
THE CRAFTY LIBRARIAN

SIXTH EDITION

American **Craft** Council

February 2022

WHAT'S NEW IN THE ACC LIBRARY

A new informational video about the ACC Library can now be viewed on the library webpage. [Take a look!](#)



LIZ ANDERSON
Ruth DeYoung Kohler
Foundation Archive Intern



KIRSI RITOSALMI-KISNER
Assistant Librarian

The new year also ushers in two new grant-funded library staff positions for 2022. Liz Anderson is our Ruth DeYoung Kohler Foundation Archive Intern, and Kirsi Ritosalmi-Kisner will be our Assistant Librarian through FY2022, funded by an American Rescue Plan Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Welcome Liz and Kirsi! We look forward to contributions from each of them in future issues of *The Crafty Librarian*.

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BOUND TOGETHER: BOOK ARTS AND LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

by **Amelia Foster** Artist and MLIS student at St. Catherine University

In this issue of The Crafty Librarian we welcome our first guest contributor, Amelia Foster. Amelia is an artist and MLIS student at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The art of making a book encompasses a multitude of different creative pursuits, from papermaking and marbling to bookbinding and printing. On any given day, under the umbrella term of “book arts” you’ll find a varied mix of artists and practitioners—DIY zine makers, fine press printers, conceptual artists, and preservation specialists—each participating in the centuries-old craft of making a book.

As an aspiring librarian curious about the intersection of craft and collection management, I was thrilled to learn that the book arts are an essential component of preservation. In fact, here at Minneapolis’ downtown Central Library branch, we have a rarity for a public library system: a preservation department. The Hennepin County Public Library (HCLIB) system’s in-house preservation department is dedicated to maintaining their unique collection. Their work includes everything from replacing the plastic mylar that protects dust jackets to completely rebinding books.



Photo: Suzelfe [CC BY-SA 4.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons

When you walk into the HCLIB preservation department, the equipment is much the same as what you’d find at a center for book arts. Antique book presses, a board shear, and foil stamping machines stand ready in an office stacked high with books queued for treatment. Preservation specialist Frank Hurley and his coworker treat upwards of 10,000 items each year with a particular focus on the collection of the Minneapolis Central Library. This branch houses the James K. Hosmer Special Collections and archives. The most common repairs the preservation department executes include gluing text blocks, gluing hinges, and replacing end sheets.

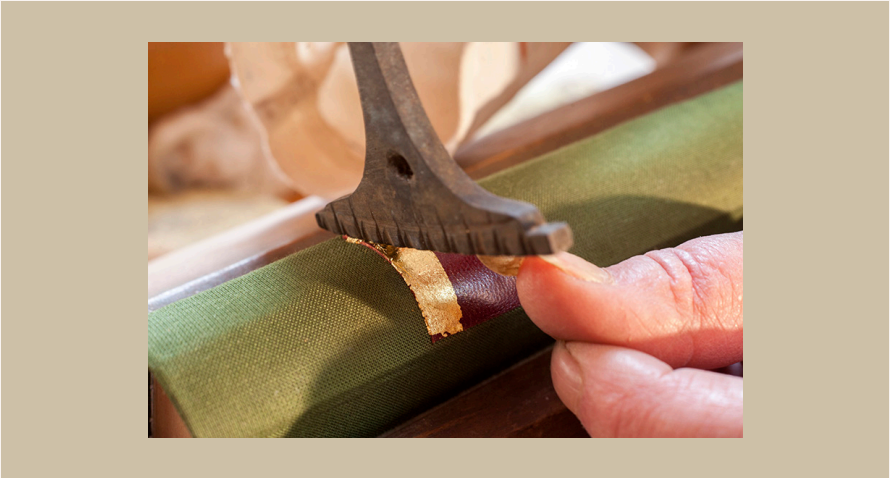


Photo: Scopidrone [CC BY-SA 4.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons

Less common repairs are reserved for rare, fragile, and older books or documents. Special treatments might include full rebinds, creating a phase box for a book, or making a clamshell box that both preserves a document and facilitates its display. In certain cases Frank has created a spine mount. Although it might sound macabre, this treatment helps preserve the original cloth of an antique book. To execute the repair, Frank creates a new spine, which is laid in to replace a broken spine. Then the cloth from the old, broken spine is glued over the new spine, while the original book covers remain in place.



