Dora de Larios**
born 1933, Los Angeles, CA; died 2018, Culver City, CA

*Opera Singer*
ca. 1960
stoneware with glaze
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Forrest L. Merrill, 2021.98.1

Through this opera singer, Dora de Larios exclaims that she, too, is a great artist. This combination of subject and style challenges boundaries between “high” art like opera and “low” art like folk art ceramics.

De Larios’s lifelong inspiration from Mesoamerican ceramics began when she was a young girl and encountered an Aztec calendar at an archaeological museum in Mexico City. She committed her artistic practice to emulating ancient Mexican motifs and stories, even as her peers in Los Angeles shattered craft’s connection to the past to define themselves in their field.
Katie Hudnall  
born 1979, Alexandria, VA

*Nut Case*  
2019  
reclaimed wood with found hardware and fasteners, industrial felt, and 178 acorns  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.21

In 2017, Katie Hudnall began to fill her home with acorns collected on long walks. Dealing with difficult life circumstances, Hudnall found, “The walks became a way to find myself back to my mind and body again and to be really present.” Hudnall created a special shelter for the acorns: a curvilinear suitcase featuring a square—a home—for each one.

The 178 acorns trace the ongoing journey of the artist. A mature oak tree produces about two thousand acorns a year, but only one in ten thousand acorns reaches maturity. Hudnall explains, “I think the idea of constant, repeated, tiny attempts for success, with the understanding that most will go nowhere, became a way for me to think about slow progress toward health in my own life.” Hudnall renders a playful case of acorns into a powerful call to action: slow down and linger, seek alternative paths, and accept failures.

To view an image of the acorns inside the case, scan the QR code with your smartphone camera.

Corey Alston  
born 1982, Mount Pleasant, SC

*From Traditional to Contemporary*  
2021  
sweetgrass  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Carolyn L. Mazloomi

This is the most ambitious basket completed by Gullah weaver Corey Alston. Unlike many Gullah weavers, Alston did not learn the craft of coiling as a child because he was born into a family of blacksmiths. When he married into a family of sweetgrass weavers, his wife’s grandmother, the family matriarch and nationally acclaimed artist Mary Jane Manigault, gave her blessing for Alston to learn the family tradition.
Gullah people have been making sweetgrass baskets in the Lowcountry of South Carolina since the seventeenth century. Early “traditional” baskets were made by enslaved Africans to aid the cultivation of rice on plantations. Alston, a fifth-generation maker, shapes intricate patterns into “contemporary” sculptural baskets. He is currently teaching his daughter the process, sustaining memory and kinship coil by coil.

Marilyn Pappas
born 1931, Brockton, MA

*Nike with Broken Wings*

2002–8
cotton and linen with gold thread
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Fleur S. Bresler, 2021.48.2

Marilyn Pappas made thousands of tiny stitches to illustrate a Hellenistic Greek sculpture of Nike, the goddess of victory. The artist equates embroidery with drawing, but as a slower and more satisfying process—with every stitch, she ponders the folds of time. “Larger than life, scarred and battered by the ravages of time, there is a peculiar beauty, vulnerability, and dignity in these mythical personifications of idealism,” the artist explains. Pappas, whose prolific career in fiber spans sixty years, has interpreted ancient goddesses with modern sensitivity. She imbues *Nike with Broken Wings* with a sense of feminist power and, of course, victory.

Moments of Presence

Sharon Kerry-Harlan
born 1951, Miami, FL

*Portrait of Resilience*, from the *Flag Series*

2020
machine-quilted, dye-discharge fabric designed by the artist and antique quilt, vinyl, American flag, and African print fabrics
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.35

*Portrait of Resilience* pieces together materials and symbols from the past and present to create a portrait of a Black American woman in this current moment. Sharon Kerry-Harlan depicts a girl with a youthful bubble braid. Each bubble is haloed with the crownlike appearance of a COVID-19 particle. The blouse is constructed of an antique patchwork quilt, adorned with a 2020 golden
A necklace made with faux leather. Her lips and nose are made of a commercial cotton American flag, and the bows accenting her braid are made of African kente cloth.

Reflecting on current events—including the effects of the pandemic—that have affirmed structures of racism in American society, Kerry-Harlan writes, “despite these dire situations, resilience remains among African Americans and their allies to realize a better future.” The artist’s process, quilting, inspires a way forward rooted in generational togetherness, empowering the young girl with the strength of the community. The stitches carry the stories of pain, but they also mend and bring comfort.

**Bisa Butler**

born 1973, Orange, NJ

*Don’t Tread on Me, God Damn, Let’s Go! — The Harlem Hellfighters*

2021

pieced, appliquéd, and quilted cottons, silk, wool, and velvet

Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of David Bonderman

In this monumental quilt, Bisa Butler brings to life the history and emotions of nine members of the 369th Infantry Regiment known as the Harlem Hellfighters, a segregated unit of the American Expeditionary Force in World War I. Drawing from the wellsprings of African American quilting traditions and the Kool-Aid colors of the Black Power art movement, Butler pieced together layers of dazzling textiles to connect this present moment to the past.

“I look to their example to see for myself that the triumphs we experience today will outlast tyrants and that nothing can ever erase them—not time, not death. These protectors of our nation fought and put their very bodies and their lives on the line. My work is to continue to lift them up in history so they can be seen in public spaces, where their heroic sacrifices become part of the American quest to fight against oppression and for freedom.” —Bisa Butler

The Harlem Hellfighters fought in several key battles in World War I and spent extensive time in continuous combat. This photograph was taken on the deck of the ship *Stockholm* upon its return to the United States from Europe on February 12, 1919. All of the soldiers wear the Croix de Guerre, the highest military decoration in France bestowed on allied foreign military forces for their gallantry in action. The men in this image range in ages from nineteen to thirty-three.

