

# North Carolina Retreat on Craft Publications

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February 28-March 1, 2003

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The two-day retreat on craft publications was convened to discuss and develop specific recommendations for research and publications on craft that were identified as priorities in the March 2002 Summit Retreat on Craft. Four of the ten participants participated in the 2002 retreat. Before arriving, participants reviewed the initiatives recommended and responding comments from the field published in the [North Carolina Summit Retreat on Craft](#). The meeting was held in UNC Asheville Kellogg Conference Center in Hendersonville North Carolina and sponsored by **The Center for Craft, Creativity and Design** (CCCD), a regional center of the University of North Carolina located adjacent to the Conference Center. CCCD Executive Director Dian Magie facilitated the meeting.

Returning participants included:

- **Glen Adamson**, Curator, Chipstone Foundation, Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin
- **Diane Douglas**, Executive Director, Center for Liberal Arts, Bellevue Community College (former Director of Bellevue Art Museum, 1991-2001), Bellevue, Washington
- **Janet Koplos**, Senior Editor, Art in America, New York, New York
- **Martha Drexler Lynn**, curator and author (former Curator, 20th Century Decorative Arts Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989-1999), Carmel, California

Additional participants:

- **Garth Clark**, author and owner, Garth Clark Gallery, New York, New York
- **Ned Cooke**, Chair, Art History Department, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut
- **Andrew Glasgow**, Executive Director, The Furniture Society, Asheville, North Carolina
- **Vicki Halper**, curator and author (former curator, Seattle Art Museum), Seattle, Washington
- **Jim Melchert**, Ceramic sculptor and Professor of Art Emeritus, UC Berkeley, Oakland, California
- **Bruce Metcalf**, jeweler, author, critic, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

## Meeting Report

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The 2002 North Carolina Summit Retreat prioritized four initiatives that would "advance craft in academia and the curatorial world." Two of the four initiatives involved publications. The initiative with the highest priority was the publication of a history of 20th century American studio craft. A peer-reviewed scholarly journal on American craft was a second publication priority. The goal of the 2003 meeting was first to review the recommendations and to further define the scope and content of the book

At the end of the two days all of the attendees expressed amazement at what had been accomplished with maximum cooperation and at times respectful disagreement. The group exuded high energy and enthusiasm for this project and a conviction that the book, so critical to advancing field, would become a reality. By mid morning of the second day, there was consensus on the scope and contents of the book.

**North Carolina Retreat on Craft Publications** Participants in the 2003 retreat developed the following structure and outline.

**20th Century American [USA] Studio Craft**, a textbook

**Primary Audience:** liberal arts undergraduate level

**Secondary Audience:** reference book for critics, curators, dealers and collectors

**Structure:** A social and cultural history of crafts in the United States, broadly dived chronologically with

themes; sidebars with voices from primary and secondary sources, possibly illustrating tensions in a "cross-fire" format; media specific content could be discussed relative to seminal time periods, e.g. 1960's-1970s for Clay, 1980s for Glass, etc; index; annotated bibliography; and footnotes as needed. A CD ROM and/or slide package could accompany the book to expand visuals and classroom use.

**Author:**

**Single author**, informed, with a vivid writing style and lively neutrality plus an editor to point out areas that the reader might not understand

or

**2-3 authors**, possibly one a major scholar and social historian, with time-frame expertise, plus a strong editor to maintain a common voice.

**Readers:** supporting committee A supporting committee of readers with expertise in specific media or time periods will vet written material for accuracy.

**Designer:** should be young-thinking imaginative designer, who can shape an interactive publication that will appeal to younger generation accustomed to drop-down screens and rapid flow of information.

**Additional support staff suggested**

- research assistant and/or
- project manager for permission and photos

**Time line:** 3-4 years to write; 1 year for editing, design, publication, distribution

**Publisher:** the publisher should have experience with text books

**Distribution:** recommendation the distributor be experienced with text books. Such distributors include McGraw-Hill, Oxford, Thames & Hudson, and Broyhill and exclude most university presses.