Photo: Marie-Lan Nguyen, [CC BY 2.5](#), via Wikimedia Commons

Frank works as a full time preservation specialist at the Central Library. His previous experiences working at an antiquarian bookstore, and later as a picture framer, primed him for preservation work with an introduction to the care of rare objects as well as the craft of creating conservation-friendly enclosures.

Frank has completed an Advanced Certificate in Book Arts at the Minnesota Center for Book Arts but doesn’t consider himself an artist. “I do think of my work as craft rather than art,” he says. He’s enthused to see a continued interest in bookbinding, particularly among the volunteers and interns he hosts in the preservation department. “In many ways the technology of the book is unchanged, and the treatments have remained the same.” Frank’s confident the preservation department will likewise remain an important part of the Hennepin County Library system.

I’m a letterpress printer as well as a librarian in training, and as an artist I’m often drawn to archives

and special collections. Type specimen books and printers manuals as well as gorgeously illustrated volumes on flora and fauna are sources of delight and inspiration. And when it comes to long-practiced skills such as those in the book arts, instructional books from the mid-twentieth century (a time when letterpress was sometimes taught in school shop classes) are often incredibly helpful. Accessing these resources connects printers across the centuries



The American Craft Council Library holds a wealth of material that’s sure to appeal to book artists, preservation enthusiasts, and curious readers. Look for vintage volumes on [handpress printing](#) and [bookbinding](#), or check out the many trade newsletters to tap into the contemporary conversation. Current subscriptions held by the ACC Library include [Hand Papermaking](#), publications of the [Guild of Book Workers](#), and [Book Arts](#) from the Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild.

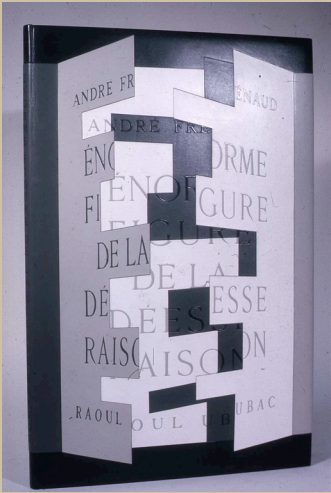
EXHIBITION M-39: BOOK BINDINGS BY CONTEMPORARY FRENCH BINDERS, 1964

Many of the ACC Library’s resources are available digitally. For example, you don’t have to be here in Minneapolis to enjoy material from the 1964 exhibition [Book Bindings by Contemporary French Binders](#) at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts.

Explore the [ACC digital collections](#) and the [library catalog](#) for these and other resources on bookbinding and the book arts.



Daphnis et Chloé by Longus.
Binding by Georges Cretté, 1955.



Enorme Figure de la Déesse Raison by André Frénaud.
Binding by Pierre Lucien Martin.



Passion by André Suarès.
Binding by Paul Bonet.

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS: THE SELKURT COLLECTION OF SCANDINAVIAN CRAFT & DESIGN

Beth Goodrich ACC Librarian

One of the most unique collections within the ACC Library is the Selkurt Collection of Scandinavian Craft & Design. Claire Selkurt is a design historian, a retired University of St. Thomas (St. Paul, Minnesota) art history professor, and a long-time volunteer for the ACC Library. She donated a large portion of her personal collection of rare brochures and publications on Scandinavian design to the ACC library in 2015. I spoke with her recently about her interest in Scandinavian design and the procurement of the collection.



BG: What inspired your interest in the area of Scandinavian Design?