Artist Bisa Butler included more recent honors in her depiction: In 2002, some of the Harlem Hellfighters were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest US Military decoration; in 2015, some were awarded the Medal of Honor, the highest decoration. In 2021, the Harlem Hellfighters were also awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by an overwhelming bipartisan majority.

**Nick Cave**
born 1959, Fulton, MO

*Soundsuit*
2010
fabric with beads and sequins
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Fleur S. Bresler, 2021.48.1
Trained as a fiber artist and dancer, Nick Cave named his ongoing series of *Soundsuits* for the rustling he heard as he moved around in his first suit.

In the aftermath of the beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles police officers in 1991, Cave imagined these *Soundsuits* as protective shields capable of masking a person’s identity. Extravagantly ornamented, the suits also explore the tension between “low craft” and “high art.” They are often made from found objects and incorporate a wide range of cultural references, from American craft techniques to African dance rituals.

**Woody de Othello**  
born 1991, Miami, FL

*Covering Face*  
2021  
stoneware with glaze on tiled base  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund

Ceramist Woody de Othello made this blue jug-like face to convey the melancholy of 2020 and 2021. The title, *Covering Face*, is a sly nod to the sudden necessity of face coverings to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The related constant cascade of bad news also made him want to take cover. Othello exaggerated the scale of the hands as they conceal the face, reinforcing the tenderness of touch.

As Othello works with clay, he reflects on his experience as a Black man. The artist recalls, “ceramics taught me how to live life. . . . You have to be prepared that things will not work out as planned.”

**Nancy Lee Worden**  
born 1954, Boston, MA; died 2021, Seattle, WA

*Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*  
2018  
silver, found gloves, found purses, and plastic flowers  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the Estate of Nancy Worden, 2021.54.1

The Me Too movement of 2017 encouraged victims of sexual abuse and harassment to share their stories and make demands for accountability. Nancy Worden reflected on her own
memories of sexual harassment as she crafted this necklace, subverting its status as a luxury item into a relevant political statement. The coin purses reference the crude euphemism for a woman’s vagina, while the work gloves make visceral the feeling of unwanted touch. In Worden’s experience, claims of sexual harassment were often dismissed, but the victims never forgot.
The artwork encompasses Worden’s study of the lived experiences of American women through jewelry.

Carolyn Crump  
born 1960, Detroit, MI

*BLM-4*  
2020  
machine-quilted cotton with cotton thread and paint  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.15

“I started making my art masks to chronicle this time in my life so people could know I gave my love, talent, and my time to my community, friends and family, anybody that needed my help. I tried do what I could.” —Carolyn Crump

Carolyn Crump tells stories of African American life with her three-dimensional quilts. She is a fifth-generation quilter and member of the Women of Color Quilters Network. At the onset of COVID-19, Crump began making cloth masks for her community in Houston, Texas. After a few months, she began sewing more elaborate and nonfunctional masks, like a joyful vignette of a little girl reading under an apple tree. Following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, she turned to themes of resilience and social justice, including a portrait of Floyd and protest signs affirming the message Black Lives Matter.

Katrina Mitten  
Miami Tribe of Oklahoma  
born 1962, Huntington, IN

*MMIW*  
2020  
cotton with ribbon, Czech seed beads, bone, and shell  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2020.29.1
Katrina Mitten created the **MMIW** (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women) face mask as a statement of solidarity and awareness during the COVID-19 pandemic. She explains, “Many women use the red handprint to bring attention to the horrible injustices that are occurring in indigenous communities throughout North America. Having to wear protective masks for our health would cover those who choose to paint the handprint on their faces, and I beaded it onto the mask.”

At the age of twelve, Mitten began learning the traditional arts of the Miami, a Native nation whose name for itself is Myaamia, meaning the “Downstream People.” She continues to make traditional clothing and practice Miami-style beadwork.

**Marlana Thompson**  
Mohawk, Wolf Clan from Akwesasne  
born 1978, Cornwall, Ontario, Canada

*Ononkwashon:a (Medicine Plants)*  
2020  
black velveteen with red flannel, Czech seed beads, sweetgrass, sage, and leather  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2020.29.3

Strawberries, white pine, and cedar are some of the medicinal foods and plants gathered by members of the Mohawk Nation. Marlana Thompson, an Akwesasne Mohawk artist and regalia maker, beaded images of those medicines on her face mask. She added white “sky domes” on the bottom to represent prayers for her three children. For more protection, she sewed pieces of sweetgrass and sage inside the mask. Thompson has beaded since the age of seven and uses the artform to convey Mohawk culture and history.

**Kit Paulson**  
born 1981, Hinsdale, IL

*Lungs*  
2020  
flameworked borosilicate glass  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.22
Kit Paulson shapes thin strands of heat-resistant glass with a torch to create intricate sculptures. *Lungs* draws comparison to the structuring of veins and lacework. The artist transformed the alveoli, the tiny air sacs on the lungs, into flowers. Paulson finished this work just weeks before the pandemic of COVID-19, a disease that causes numerous complications in the lungs.

**Julia Kwon**  
born 1987, Woodbridge, VA

*Unapologetically Asian*  
2020  
Korean silk, cotton canvas, muslin, and elastic  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.1

Julia Kwon created this face mask using *bojagi*, a Korean style of patchwork. As a Korean American textile artist from Northern Virginia, her work explores notions of gender and identity. She made the *Unapologetically Asian* masks in response to anti-Asian racism and violence during the pandemic.

