

THE CRAFTY LIBRARIAN

ISSUE 10

American **Craft** Council

FEBRUARY 2023



America House as seen in its Madison Ave. location, 1943-1949.

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SPOTLIGHT

The American Craft Council Turns 80!

Beth Goodrich ACC Librarian

The year 2023 marks the 80th anniversary of our organization. The origins of the American Craft Council began with founder Aileen Osborn Webb’s vision for a society enriched through the handmade. She founded the Handcraft Cooperative League of America whose purpose was to develop and distribute crafts in the United States through the retail shop America House. The organization also produced *Craft Horizons* as a publication for member artists selling through America House. In 1943 the Handcraft Cooperative League merged with a sister organization, the American Handicraft Council, which was founded by Anne Morgan and whose focus was craft education. The merger of the two organizations marks the birth of ACC as it functions today.

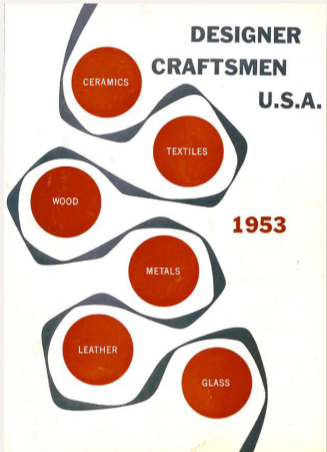
Here are some highlights from ACC’s long history, as documented in our archives!

BIRTH of the American Craft Council

May 21, 1943 – The charter for the American Craftsmen’s Cooperative Council is established by the State of New York Education Department. Later that year, the American Craftsmen’s Educational Council was formed as a parallel nonprofit organization to provide education in the crafts through workshops and educational public displays while the Cooperative Council managed America House and the magazine *Craft Horizons*. The Educational Council was responsible for the formation of the School for American Craftsmen in 1944.



America House as seen in its Madison Ave. location, 1943-1949.



1953 The American Craftsmen’s Educational Council, with the backing of the Brooklyn Museum, organizes a national exhibition of craft which opens at the Brooklyn Museum in October 1953. Designer Craftsmen U.S.A. 1953 later travels to the Art Institute of Chicago and the San Francisco Art Museum before continuing its tour for an additional year under the auspices of the American Federation of Arts. Award winners include Peter Voulkos, Marguerite Wildenhain, Kay Sekimachi, and John May.

1963 – The organization is now known as the American Craftsmen’s Council. David Campbell, a professional architect, is executive president and director of both the Council and the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, which has been operating for seven years. Exhibitions at the museum this year include Woven Forms and Creative Casting. David Campbell dies unexpectedly, and Assistant Director Paul J. Smith becomes the new director of the museum. Trustee William J. Barrett becomes president of the Council.



Delegates from Central Europe and the Middle East at the First World Congress of Craftsmen, 1964.

Having hosted four national conferences to date, the Council is preparing for the fifth national conference and its first global convening to take place in New York City in 1964. The First World Congress of Craftsmen marks the birth of the World Crafts Council.



Solar-fired kiln construction at the ACC’s Seventh National Conference, 1973.

1973 – America House is no longer operating, but craft fairs are growing in popularity. ACC hires a director to run the Northeast Craft Fair, after depending on volunteer organizers for the previous eight years. The Northeast Craft Fair 8 moves from locations in Vermont to Rhinebeck, New York, where it will be held for the next 11 years.

The ACC hosts its seventh national conference in Fort Collins, Colorado.

CONTINUED...

The American Craft Council Turns 80!

Beth Goodrich ACC Librarian

40
YEARS

1983 – The museum is now known as the American Craft Museum. Being in need of more exhibition space, the museum begins construction on a new space to open in 1986. During construction of the new space, a second exhibition space, American Craft Museum II, opens on the ground floor of the International Paper Company’s world headquarters with the inaugural exhibition Papermaking USA: History, Process, Art.



Installation of Papermaking USA, 1983.

50
YEARS



1993 – ACC celebrates its 50th anniversary and the Year of American Craft with ceremonies held at the Sculpture Objects & Functional Art (SOFA) expo in Chicago. Having established the American Craft Museum as an independent organization, ACC provides the museum free use of their condominium property on West 53rd Street. The property is sold to the museum in 1997, ending all ties between the American Craft Council and the American Craft Museum.

60
YEARS

2003 – The ACC shows are at the height of their popularity, with shows taking place in Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, St. Paul, San Francisco, Sarasota, and both summer and winter in Baltimore.