CS: My dad was a professor who attended a number of international conferences and took sabbaticals in Denmark. I first visited Europe in 1961 when I was fifteen. We were in a bookstore with one of our Swedish friends and I spotted the book Design in Scandinavia by Ulf Hård af Segerstad. I picked it up and I looked at these images, and it was just like love at first sight. During that same trip, we spent quite a bit of time in Copenhagen. I visited the annual Cabinet Makers Guild exhibition, which showcased the best new cabinet making. That’s where I first saw the top of the line Danish furniture. I also visited the Decorative Arts Museum for the first time. All the major cities in Scandinavia at that time had these incredible design centers that were retail, but also showcased the latest design and some of the classics. All of these experiences had a big impact on me at an impressionable age, but it started with just an absolute love of the forms.

BG: How did you acquire the materials in the collection?

CS: I spent several summers in Copenhagen doing research in the archives of the Decorative Arts Museum and at the National Library. I would go out and have coffee in the afternoon, and then visit the used bookstores. I would systematically go through and see what they had on Scandinavian design, and pick up books on the subjects I was most interested in. At that time there was something called book rate. You could send literally dozens of books for nothing, and I would just send off boxes of books back to America.

In the 1970s I started to work for the International Design Center and Barbara Brustman. That’s where the Mobilia series and the design brochures came from.

BG: It seems that Americans have had a decades-long fascination with Scandinavian design. Why do you think it is so appealing?

CS: The Scandinavians cultivated that interest during the postwar period. They actively promoted Nordic design, particularly in galleries and stores in New York. The Scandinavians had a huge impact on the postwar American designers like Eames. They took and learned a lot from Scandinavian designers and integrated this in many ways into mainstream American design. Elizabeth Gordon, editor of *House Beautiful*, wrote a lot about Scandinavian design. She saw it as symbolic of democracy in a democratic society in the postwar period and promoted it to her readers. I think that it’s part of the American design DNA.

Many of the original pieces from the period are still in circulation. It’s that fusion of form and function that really appeals to people in a direct way. It’s comfortable and I think it fits into the contemporary American lifestyle.

BG: How did you decide to place the collection with the American Craft Council?

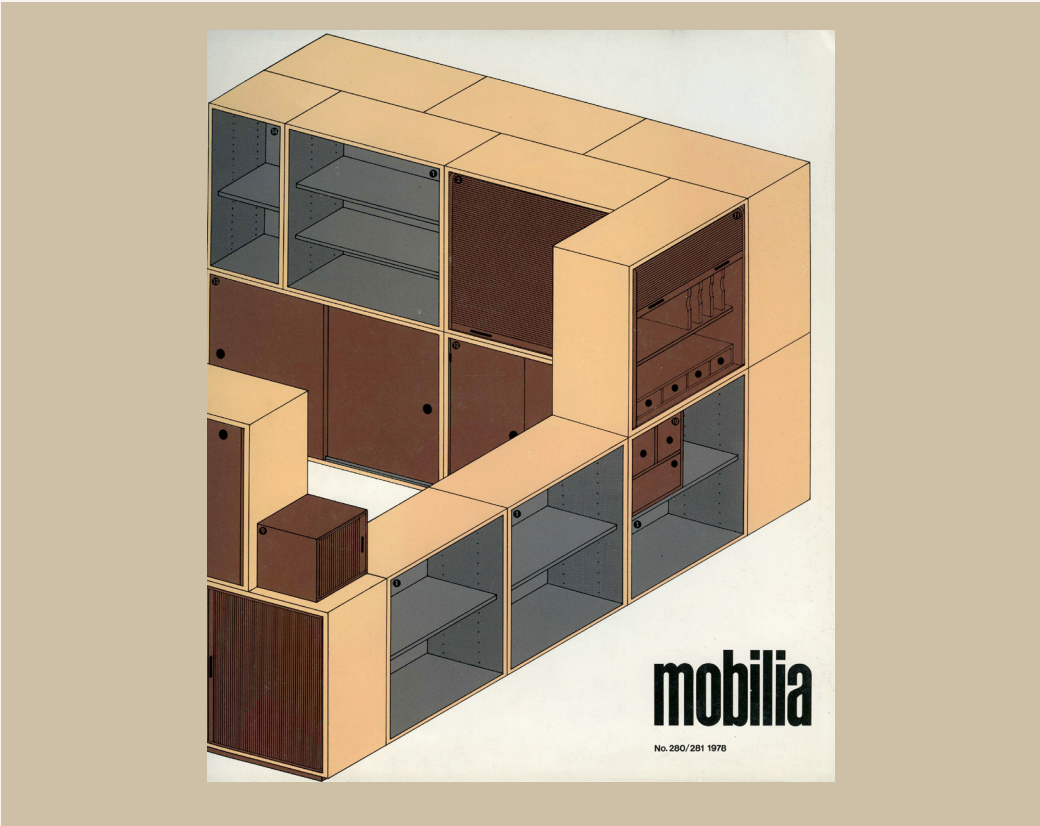
CS: I really liked the idea of the books as a collection. Because it’s like any collection, you see things in context and you see the things that unify the collection. I also wanted to preserve part of the Brustman legacy, since Barbara had entrusted me with this material when they sold IDC. So I was delighted when Jessica Shaykett suggested creating this collection. I also like the fact it’s in