“I became deeply aware of how I may be misperceived not only as a perpetual foreigner, but, now during this pandemic, also as a carrier or cause of the COVID-19 virus. I felt tired and frustrated by the pressures to exist quietly and invisibly. So, I decided to create vibrant Korean patchwork face masks to unapologetically celebrate my ethnic identity.” —Julia Kwon

**Linda Lopez**  
born 1981, Visalia, CA

*Blue/Purple Ombré with Rocks*  
2018  
handbuilt colored porcelain  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Howard Kottler Endowment for Ceramic Art, 2020.64

Linda Lopez calls these lively porcelain sculptures “furries.” At first glance, the furries look soft and fluffy. A closer look reveals their hard porcelain surface, prompting viewers to slow down and take notice of the textures of life.
The charismatic furries were inspired by a walk in New Zealand in search of glow worms. Lopez recalls, “There was not even a glimmer of a glow, so we decided to walk the trail again. We walked slower, we didn’t talk, and we practiced seeing. Then, all of a sudden, the forest was covered in thousands of glow worms. It was that moment that made me realize that I wasn’t seeing the things around me every day.”

**Sharon Massey**
born 1977, Winston-Salem, NC

*Touch (in the time of corona)*
2020
Copper
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.33

Metalsmith Sharon Massey created this deeply personal work in 2020 following the death of her husband’s grandmother during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the funeral, Massey’s husband was unable to console his mother because of the need to maintain physical distance. Massey etched his fingerprints onto copper, intending them to be held and caressed like worry or prayer beads. The piece is a reminder of the centrality of touch, not just in craft, but in our everyday lives.

**M. J. Tyson**
born 1986, Morristown, NJ

*Popular Devotion*
2020
devotional medals with sterling silver and cast pewter
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.18.2

“We pin so much to our precious possessions. We use them to extend our lives, to carry our stories into the future and our histories out from the past. Our possessions will outlive us, but they will not live forever.” —M. J. Tyson
David Chatt
born 1960, Des Moines, IA

Love, Dad
2012–13
glass beads and thread with wooden table and thirty-year collection of letters from the artist’s father
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.18.1

David Chatt has specialized in labor intensive beadwork for more than thirty years. His father, Orville, was also an accomplished modernist jeweler and introduced Chatt to beadwork. Chatt developed his own technique for beading, a modified right-angle weave that uses a single needle and allows him to build in three dimensions. Following the death of his father, Chatt meticulously encased, with white beads, thirty years of their correspondence.

Chatt’s reflection on his father and Love, Dad:

My father was typical of many men; friendly but not intimate, familiar but not known. I loved him but struggle still to understand the distance he kept. That said, my father did not let a week pass without sending me a hand written, newsy and advice-laden letter. Even with the emphasis on advice, I loved getting these missives and in 1980 I began saving them. When he passed, I found myself with a collection, now complete, which spanned thirty years. I had imagined myself going back and re-reading them after his death. When the anticipated time arrived, the box that housed them loomed large in its place in my home. I thought of delving into its contents but could not bring myself to do it. I have known grief and do not fear it, but I am also my father’s son. While I am willing to engage, I do not invite sadness, and reading about a world where a father and mother shared a home and offered updates and council to a young son as he experienced the first throws of independence seemed impossibly sad. Instead, I spent a year laboring to create a place for these letters. I recognize the importance of what they represent but I am making the choice to contain them and to place them in an environment where they can be seen but not shared. As I began this work, I thought of this image as a metaphor for my father and his illusive nature. As I completed it, I understood that this effort is as much a symbol of how I deal with my feelings as for how my father dealt with his. Love, Dad is about a father and son who loved each other, each in their own sincere and flawed way.
Preston Singletary
Tlingit
born 1963, San Francisco, CA

Safe Journey, from the series Spirit Boxes
2021
cast and sand-carved glass on wooden pedestal
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase with support from the James Renwick Alliance for Craft, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Renwick Gallery and the 40th anniversary of the Alliance, and the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.82A–C

Safe Journey is based on traditional storage boxes of Northwest Native communities, sometimes used as burial boxes. This Spirit Box is a tribute to the artist’s father, who passed away in 2019. The killer whale theme identifies Preston Singletary’s clan and symbolizes a transition from the physical world to the spirit realm. Two orb lights represent the spirits of his father and grandfather and create the effect that the box, as Singletary describes, “contains universes.”

Drawing on his Tlingit heritage, Singletary reimagines ancient themes, forms, and designs traditionally made in materials like cedar, shell, and bone in the contemporary medium of glass. Here, Singletary carved and sandblasted the designs onto kiln-cast panels of glass.

Guillermo Bert
born 1959, Santiago, Chile; based in Los Angeles, CA

Mapuche Portal #3, from the series Encoded Textiles
2014
tapestry woven by Anita Paillamil Antiqueo, Mapuche weaver
wool with natural dye; Aztec Code to digital audio files of Mapuche Traditional Stories narrated by poet Graciela Huinao

As machine-readable codes became popular in American life, artist Guillermo Bert noticed their similarity to the geometric patterns of Mapuche weavings. Bert collaborated with Mapuche weaver Anita Paillamil Antiqueo to create this Mapuche Portal. The artwork is both a material and a digital text. The handwoven Aztec Code links to the Traditional Stories of the Mapuche narrated by poet Graciela Huinao. Such stories, according to Chilean-born Bert, bring intimate
insight into the experience of Indigenous communities in the Americas. The Aztec Code, typically used in the airline industry, features a central square pattern reminiscent of an ancient Aztec pyramid as seen from above. The code can be scanned by an Aztec reader app. This code’s content is provided on the adjacent monitor.

[accompanying video label]
Mapuche Traditional Stories narrated by Graciela Huinao

Kaleuche Sound 5:09 mins.
La Cueva de las Brujas 6:04 mins.
Kai Kai 2:31 mins.
The Origin 1:11 mins.