Lois Moran has been on the staff of the ACC for 40 years, and editor of *American Craft* magazine for 23 years, later retiring in 2006.



Lois Moran with Thomas Turner at her celebration of 40 years with the ACC.

70
YEARS

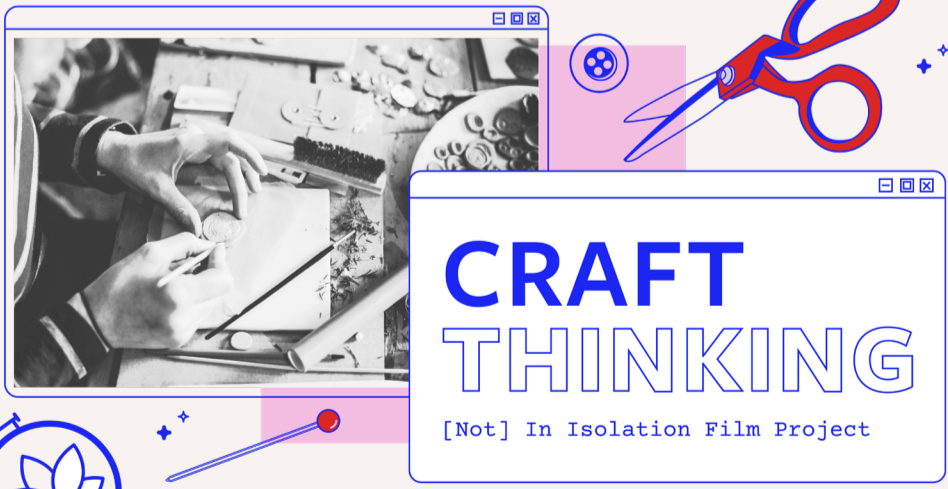


2013 – ACC headquarters and library are now located in Minneapolis. ACC produces four craft shows in Baltimore, San Francisco, St. Paul, and Atlanta each year. *American Craft* magazine has been published continuously for over 70 years.

The education department hosts the Library Salon Series, a program of conversations with invited guests from the craft field, held in the ACC Library on a near-monthly basis. The recently launched ACC Library Digital Collections presents fully digitized issues of the first 25 years of Craft Horizons.

80
YEARS

2023 – The latest decade leading up to 2023 has seen ACC organize two national conferences and weather a global pandemic and a national racial reckoning. We created digital programming and engagement with our audience through American Craft Forums, the Craft Thinking: [Not in Isolation] film project, online craft marketplaces, expanded editorial content online, and more. The nature of archiving has changed dramatically, with paper and print giving over to digital files in a wide variety of formats. The pandemic further pushes research to be conducted remotely and increases demand for digital access to resources.



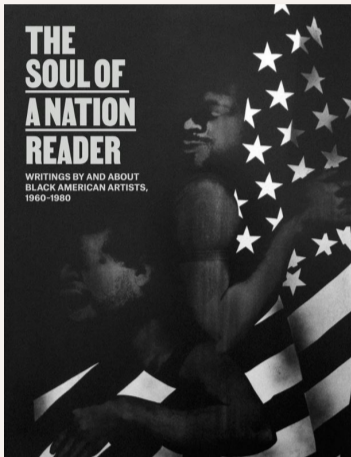
We evolve and we endure. Here’s to another 80 years of celebrating all things craft!

INSIDE

Black History Month Suggested Reading

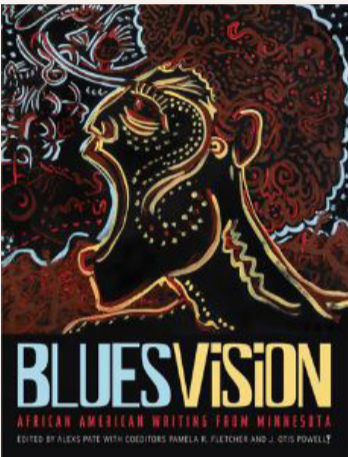
Beth Goodrich ACC Librarian

In recognition of Black History Month we have compiled a suggested reading list of books by and about Black artists from the ACC Library collection:



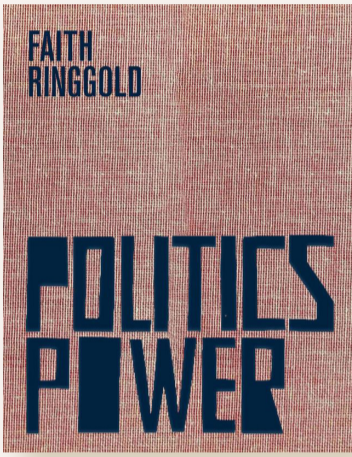
The Soul of a Nation Reader:
Writings By and About Black American Artists 1960-1980

A chronological compendium of 230 texts by a variety of Black American artists including Emory Douglas, Romare Bearden, Betye Saar, and Faith Ringgold.