Minneapolis, which is a perfect place for it to be. Design played a major role in the American craft movement as well. In fact, when I was doing my postdoctoral research on the impact of Scandinavian design in America, I went page by page through *Craft Horizons*, *Interiors*, and *House Beautiful*. I became aware of how important it was to the craft movement. This also made the ACC Library a very appropriate place for the collection.

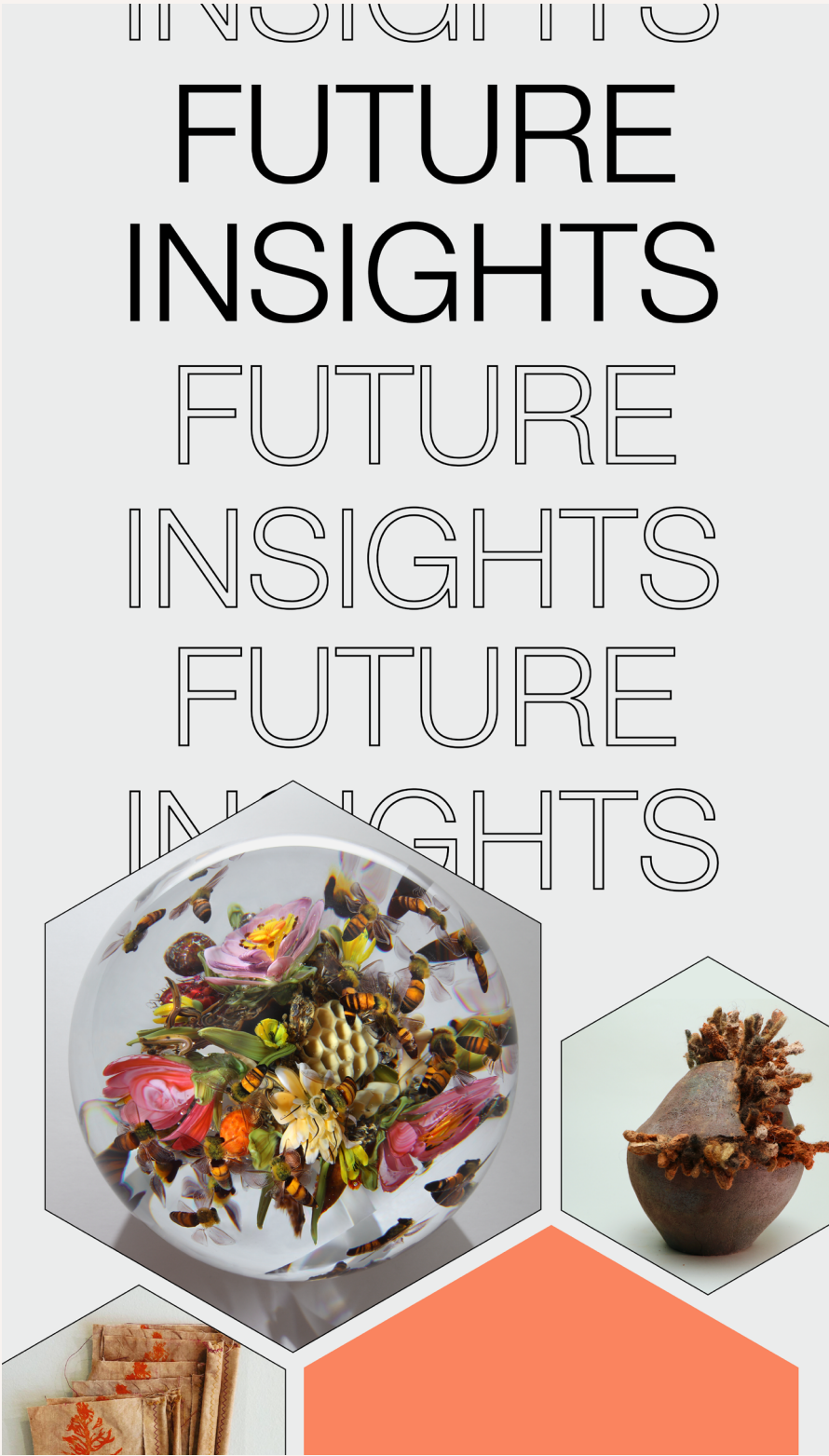


BG: Is there a particular item or series of items that you find particularly interesting or unique?

CS: The Mobilia series is really terrific particularly since there are so many volumes. [Scandinavian Design Beyond the Myth](#) by Widar Halén from 2003 is one of the definitive works on the influence of Scandinavian design on postwar America. Some of the earlier ones that I think are rather rare are [Applied Art in Finland](#), published for the Finnish section at the New York’s World Fair of 1939 and [Designed in Sweden Today](#) by Åke Huldt, published in 1948.



[Browse all the titles in the Selkurt Collection of Scandinavian Craft & Design.](#)



FUTURE INSIGHTS TALK: THE FUTURE OF STEWARDSHIP AND LEGACY

In December I was honored to participate in the second of three ACC Future Insights Talks, a series coordinated by Gwynne Rukenbrod Smith, ACC’s director of community and creative work. This program served to allow ACC and other organizations to “listen to craft communities and their needs, develop and innovate solutions, and implement new ideas for support.” In Future Insights Talk 2: The Future of Stewardship and Legacy, I was part of a panel that included Anna Fariello, digital initiatives curator, Western Carolina University; Jaimianne Jacobin, executive director, James Renwick Alliance for Craft; Dr. Tiffany Momon, founder and co-director, Black Craftspeople Digital Archive; and Angelik Vizcarrondo-Laboy, assistant curator, Museum of Arts and Design. We discussed the meaning of stewardship and legacy, responsibilities for documenting craft artists, and how to steward more diverse artists in the field.

[Recordings of all of the Future Insights Talks are available for viewing on the ACC website.](#)

REGIONAL CRAFT ARTISAN DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

There are many examples of collections that feature information about craft objects and artisans from specific regions of the United States. Take some time to explore these resources!

William J. Hill Texas Artisans and Artists Archive

Created by Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the William J. Hill Texas Artisans and Artists Archive features information about 19th-century crafts and craft artists gleaned from primary source materials such as census records, city directories and newspapers of the time. Object images come from the collection of Bayou Bend and numerous partnering Texas repositories.