**Shan Goshorn**
Eastern Band Cherokee
born 1957, Baltimore, MD; died 2018, Tulsa, OK

*Song of Sorrow*
2015
watercolor paper splints with ink and acrylic paint
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.32

Shan Goshorn wrote Navajo, Lakota, and Kaw prayers of healing and well-being onto the brilliant blue splints of this basket. She intended the prayers for the generations of Native boarding school victims—children who were forcibly separated from their families and cultures to live in prison-like facilities. Notable are the words to a Cherokee memorial song: “We will remember your sacrifices. You will not be forgotten.”

Goshorn also includes anti-Indigenous language that is woven into American culture. For example, the center white splints contain violent lyrics of the children’s song “Ten Little Indians.” Together, the juxtaposed messages form a resolute basket that carry Goshorn’s call for empathy, accountability, and amends.

**Stirrings of the Future**

**Wanxin Zhang**
born 1961, Changchun, China; resides San Francisco, CA

*Warrior with Color Face*
2009
Wanxin Zhang’s series of *Color Faces* are an homage to Chinese culture. They recall colored masks worn during opera performances to represent a range of characters, personality traits, and backgrounds. As Zhang explains, “Different colors can distinguish goodness from evil, strength from serenity. And these operas are just like life—they show us history, politics, and the human condition.”

“Color Face” is also an intentional play on words that describes Zhang’s continuing experience of otherness within the country that has been his home for over thirty years. “These pieces seek to ask and discuss the same questions that will never really be answered. They are individual, they are puzzled, but they have hope, and they wear their own colors on their faces to pose the range of their humanness.”

**April Surgent**  
born 1982, Missoula, MT

*Wave*  
2021  
cameo-engraved glass  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Gwen and Jerome Paulson in honor of the James Renwick Alliance for Craft

April Surgent makes portraits of the ocean with the traditional craft of cameo engraving. This slow, intentional process contrasts the drive for speed and innovation in contemporary life. *Wave* prompts a closer look at ancient and vulnerable marine ecosystems. Small red flecks below the water’s surface represent the destructive and ever-growing presence of plastics in the ocean.

**Susie Ganch**  
born 1971, Appleton, WI

*Drag*  
2012–13  
collected detritus and steel  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the James Renwick Alliance for Craft in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Renwick Gallery and the 40th anniversary of the Alliance, 2021.81
Susie Ganch applied her virtuoso skills in metal and jewelry to make this monumental bracelet from discarded plastics. It includes many single-use plastics, like coffee lids, to show that long after we throw it away, plastic lives on indefinitely, becoming a drag on our ecosystems.

“Our collective detritus connects me physically to the world outside my studio while also serving as a commentary on our collective habits of consumption. From a distance they are beautiful. Up close they are dirty and covered with the evidence of their now forgotten use. With these materials, I construct pieces that are comprised of multiple interdependent parts. Often held together by tension, they have structural integrity but also flexibility and fragility. This dynamic balance mimics the cooperative nature of the universe. The idea is to offer the viewer a tactile experience.” —Susie Ganch

**Daniel Brush**  
born 1947, Cleveland, OH

*Diamond Egg (#90)*  
1991–93  
24-karat gold and steel with diamonds  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Fleur S. Bresler in honor of Robyn Kennedy, 2022.1

Daniel Brush’s *Diamond Egg (#90)* emulates the contours of a topographic map cast in three dimensions. The delicate, undulating terrain emphasizes the play of light across the diamonds and metals, inspiring us to stop and take notice of small wonders. This piece was made shortly before Brush’s solo exhibition at the Renwick Gallery in 1998.

The interior of *Diamond Egg* is lined with gold. To view an image of the open egg, scan the QR code with your smartphone camera.

[wall quote]

*What do we owe the future humans? Existence, skills, and a not-bad world. Maybe even a better world.*

Kelly Church
Ottawa and Pottawatomi
born 1967, Allegan, MI

*Sustaining Traditions—Digital Memories*
2018
black ash and sweetgrass with Rit dye, copper, vial of EAB (emerald ash borer), and flash drive containing black ash teachings
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Decorative Arts and Crafts Endowment, 2020.49A–B

Kelly Church is from an unbroken line of Anishinaabe basket makers. Along with her family, she harvests and processes the materials for her work. *Sustaining Traditions—Digital Memories* is a basket that carries the past, present, and future teachings of this art. Woven with black ash and Michigan-sourced copper, the radiant green color alludes to the emerald ash borer, an invasive beetle that has decimated black ash trees in over twenty-three US states and two Canadian provinces. When opened, the basket reveals a sealed glass vial with the carcass of the beetle. It also contains a computer flash drive with directions on how to harvest and prepare black ash for weaving, in case those traditions are lost without access to healthy trees.

To view an image of the open basket with the flash drive, scan the QR code with your smartphone camera.

Shari Mendelson
born 1961, Schenectady, NY

*Animal with Caged Vessel*
2019
repurposed plastic with hot glue, resin, acrylic polymer, mica, glass frit, and monofilament
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund

Shari Mendelson is inspired by ancient Greek, Roman, and Islamic figurines made in glass and terracotta. Uncovered during archaeological excavations and now preserved in museums, the artworks originally carried sacred meanings in their cultures. Riffing on this idea, Mendelson makes her figures from plastic and glue to comment on our contemporary rituals of consumption.
Joe Feddersen
Colville Confederated Tribes, Okanagan and Arrow Lakes
born 1953, Omak, WA

Horses and Deer
2020
blown and sand-carved glass
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.34

This glass basket features a lone deer surrounded by many horses. In parts of Washington state, wild horses have overgrazed the natural habitat, thereby threatening the livelihood of other species. The basket’s bright yellow background signals urgency and alarm to the situation. An enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in Washington, Joe Feddersen creates works in glass, fiber, and print that speak to relationships among humans, animals, and their environments.