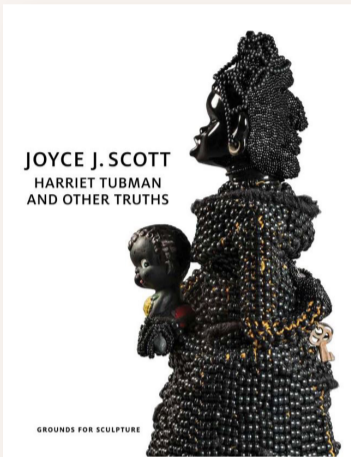
Blues Vision:
African American Writing from Minnesota

Alexs Pate, Editor
The voices of 43 Black Minnesota writers are centered in this co-publication of the Minnesota Historical Society Press and the Minnesota Humanities Center.



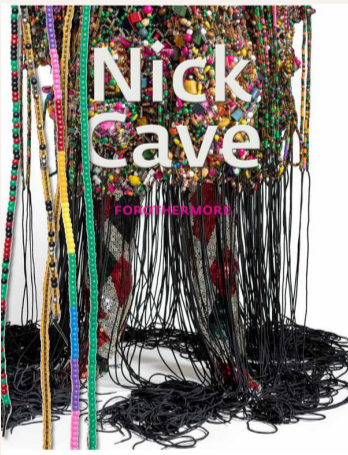
Faith Ringgold:
Politics / Powers

Faith Ringgold
A chronicle of the artist's seminal artistic and activist work from 1967-1981, featuring illustrations of works together with previously unpublished work and archival materials.



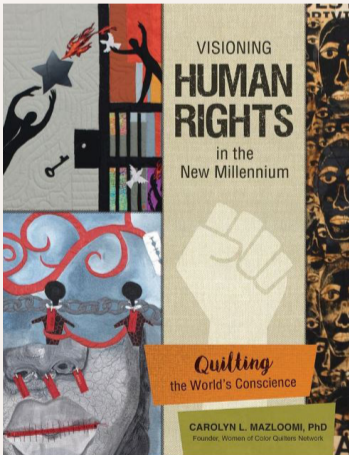
Joyce J. Scott:
Harriet Tubman and other truths

Joyce Scott
A comprehensive overview of 45 years of works by Baltimore artist and ACC Gold Medalist Joyce J. Scott, published on the occasion of the 2018 exhibition of the same name, with essays by co-curators Lowery Stokes Sims (2022 ACC Honorary Fellow) and Patterson Sims.



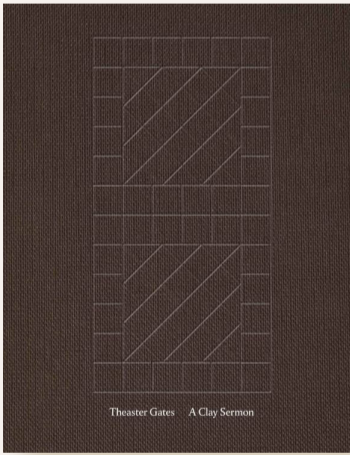
Nick Cave:
Forothermore

Edited by Naomi Beckwith
This publication for the 2022 exhibition Nick Cave: *Forothermore* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago examines the ever-evolving work of textile and performance artist, and ACC Fellow Nick Cave.



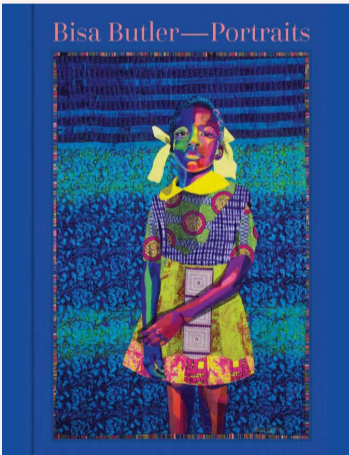
Visioning Human Rights in the New Millennium:
Quilting the World's Conscience

Carolyn L. Mazloomi
ACC Honorary Fellow Carolyn Mazloomi celebrates the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Human Rights Declaration and its 30 principles, as illustrated through 91 art quilts.