Kentucky Crafts Encyclopedia

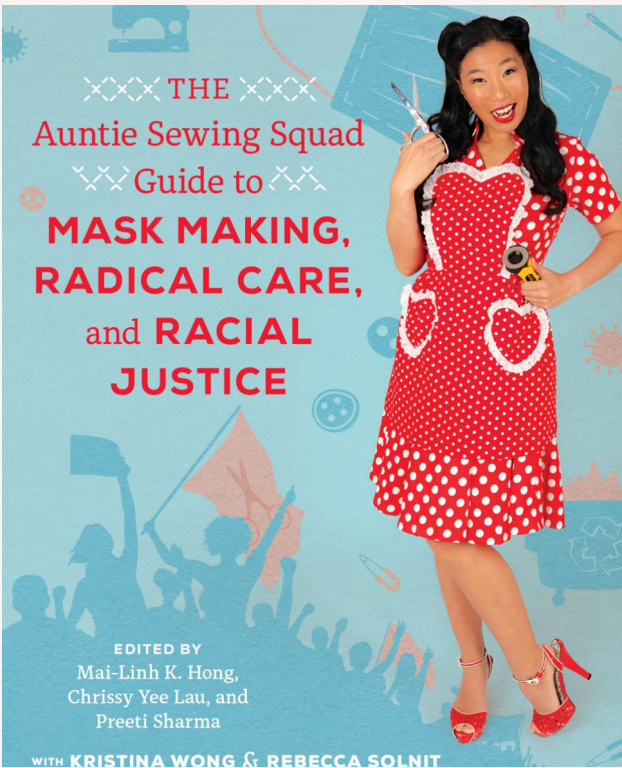
The Kentucky Crafts Encyclopedia website aggregates information about craft practices and history with links to craft institutions and artisans in the Kentucky area. The site includes county maps of craft highlights and a craft history timeline.

Craft Revival: Shaping Western North Carolina Past and Present

Influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement in England, the Craft Revival movement in Appalachia spanned the dawn of the 20th century into the 1940s and gave equal value to the quality of the work and the social welfare of the artisan. This database is a project of Hunter Library Digital Initiatives at Western Carolina University, with contributing partners John C. Campbell Folk School, Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Penland School of Crafts, Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, and the Southern Highland Craft Guild.



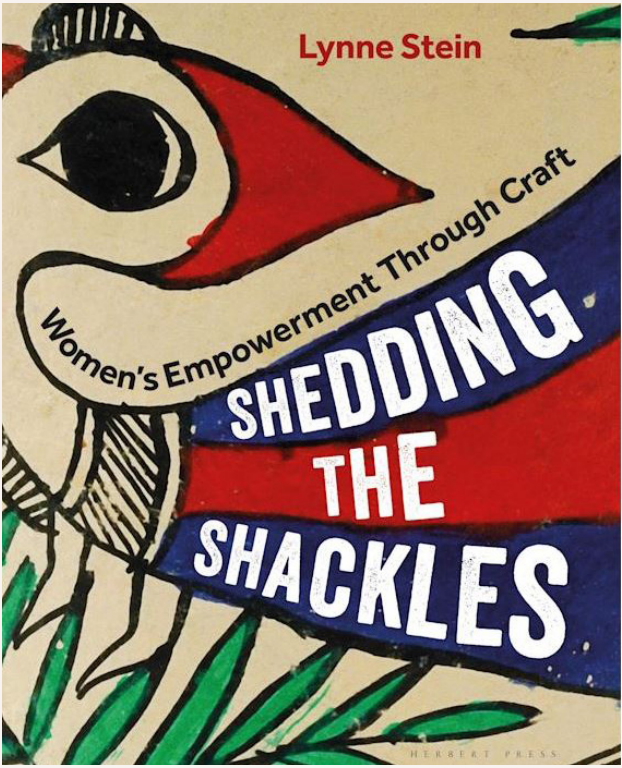
JUST ARRIVED: NEW BOOKS IN THE COLLECTION



The Auntie Sewing Squad Guide to Mask Making, Radical Care, and Racial Justice

Edited by Mai-Linh K. Hong, Chrissy Yee Lau and Preeti Sharma, with Kristina Wong and Rebecca Solnit