Steven Young Lee
born 1975, Chicago, IL

Vase with Landscape and Dinosaurs
2014
porcelain with pigment and glaze
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Richard Fryklund, Giselle and Ben Huberman, David and Clemmer Montague, and museum purchase through the Howard Kottler Endowment for Ceramic Art, 2015.17

Steven Young Lee perfectly formed and then deconstructed this vase. A closer look reveals roaming dinosaurs, which transform a traditional Chinese landscape painting on porcelain.

Lee expresses the artist’s role in questioning boundaries: “As artists, our role is to observe, question, and articulate the moment. An important aspect of this work is the sincerity of the investigation and the willingness to engage in difficult conversations. . . . while boundaries do exist, the mere fact of their existence invites—if not demands—that they be confronted, challenged, and reshaped.”
James C. Watkins  
born 1951, Louisville, KY

*Communion*  
1998  
raku-fired, double-walled earthenware with glaze  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2020.56

James Watkins shaped this double-walled ceramic cauldron from memories of his childhood on a farm in Athens, Alabama. His mother and grandmother cooked and cleaned in black cast-iron pots reminiscent of *Communion*. The repeating rim motif emulates the pickets of a cattle fence built by his father. Watkins has transformed a pot from an essential farm tool into an expressive reminder of shared family experiences.

Jane Osti  
Cherokee Nation  
born 1945, Tahlequah, OK

*Tall Squash Pot*  
2020  
coil-built and pit-fired earthenware  

This pot is an abstracted round squash with its blossom leading into a tall neck. The artist fired it with wood from an Osage orange tree, which resulted in a deep, dark hue.

Named a Cherokee Living Treasure in 2005, Jane Osti is a master potter based in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, the capital city of the Cherokee Nation. Her art centers on preserving and promoting Cherokee culture and arts. Osti hand builds and wood fires her ceramics, often drawing from ancestral forms and designs.

Basil Kincaid  
born 1986, St. Louis, MO

*Riverside Revival: Lift Every Voice and Sing*  
2020  
machine-piece and hand-stitched clothes from the artist, donated clothes and corduroy, old choir robes from Black churches in St. Louis, fragments of vintage quilts, and Ghanaian fabric and embroidery  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.50.1
This quilt tells a love story. The artist’s paternal grandparents met at a tent church revival in Arkansas, where his grandfather sang in a quartet. Old choir robes from Black churches in St. Louis make up the central figures extending their arms upwards in praise. The background comprises vintage quilts, donated clothing, and fabric from Ghana, chosen by the artist to honor how the women in his family have long made beautiful quilts from recycled clothes.

A seventh-generation quilter, Basil Kincaid connects personal and collective memories. He notes, “you can look at where the materials come from and decode the tapestry like a mythology. Future people may not know our religions, their rise and fall, but they will know that we drew energy from dancing and singing together by the riverside.”

The subtitle, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, pays tribute to the poem-turned-song by brothers James Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson that became the canonical song of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and is often referred to as the Black national anthem.

**Carla Hemlock**  
Kanienkehá:ka (Mohawk)  
born 1961, Kahnawake, Quebec, Canada

*Our Destruction*  
2019  
wool stroud cloth with wool, glass beads, Swarovski crystals, and sequins  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2021.10

Inside this vibrant scene of beaded flowers, vines, birds, and dragonflies is a pair of sequined ruby-red slippers identical to the ones worn by Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. The toe of one slipper reads “tic” and the other “toc.” The “tic toc” warning repeats, echoing in each corner.

Despite its outward beauty, *Our Destruction* speaks to the current state of the planet and global climate change. On the textile’s reverse, the artist writes, “Our Natural world is an environmental ticking time bomb on the eve of destruction. Time is running out. Our inaction will soon redefine those Ruby Red Slippers to symbolize ‘No Place to Call Home.’” The work is a harbinger of what humans cannot lose—Our Heart, Our Home, Our Soul.
Gail Tremblay
Mi'kmaq and Onondaga
born 1945, Buffalo, NY

*When Will the Red Leader Overshadow Images of the 19th-Century Noble Savage in Hollywood Films that Some Think Are Sympathetic to American Indians*
2018
35mm film from *Windwalker* (1981), red and white leader, and silver braid
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Ms. Brenda Erickson in honor of the James Renwick Alliance for Craft, 2021.11

This basket is filled with meaning, from the title to the color choice and type of stitch. It incorporates 35mm film from the 1981 western *Windwalker*, in which one Native American tribe is portrayed as noble and the other as villainous. The red film leader and the reference to “Red Leader” in the basket’s title symbolize the derogatory term used to describe Native Americans. Gail Tremblay twists the film into a prickly porcupine stitch. Often using movies and documentaries with Native characters and storylines, the artist notes, “I enjoyed the notion of recycling film and gaining control over a medium that had historically been used by Hollywood and documentary filmmakers to stereotype American Indians.”

Judith Schaechter
born 1961, Gainesville, FL

*The Birth of Eve*
2013
flash glass with vitreous paint, silver stain, and copper foil
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the James Renwick Alliance, 2015.12

In *The Birth of Eve*, Judith Schaechter constructed up to five layers of cut, sandblasted, and enameled glass, stacked to produce the variations of pattern and color gradation. The flowers represent an alternative story for Eve, the first woman in most versions of the Judeo-Christian creation story, one where she is welcomed into her own glorious Garden of Eden.