**Chronological themes and events**

Author(s) responding to the RFP will be asked to address themes/tensions that the group identified as the thread running through the various time periods that form the basis of the text:

During the first morning of the retreat attendees agreed on the chronological approach and created a list of themes and events they felt were important to the field as a whole.

**Themes that could apply to every time period**

- A. Handworker versus industry
- B. Innovation versus tradition
- C. Hierarchies in the Arts and Crafts (High Art - Low Art)
- D. Patronage and the market place
- E. Academics versus self-taught
- F. Influence of Institutions (government, artist communities, schools)
- G. Gender
- H. Regional, national and international
- I. Medium specialization versus multi-media
- J. Groundbreaking events
- K. Criticism and theory
- L. Key artists

The following is a listing of important events in each time period that could fall under the general themes identified by the group.

**1875-1918 - Arts and Crafts Movement**

The 19th Century period was considered essential to establishing the theoretical framework for the studio crafts movement but also the time period that has had the most research and publications.

**Important issues and events:**

- 1) Industrialization and handwork
- 2) Manual training education
- 3) Socialism and social critique

- 4) Urbanization versus rural
- 5) Utopian communities
- 6) Aesthetic movement
- 7) Beginnings of formalism
- 8) Design theory (Dunn, Ross)
- 9) Hobbyists
- 10) World's Fairs
- 11) Commercialization and Promotion
- 12) Spectacle of craft - fascination watching people make

#### **1919-1945**

- 1) War
- 2) European influence
- 3) Immigration
- 4) Factory vs. studio
- 5) Seeds of modernism
- 6) Technology
- 7) Education as major patron (university as promoter; craftsman as professor)
- 8) Artist schools and communities
- 9) WPA and the Great Depression
- 10) Smithsonian cataloging
- 11) Folk Arts versus studio crafts; folk artist versus designer craftsman
- 12) Social amelioration
- 13) Regionalism
- 14) Black Mountain
- 15) Hobbyists
- 16) State-wide craft organizations
- 17) American Indian Art Institute
- 18) Commercialization and promotion
- 19) Socialism and social critique
- 20) Urbanization vs. rural
- 21) Craft as women's work
- 22) New venues for sale of work
- 23) Theory - Bauhaus, Gandhi
- 24) Occupational therapy and craft
- 25) Evolution of Criticism
- 26) Painters Miro, Leger, Matisse and Picasso design for craft

#### **1945-1955**

- 1) Socialism
- 2) GI Bill and university undergraduate majors in craft mediums.
- 3) American Craft Museum, American Craft Council
- 4) Designer craftsmen
- 5) National and International conferences, exhibitions
- 6) Professionalism of support services
- 7) Venues for sale of work
- 8) Men entering the field
- 9) Alliance between avant-garde and crafts
- 10) Institutional recognition - From WWII abroad
- 11) International Influences (Leach, Hamada visit USA)
- 12) Residencies (Voulkos at Black Mountain College)
- 13) Periodicals and publications (technical and global cultures)
- 14) Hobbyist
- 15) Technology thread - availability of equipment and material in USA
- 16) Skill increase
- 17) Artist as star

#### **1955-1970 the Sixties**

- 1) Hippie movement
- 2) Boom time
- 3) Grass roots and academic drop outs
- 4) Marginalization seen as benefit
- 5) Craft fairs, from state fair to festivals
- 6) Cultural tourism
- 7) Craftsmen move from local to national sales
- 8) Visiting artist workshops at universities
- 9) Strong university departments
- 10) "Artist" became model for craftsmen - anti-hippie
- 11) Avant-garde versus craft
- 12) Revival of glassblowing and blacksmithing
- 13) Criticism-poetic
- 14) California Funk - UC Berkley (California exhibition and catalogue)
- 15) Fiber and glass ascendancy in late 1960s
- 16) Abstract-expressionist Clay artists 1966; Rose Slivka's "New Ceramic Presence"
- 17) Objects USA - Eloquent Object; traveling exhibitions in the crafts
- 18) Literature published document
- 19) Viet Nam War; politics in crafts
- 20) Rise of media groups - NCECCA, GAS and SNAG
- 21) Influential books - authors Daniel Rhodes, Oppi Utrecht