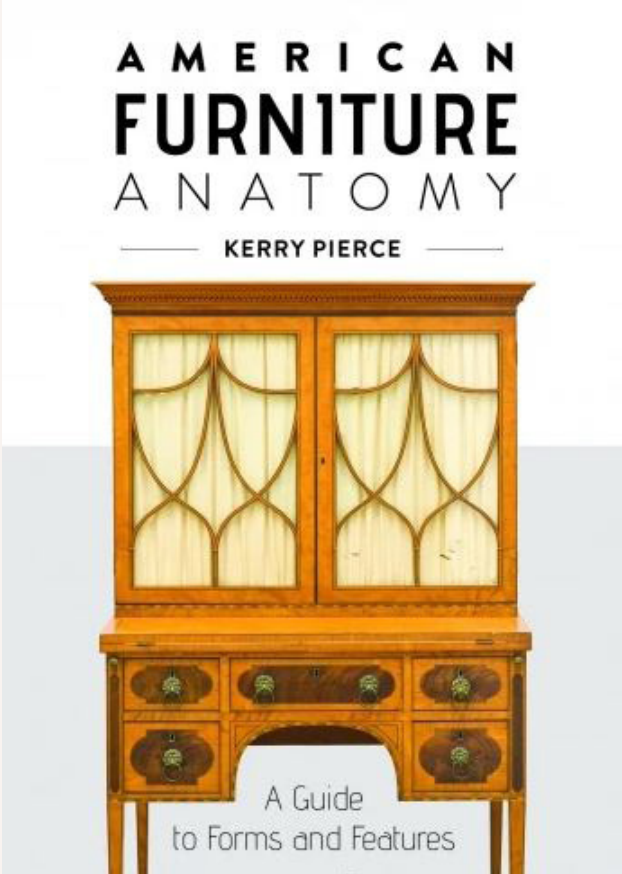
In March of 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in the United States and face masks were in short supply, performance artist Kristina Wong assembled a team of mostly Asian American women and founded a mutual-aid group called the Auntie Sewing Squad. Its purpose was to make and provide masks to vulnerable people such as asylum seekers, Indigenous communities, and the incarcerated. With contributions from many “Aunties,” this book reflects on the act of making masks through 2020 as a means of caring for community, working for social justice, promoting self care and empathy, and sharing love. It includes illustrations, a timeline, and recipes.



Shedding the Shackles: Women's Empowerment Through Craft

By Lynne Stein

Textile Artist Lynne Stein celebrates craft practices long marginalized and undervalued as a female domestic pastime. It is in recent decades that fiber arts have been recognized as worthy of the same respect as other craft media. *Shedding the Shackles* explores the work of both individual craft artists and collective artist initiatives that are creating sustainable livelihoods and uplifting communities.



American Furniture Anatomy: A Guide to Forms and Features

By Kerry Pierce

American Furniture Anatomy is an illustrated dictionary of American furniture forms and anatomical features from 1620 to the present. Alphabetical terms and definitions are accompanied by detailed line drawings or photographic examples taken from museum pieces to accurately illustrate terms.

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This list recognizes those who donated \$60 or more to the Friends of the ACC Library & Archives through February 15, 2022.