On creating narrative work and alternate realities, the artist states, “In my work, there is narrative, but one I hope defies any sense of past or present—it is a narrative in which those possibilities are impossible, and time exists as a sort of eternal present.”
Lauren Mabry  
born 1985, Madison, WI  

*Glazescape (Green Shade)*  
2021  
earthenware with slip and glaze  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Ted Rowland  

Lauren Mabry constructed the frame of this sculpture from slabs of earthenware. She piped a selection of glazes into the top cavity, then relinquished all control. During the firing process, the glazes melted down, colors mingling, and eventually hardened into glasslike strands. Mabry's spontaneous process yields luscious patterns and textures, reminiscent of butterfly wings and otherworldly terrains.

Aram Han Sifuentes  
born 1986, Seoul, South Korea; resides Chicago, IL  
for the Protest Banner Lending Library  

*Otro Mundo Es Posible*  
2017  
felt and fusible web on cotton; checkout card  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jaimianne and Anthony Jacobin in honor of the James Renwick Alliance for Craft, 2021.36  

This banner was created during one of Aram Han Sifuentes’s community-based Protest Banner Lending Library workshops. Sifuentes, a Chicago-based artist and Korean immigrant, created the workshops as alternative sites of protest. She learned to sew at a young age to assist her mother’s work as a seamstress.

The banner was created following the Trump administration’s controversial decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (known as DACA). The reversal threatened legal protections granted to 800,000 people who entered the country undocumented as children. Protesting this action, the phrase “Otro Mundo Es Posible” emphasizes the idea that a more just and equitable world is possible.
Checkout card for Otro Mundo Es Posible. Names have been blurred to protect the borrowers' privacy.

David Harper Clemons  
born 1973, El Paso, TX  

The Weight of Deferred Gratification  
2019  
sterling silver, stainless steel, brass, glass, and mahogany with corn, wild rice, and wheat  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the James Renwick Alliance for Craft in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Renwick Gallery and the 40th anniversary of the Alliance

Metalsmith David Harper Clemons stretches the expected use of utensils with The Weight of Deferred Gratification. While imagining a better future, Clemons looked to the past. He created this functional knife, fork, and spoon to critique unsustainable agricultural production and consumerism. The utensils contain corn, wild rice, and grains, as well as soil pods for planting the grains and water flasks for nourishing the sprouts.

“The tools become vehicles to convey the extended relationship between germination, production, cultivation, preparation, consumption, and even sharing and distribution,” the artist explains. To use the utensils, from seed to table, requires a commitment to nurturing the present; Clemons encourages the user to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.
The Bernstein–Chernoff Collection of Sculptural Wood Art

In 2021 collectors Judith Chernoff and Jeffrey Bernstein donated forty-three sculptural wood artworks from their collection to the museum. Bernstein and Chernoff, both trained as physicians, collected their first artwork—that just happened to be made of wood—in 1994. They did not begin with a focus on wood, but they soon made it their niche. With thoughtful care, they assembled not merely a collection, but a constellation of rooms and nooks, each with its own personality. As their collection grew, the works rotated and fostered new emotions, memories, and experiences in their daily lives. This gallery recreates the spirit of the collection in their home.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Renwick Gallery, the Bernstein–Chernoff Collection arrives amid changes in the field. While most of the artworks on view incorporate traditional elements of woodturning, the craft of using a lathe—a machine tool—to shape wood, they also push the boundaries of the medium, displaying skills in carving, piercing, and segmenting. This collection introduces a new group of artists to the museum’s extensive holdings of art in wood, reflecting Bernstein and Chernoff’s commitment to artistic vision and education. The collectors have supported an expanding community, to include more women, artists of color, and second-career artists. As the Bernstein Chernoffs intend, the artworks will continue to inspire people to discover the intricacies of knots, burls, and grain, learn more about process and skills, and then perhaps cherish wood art in their own homes.

All artworks are Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD
Making Waves

Andy Cole
born 1957, Beverly, MA

Hawaiian Six Pack
2015
Macadamia
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.7

Andy Cole lives on O’ahu, Hawai’i, where his hillside studio provides inspiring ocean views and proximity to local trees. For his signature turned bowls, Cole reclaims timbers knocked over in windstorms or discarded at construction sites. This nested set of six bowls reveals the unique personality of the tree, from the natural edge (the tree bark) to grain pattern.

Hal Metlitzky
born 1946, Johannesburg, South Africa

Cyclone
2012
yellowheart, Gabon ebony, holly, imbuia, black walnut, satiné, and old growth East Indian rosewood
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.27

California woodturner and electrical engineer Hal Metlitzky created the dramatic churn of a cyclone from 5,000 small segments of wood. The segments were glued together into thin sheets and then stacked into a block. Metlitzky turned the block into the funnel form on a lathe.

John Beaver
born 1963, Santa Barbara, CA

3 Protruding Wave Bowl
2011
alder and padauk
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.2

Intersecting Waves
2016
walnut and maple
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.1
John Beaver has always lived near the Pacific Ocean, where the endless horizon and waves inspire his turned bowls. For these two works, Beaver emulates the moment a wave curves into a tunnel, closing into itself. The forms appear simple, but Beaver uses great skill to perfectly align turned segments from two separate types of wood.

**Centering Nature**

**Jacques Vesery**
born 1960, New Milford, NJ

*Makana Ka Na Hoku (Gift of the Stars)*
2006–7
cherry with 23-karat gold leaf and acrylic paint
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.42

**Louise Hibbert**
born 1972, Southampton, England

*Radiolarian Vessel VII*
2004
English sycamore with silver, texture paste, and acrylic inks
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.19
Cinachyra Box
2000
sycamore and boxwood with polyester resin and acrylic ink
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.20

Louise Hibbert recreates curious wonders of the marine world, like this Cinachyra, a spherical sponge featuring a bright orange surface pattern.