### 1970-1985

- 1) Commodification of Craft
- 2) Ceramic symposiums, World Craft Council
- 3) Function versus non-function tension
- 4) Crafts mine history for design (archeology)
- 5) NEA and Bicentennial impact
- 6) Private patrons and galleries
- 7) Lust for high art recognition
- 8) Entrance into museum collections
- 9) Publications increase
- 10) Craft Horizons changes from criticism to marketing in 1979
- 11) Museums dedicated to studio crafts: American Craft Museum and Renwick Gallery
- 12) Craft publications
- 13) 1970's fracturing of craft by medium - GAS, NCECCA, SNAG
- 14) Professionalism, and business presentation
- 15) Rise of single and multimedia galleries
- 16) Recognition
- 17) Growth of multimedia

### 1985-2000

- 1) Closing of university departments
- 2) Economy - impact on teaching versus growth of retail market
- 3) Breakdown of medium specificity; artists embrace cross-disciplinary approaches
- 4) Utilitarian; persistence of functional ware; traditional craftsmen
- 5) Growth of high-end market and decline of middle-market
- 6) Cultural tourism
- 7) Question of the decline of wholesalers and sales representatives
- 8) American Craft Museum changes name
- 9) Celebrity branding of craft design
- 10) Merchandising - gift shop sales, dumbing down
- 11) Nostalgia - thread throughout
- 12) Ceramics from self-referential to machine referential
- 13) Furniture ascendancy
- 14) Craft as fetish
- 15) Government funding
- 16) Conservatism of 1994 elections

- 17) Vanity and collector books
- 18) Increased international exchange
- 19) Hierarchy in craft status
- 20) Increased high art tensions - "fine artists" using craft materials
- 21) Role of internet to bring back middle market
- 22) Influence of interior design market

Two important recommendations grew out of the discussion about the content of the textbook. The group felt both of these could be accomplished in a short period of time and be a precursor to the textbook.

### **Anthology of craft writings to serve as a READER**

A collection of primary source material on the studio craft movement does not exist. Although all firmly agreed this was a critical need, the approach to this was the area most aggressively debated. In the end, it was agreed that both approaches were valuable and necessary and participants stepped forward to follow-up on each. The optimum format for research and especially for use in the university classroom would be to combine the two approaches in one volume to include:

**A. Published primary source material** - documents that record or influence a period of time. A cannon of evolution of thought, historic documents, primary source material. Martha Drexler Lynn offered to take on this project

**B. Voices and ideas in American craft** - letters, oral history, diaries, the voice of the artists of each era, contemporary, not through a filter. Diane Douglas and Vicki Halper offered to follow this theme.

Dian Magie, CCCD, will discuss this project with University of North Carolina Press and Martha Lynn will approach other publishers/distributors. The goal is to complete the compilation of material and publish and distribute the volume(s) prior to the publication of the book and possibly within a year.

### **SLIDE FILE FOR USE IN UNIVERSITIES**

University art and art history faculty often teach to the slides available, and many university departments are lacking slides of the work of significant craft artists. It was recommended that CCCD collect slides for each medium, and reproduce the slide files for distribution to major universities. This could be accomplished with little effort, drawing on the resources of those in the group gathered. Garth Clark offered to send slides of artist work (with permission for duplication) in clay. Bruce Metcalf in metal. Ned Cooke will provide work in wood (although this may take more work to receive permission rights). The group felt media service organizations like GAS and FiberArts would also participate in this project. The goal would be to span the same period of time as the textbook but with emphasis on the last half of the 20th Century, with 60-80 slides for each medium. Each slide would identify the work, date, and maker with dates for the artist's life. A core group of universities would be identified to receive the slides free, and following this the slide files would be offered at a cost to cover the expense of reproducing and mailing. A CD ROM would also be offered for universities that prefer this method.