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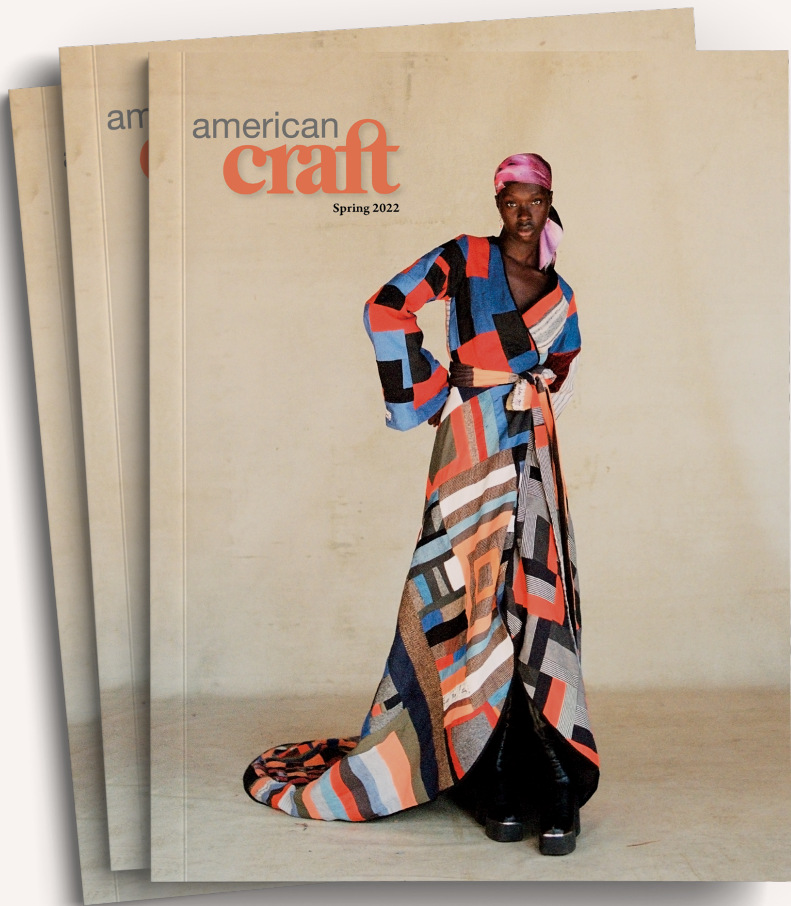
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Special Thanks to the Foundations Supporting Our Library

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FASHION

Beth Goodrich ACC Librarian

The theme of the Spring 2022 issue of *American Craft* magazine is “fashion,” and so we explored the materials of numerous exhibitions related to fashion and body adornment within the archives of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts/American Craft Museum. Here is a surprising image from the archives—a model wearing an Alice Edeling outfit to showcase the Body Covering exhibition of 1968 on NBC’s Johnny Carson Show. Ed McMahon (far left), Johnny Carson (center) and Joan Rivers (far right) look on.



of orange

A fashion scholar reveals the story of a collaboration between the quilters of Gee’s Bend and designer Greg Lauren—and the power of color in quilts.

BY JONATHAN MICHAEL SQUARE

A horseshoe-shaped spit of land surrounded on three sides by the Alabama River shelters a community of quilters who carry on the traditions of their enslaved ancestors. This hamlet is officially named Boykin, but is better known as Gee’s Bend. Over the past century, the women of this isolated rural Black community have made their names as some of the most important artists of the 20th and 21st centuries. Despite accolades for their innovative quilting practice, the name Gee’s Bend is still unrecognized in many mainstream art and fashion circles. Yet their quilts, and quilts in general, are part of our collective consciousness. Most of us have personal connections to quilts that transcend race, class, or geography.

When my parents moved into their first apartment in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, their octogenarian landlord, Mrs. Bennett, gifted them a patchwork quilt. The quilt in Toni Morrison’s 1987 novel *Beloved* reminds me of those rare cold Louisiana nights when my mother covered my bed with that multicolored mantle. What always struck me about the quilt was how its orange accents clashed with the rest of the fabric mosaic. The colorway worked, but the aesthetic threw your attention for a loop. The quilt—which my mom, unfortunately, parred ways with after decades of use—subtly marked my childhood.

Beloved, in my opinion, is one of the best novels ever written. I look for any opportunity to incorporate it into my syllabi. The novel tells the story of how the formerly enslaved main character Sethe and her family grapple with the trauma of slavery and newfound freedom in late 19th-century Cincinnati. The novel has been analyzed through multiple lenses: mother-daughter relationships, natal alienation, the historical trauma of the Middle Passage, the psychological impact of slavery, and so on. Yet what I find most interesting are the motifs of color and adornment, particularly quilting.

The garments in the collection MOSAIC; Gee’s Bend & Greg Lauren began as scraps in Lauren’s Los Angeles studio. He sent the scraps to the quilt artists of Gee’s Bend, Alabama, who turned them into vivid and signed abstract compositions.