Hibbert describes her process: “I find that using the lathe gives my work rhythm and balance, almost like a structural backbone within each piece. I then begin carving, texturing, applying airbrushed inks, resins or metals to create the intricate details.”

Philip Moulthrop
born 1947, Atlanta, GA

Mixed Mosaic
n.d.
pine, mimosa, oak, pear, and cherry
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.29

Philip Moulthrop grew up watching his father turn wood. His father, Ed Moulthrop, happened to be one of the most influential artists in the contemporary woodturning movement in the United States. Philip worked closely with his father and then cut his own path in the field with his signature mosaic bowls. Mixed Mosaic is made from several kinds of trees, all sourced in Georgia. The artist first encases individual medallions of wood in resin, then turns the block of resin into a bowl. Philip’s son, Matthew, continues the family’s talent for turning.

Stephen Hatcher
born 1953, Colorado Springs, CO

Falling Blossoms
2016
big leaf maple, Gabon ebony, and fiber veneer with mineral crystal inlay, rare earth magnets, resin, dyes, and lacquer
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.18
Ron Fleming
born 1937, Oklahoma City, OK

*Echo*

n.d.
spalted hackberry
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.16

Dixie Biggs
born 1956, Lafayette, IN

*Sweet Dreams*

2010
painted sugar maple
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.4

*Sweet Spot*

2010
painted Jordan sugar maple
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.5

“In each of my pieces I try to evoke the sense of tranquility that one often finds during a quiet walk in the woods.” —Dixie Biggs

Dixie Biggs illustrates the intricacies of nature with her wood forms. Here, she has carved and painted the green maple leaf and winged samara (seedpod) onto a turned maple vessel. Biggs learned to carve from her mother and then taught herself woodturning in 1978.
Turning Memories

Top row:

Graeme Priddle
born 1960, Lower Hutt, New Zealand; active in Penland, NC

Reflection
2006
macrocarpa with acrylic paint
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.33

Graeme Priddle reflected on his memories of New Zealand, where he grew up, to create this pair of turned and carved sculptures. The shape of each sculpture emulates a waka, a Māori canoe. The black surface effect alludes to New Zealand tree ferns, easily identified by their dark skirts of blackened, scruffy fronds.

Sharon Doughtie
born 1957, Abington, PA

Four Winds, Two Poles
2005
Norfolk Island pine
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.8

This bowl contains Sharon Doughtie’s deeply personal story of survival. In the early 1990s, she and her husband, woodturner Pat Kramer, experienced a volcanic eruption on Hawai’i Island. Doughtie felt lava splattering around her, and she was seriously injured by the impact of a rock. And yet, Doughtie recalled, “it was one of the most beautiful things I had ever seen—the birth of land.” She turned this bowl to reinforce her connection to the earth. The Celtic knotwork pattern symbolizes the wind circulating around the two poles of Earth.

Cindy Drozda
born 1958, Missouri

Wooden Bowl #157
n.d.
eucalyptus gum burl and desert ironwood with 23-karat gold leaf
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.19
Pele (Hawaiian Goddess of Fire)
n.d.
Australian red mallee burl and blackwood with garnet in 14-karat gold
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.10

David Sengel
born 1951, Radford, VA

Round Lidded Container with Legs
n.d.
Bing cherry with rose, blackberry, and locust thorns
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.37

Pat Kramer
born 1949, Honolulu, HI

Night Blooming Serious
2003
Norfolk Island pine
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.23

When Pat Kramer turns Norfolk Island pine, he allows the wood to reveal its mood as he goes. When working on this vessel, he recalled, “it desperately wanted to be pretty but dangerous. I followed this thread, carving and refining the shape and lines and cutting and burning the textures to add to the emotional context I was trying to maintain.”

Bottom row:

J. Paul Fennell
born 1938, Beverly, MA

Szechwan Serenity
2013
African sumac
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.15
J. Paul Fennell turned to wood art while working for the fast-paced Apollo program at NASA. *Szechwan Serenity* work translates his impressions of the latticework of Buddhist temples on Mount Emei, the highest of the Four Sacred Buddhist Mountains of China.

Fennell’s work is a mixture of turning, carving, and piercing. He creates his own tools to achieve his visions, noting, “I like the particular challenge of doing things no standard tools allow you to do. If I develop one, it may be used once or twice—but the idea of innovation appeals to me.”

*Offering Vessel*
2015
ficus
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.14

*Untitled Vessel*
2004
Carob
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.13

**Mark Nantz**
born 1969, Queens, NY

*Fusion*
2002
amboyna burl and ebony
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.30

*Mottled Ebony Bowl with Silver Inlay*
2013
ebony with silver
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.32

*Artifact Series*
2007
stabilized, dyed blue maple burl and ebony with silver, 14-karat gold, steel, and solvent-based aniline dye suspended in liquid acrylic
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.31
Mark Nantz’s turned vessels seemingly defy time. They might recall ancient, future, or even extraterrestrial civilizations. The forms are relatively simple, but they are elevated by rare woods, precise lines, and embellishments like metal inlays and color dyes.

Going with the Grain

Top row:

John Mascoll
born 1951, Barbados

*Untitled Lidded Vessel*
n.d.
royal palm and cocobolo
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.24

“My greatest satisfaction comes from taking what looks like an ordinary piece of wood and exposing the natural beauty.” —John Mascoll

John Mascoll learned how to use the tools of woodworking from his father, a boatbuilder and carpenter from Barbados. While turning wood in his studio, Mascoll follows the flow of the grain to create elegant vessels, each with its own character.
Harvey Fein  
born 1940, Bronx, NY

Avelino Samuel  
born Coral Bay, St. John

Untitled  
2011  
cocobolo  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.11

Avelino Samuel  
born Coral Bay, St. John

Spiral Carved Vessel  
2006  
Mahogany  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.35

Spiral Carved Vessel  
n.d.  
black olive  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.34

Avelino Samuel emulates the spiral shape of whelk shells found on Caribbean beaches in his turned vessels. The artist grew up on the island of St. John, where he continues to source most of his wood.