### **DISCUSSION OF PEER REVIEWED SCHOLARLY JOURNAL**

The group discussed and debated the need for a peer-reviewed scholarly journal. All recognized that the journal would not be self-supporting. Other facts acknowledged by the group was that journals are usually begun by an impassioned editor, that their life span begins with a spike of enthusiasm and then a gradual decline. Yet journals of the past form an important history of thought. Garth Clark and Glenn Adamson spoke to the critical need for a peer-reviewed craft publication that reflected scholarship. The Chipstone Foundation currently publishes peer-reviewed annual journals for two media specific areas, and Glenn Adamson will investigate the potential for the Chipstone Foundation to take on this project. It was acknowledged by CCCD and the group that this was a project that required the resources of an organization such as a foundation.

### **DISCUSSION OF THE FUND FOR CRAFT RESEARCH**

CCCD provided the group with information on the Nonprofit Sector Research Fund as a possible model for increasing the scholarship and research on craft. The group enthusiastically endorsed this approach. This approach would require significant support through either an endowment or funding over several years. The group felt that \$100,000 a year over five years would provide a spectacular impact on the field.

The Fund for Craft Research would **advance [published] research and writing in the field of crafts to include:**

- support for dissertations

- exhibition catalogues, especially retrospectives of important craft artists
- articles and books
- criticism

**Eligible applicants** would be individuals (university graduate students and mid-career research grants), institutions and organizations.

**National Advisory Board** with 9 members serving staggered terms would be created and would convene once a year to identify critical areas of research and scholarship. It would both respond to proposals and generate RFP's for research that address research gaps and needs. Some areas that would fall into this area include: documentation of some of the field's leading artists who are reaching advanced years, or research in specific media identified as lacking, or the Fund might support the initial publication of the peer-reviewed scholarly journal through Chipstone or other similar institutions. The ability to respond to the needs of the field annually was viewed as a definite asset. The advisory board would also serve to encourage research by graduate students.

**Readers** would be identified for media specific proposals. Readers of NEA grants receive \$250 for 30-50 grant applications.

**An Annual Convening of National Advisory Board** is recommended for the purpose of identifying critical research needs that would require a release of a Request for Proposals, and to approve funding for proposals recommended by readers. This meeting could be expanded to include a retreat with additional invited members of the field around a specific issue. The value of this has been demonstrated through the 2002 and 2003 sponsored retreats at the UNC Asheville Kellogg Conference Center. The publication of these meetings generates activity on all levels.

The group recommended the following division of funding based on figure of \$100,000 a year for distribution:

(4) \$5,000 fellowships for research in crafts awarded for summer research

The remaining \$80,000 would not be specifically divided, to allow for both smaller and larger projects of merit to be considered annually.

It was recognized that there would be administrative costs in addition to the \$100,000. The 2003 Retreat with 10 individuals cost approximately \$10,000 for travel, lodging and meals for the attendees. No one attending the meeting received compensation or honorarium. It would be important not to diminish the granting amount through administration and meeting expense.

The Center for Craft, Creativity and Design has demonstrated the ability to host and facilitate a retreat that advances the field. The UNC Asheville Kellogg Conference Center is an ideal facility to provide focus in a relaxed setting. The CCCD Director has participated on grant panels at the state level and at the National Endowment for the Arts. She also developed the grant making program for the Tucson/Pima Arts Council administered during her 12-year tenure as director that distributed approximately \$500,000 annually in grants to arts organizations and individual artists. The CCCD pending biennial budget before the North Carolina legislature includes \$10,000 annually for Summit Retreat activity.

#### **NEXT STEPS FOR BOOK**

- March 7 - Notes on the February 28-March 1, 2003 meeting distributed electronically to the full group for review and DRAFT RFP for the author(s) of the book distributed to full group for review
- March 14 - participants to recommend any revisions to the notes and or RFP
- March 13 - CCCD Board meeting to review the organizations role
- March 17 -release of RFP to identify author(s) for book
- May 15 - deadline for RFP responses
- May 15-July 1 review of RFP's by panel and recommendation of author(s)
- July 1 , full proposal assembled for funding sources.
- August 1 - author(s) announced, to participate with advisor on developing proposal to be shopped to publishers and distributors of textbooks.