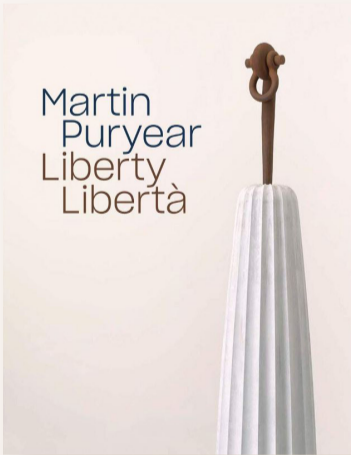
Theaster Gates:
A Clay Sermon

Theaster Gates
Part of the multi-institutional London exhibition series *A Question of Clay*, Gates' exhibition *A Clay Sermon* explores through his clay-based work the labor and the production of clay, and its collection through history.



Bisa Butler:
Portraits

Edited by Erica Warren
Catalog for the 2020 exhibition of the extraordinary textile portraiture of Bisa Butler, held at the Katonah Museum of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago.



Martin Puryear:
Liberty Libertà

Martin Puryear
An extensively illustrated and definitive chronology of the artist, published on the occasion of his exhibition representing the United States at the 58th Venice Biennale.

RESOURCES



As Seen in *American Craft*



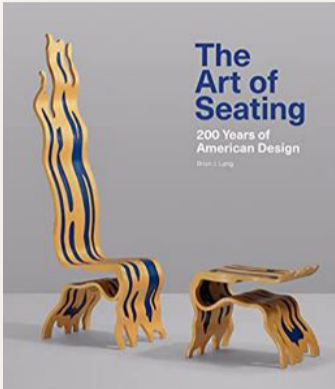
Ceramic works at the studio of Pottery Tour founding member **Robert Briscoe**, 2014.

The St. Croix Valley Pottery Tour Oral Histories

The Spring issue of *American Craft* magazine features an article by Janet Koplos about the history of the St. Croix Valley Pottery Tour, an annual three-day sale which has been hosted by potters’ studios located along Minnesota’s St. Croix River Valley since 1993. ACC received funding in 2013 to record a series of oral history interviews with participating artists in the pottery tour, which are available in the ACC Digital Collections. Koplos, a long-time editor of *Art in America* and guest editor of *American Craft* from 2009 to 2010, is one of the interviewees. Listen to [“A Measure of the Earth: An Oral History of the Potters of the St. Croix River Valley, Minnesota”](#) to learn how this area of Minnesota developed into a major center for pottery and a destination for a national ceramics audience.

New Print Releases

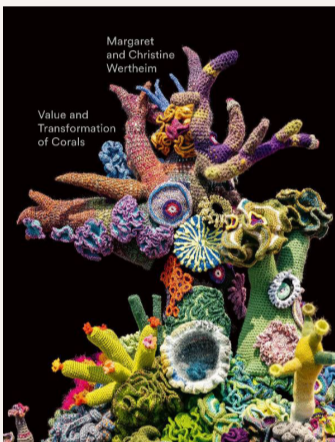
Check out some of the new print releases featured in *American Craft* this month!



[*The Art of Seating: 200 Years of American Design*](#)

by Brian J. Lang

Can the story of America be told through chairs? This volume and the Mint Museum exhibition it accompanies say yes. Here, from the Greek motifs of the Finlay chair (1810–1827) to the free-form bent-lamination curves of Laura Kishimoto’s *Yumi Chair II* (2014), chairs reflect the dominant artistic and cultural trends of a nation conceived via classical ideals, open to worldwide trends, and fond of improvisation and experimentation.



[*Christine and Margaret Wertheim: Value and Transformation of Corals*](#)

by Margaret and Christine Wertheim

Celebrating the vibrancy of the oceans, this book explores the audacious soft sculptures of the Wertheim sisters. With stunning accuracy and expressiveness, they have re-created endangered coral reefs in yarn using crochet techniques in their evolving and widely exhibited Crochet Coral Reef project. Essays by academics, arts journalists, and the artists themselves are accompanied by photos that allow readers to take a “deep dive” into these art-reefs.