Dixie Biggs  
born 1956, Lafayette, IN

Dated Material  
2003  
dyed palm and ziricote  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.3
Bottom row:

**Betty Scarpino**
born 1949, Wenatchee, WA

*Inviolate Portal*
2007
ash, oak, and walnut
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.36

Betty Scarpino uses a lathe not simply to turn wood, but also to contemplate metaphors of change. *Inviolate Portal* evokes the experience of motherhood: a tender egg held in balance for a moment, but not forever.

“There is much to discover beneath the surface of turned objects. As I cut and carve, irresistible relationships reveal themselves, as forms flow and blend together. In some ways, this process is similar to circumstances and events in my life as events weave together, drift apart, and eventually merge again to achieve glorious resolution.” — Betty Scarpino

**John Mascoll**
born 1951, Barbados

*Untitled Lidded Vessel*
2016
citrus
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.26

*Untitled Lidded Vessel*
2016
bleached chinaberry
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.25

“I try to create objects that showcase the beauty of wood through different shapes, finishes, and surfaces. Sometimes this is experienced by allowing the material to be the dominant voice. In other instances, the material (wood) is worked to accent its character. This may take the form of carving, burning, or coloring . . . all in an effort to create an object that appeals to the eye and tactile senses.” — John Mascoll
Holly Tornheim  
born 1948, Ann Arbor, MI

*Vessel II*  
n.d.  
curly maple  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.41

Curt Theobald  
born 1965, Cheyenne, WY

*Eye of the Storm*  
2013  
butternut, maple, and bubinga  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.40

Ray Feltz  
born 1946, Celina, OH

*Ribbon Bowl II*  
n.d.  
bloodwood, holly, and pink ivory  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.12

Andi Wolfe  
born 1957, Salem, OR

*When I Let Go of What I Am, I Can Become What I Might Be—Lao Tzu (Carved Sphere, No. 2)*  
2008  
redwood burl  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.43

Andi Wolfe is a working botanist who specializes in evolutionary biology. In her spare time, she is an experimental—and talented—woodturner who transforms botanical illustrations into sculptures. Here, she has carved thin, undulating ridges that invite close looking and mimic plant life.
**Constance Mississippi**  
born 1941, Greenwood, MS

*Midnight Mountain*  
2001–4  
Baltic birch plywood  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD,  
2021.66.28

*Midnight Mountain* conjures the dramatic mountains of New Mexico. The work was made as part of a series on the cyclical nature of time, an idea reinforced by the circular movement of her lathe. As Mississippi turns, she follows her intuition to craft landscape and contemplates new possibilities for wood.

“The lathe itself, an industrial and seemingly unromantic tool, has taken on new possibilities as a source for creative explorations. The artist is no longer limited to the lathe of the past, turning spindles and bowls, but has discovered an untapped reference to a universe yet to be explored.” —Constance Mississippi

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**Robyn Horn**  
born 1951, Fort Smith, AR

*Stone Circle*  
2006  
jarrah burl on steel base  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD,  
2021.66.21
Robyn Horn created this sculpture as part of her *Slipping Stones* series. The title implies that stones have been carefully positioned into a circle. Horn achieved this effect with a single block of wood carved in her Arkansas studio. The artist looks at how nature itself takes shape over time. “The forms I make in wood reflect the shapes in which stones are found. There is a solidity to stones, a sense of monumental strength and simplicity to them that intrigues me.”

**Koji Tanaka**  
born 1984, Palo Alto, CA

*Nagamé*  
2013  
African mahogany  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.39

*Uragaeshi (Inside Out)*  
2013  
African mahogany  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.38

Koji Tanaka’s sculptures are portals to different ways of seeing. The artist grew up in a traditional Japanese home, where he observed his mother’s calligraphy work and commitment to practice over perfection. Along these lines, he lets a single piece of wood dictate the forms. “I hold the wood in reverence and honor its life by presenting it in the different forms I create, knowing that it's not perfect.”

**Michael Hampel**

*It’s Not a House, It’s a Home*  
2007  
English walnut  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, MD, and Judith Chernoff, MD, 2021.66.17

Michael Hampel uses wood from trees felled for development. From a discarded material, he crafted this shellfish “home” to emphasize how “we have to have a broader view of our everyday activity and how it affects the planet and all of life forms including ourselves.”
Thomas Loeser  
born 1956, Boston, MA  

*With You in a Moment*  
2016  
honey locust and found shovel handles  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 2021.58  

**PLEASE SIT**  
You are invited to sit on this bench. Please be gentle.  

“If the furniture we sit on every day were totally different, would our lives be different, too?” wonders furniture maker Tom Loeser.  

The natural edge of this honey locust timber slab pays homage to George Nakashima’s original conoid bench, a design first introduced in 1960. When the artist, Tom Loeser, was young, he sat down on a conoid bench by Nakashima at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and that’s when he realized the power of furniture.  

Loeser has added a row of discarded shovel handles to form the back. Every spring in Madison, Wisconsin—where Loeser lives—people throw out their broken shovels, a sign as sure as spring blossoms that another harsh winter has passed. Loeser collected these tools and repurposed them. While shoveling snow can cause backpain, now these handles lend their support.  

Nakashima’s conoid bench is on view in the first-floor galleries.