[*Queer Maximalism x Machine Dazzle*](#)

edited by Elissa Auther

The artist-designer Machine Dazzle creates wildly over-the-top wearable art and stage sets for major cabaret, drag, and performance artists. This compendium of Dazzle-ing designs, published in conjunction with an exhibition at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, is richly illustrated with images of his funky-fabulous creations and includes essays and reminiscences by artists, friends, and scholars.

OTHER NEWS

Paul J. Smith Papers Acquired

The Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, and the American Craft Council are pleased to announce the acquisition of **Paul J. Smith’s papers**. The Archives of American Art has acquired approximately 70 linear feet of Paul J. Smith’s personal papers dating from about 1940 to 2020, with an additional four linear feet designated for the ACC Library, including papers from his tenure as director of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts/ American Craft Museum, artist correspondence, his high school diploma, family photos and documents, press materials on exhibitions, conference publications, exhibition catalogs, and large-format photographs from Smith’s book [Masters of Craft](#).



Paul J. Smith holds Paul Stanley’s boot from the rock band Kiss.

• The **Jane Kessler Memorial Archives at Penland School of Craft** recently released their **digital collection** of materials from the Penland archives, including audiovisual recordings and still images. [Explore the Penland archives digital collection](#).

• [Digitized issues of *Craft Horizons/American Craft* magazine](#) are now accessible through the **Getty Research Portal**.

• The College Art Association of American has issued a [Statement on the Importance of Physical Research Collections](#).

THANK YOU
Friends of the
ACC Library & Archives

This list recognizes those who donated \$60 or more to the Friends of the ACC Library & Archives between December 1, 2021, and January 31, 2023. Make a gift and join this group of supporters at craftcouncil.org/LibraryFriends.

\$5,000+

Jean McLaughlin and
Tom Spleth

\$1,000-\$4,999

Leilani Lattin Duke
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Oliver Williams and
Mary Ann Holloway
Ilene Zweig

\$60-\$99

Katie Glusica
Kathleen Weaver

*Asterisk indicates
new Library Friend

THANK YOU
Ruth Foundation
Grant 2022

The ACC Library received a second grant from the Ruth Foundation (formerly the Ruth DeYoung Kohler Foundation) for processing archival materials related to craft artists. We are grateful for their continued support of the ACC Library. Liz Anderson, who was hired through our 2021 Ruth Foundation grant, has been retained to complete projects designated for this second grant. Here are some of the new additions to our special collections and archives to date:

- [Peggy Johnson artist file](#)
- [Naomi Whiting Towner artist file](#)
- [Lillian Elliott and Pat Hickman artist file \(collaborative\)](#)
- [Emerging Voices artist files](#)
- [Rare Craft Fellows artist files](#)
- [Bernard Kester papers](#)



DISCOVER

Vessel

Toshiko Takaezu’s Moon Pots



Toshiko Takaezu, *Moon Pots*, 8.5 inches high (large), 4.5 inches high (medium), 3.5 inches high (small).

The American Craft Council Library holds tens of thousands of volumes, nearly 600 linear feet of processed archival materials, and thousands of artist files. But did you know the library also holds an object collection? The ACC Library holds many extraordinary objects, nearly all ceramic, and most were gifts from the artists to the American Craft Museum, which subsequently donated them to the ACC. Many were displayed in the ACC offices and library while the organization was still located in New York City. When the ACC made the move to Minneapolis, the objects came along and have been on display in the library ever since.

Following the vessel theme of the Spring 2023 issue of *American Craft*, I’m sharing my personal favorite in the ACC object collection: *Moon Pots* by Toshiko Takaezu. Anyone who comes to visit the ACC Library in person can see these and more beautiful objects up close.

EVENTS

Library After Dark

On February 1, members of our local community gathered in the ACC Library for a special after-hours event exploring Minnesota craft. Josh Blanc of [Clay Squared to Infinity](#) and chair of Northeast Minneapolis Arts District spoke about the special history of Northeast Minneapolis—that led to it becoming one of the top arts districts in the nation ([named “Best Arts District” in USA Today’s 10Best Readers’ Choice 2022](#)).



American Craft Made / Baltimore



ACC will host its flagship craft marketplace event at the Baltimore Convention Center March 3–5. Now in its 46th year, American Craft Made / Baltimore will bring together more than 350 emerging and established artists under one roof. Visitors will also be able to connect with partner organizations whose work showcases the vision and uniqueness of craft from the Baltimore region. [Learn more about the event.](#)





**WELCOME
TO ISSUE 10**