



2007 NORTH CAROLINA CRAFT THINK-TANK

April 12-15, the UNC Center for Craft, Creativity and Design convened twenty-two leaders in the field of craft - artists, curators, faculty, writers from throughout the U.S. with representatives from Canada and England, including CCCD Director, Assistant Director and three CCCD board members. (Listed at end of report) Friday and Saturday attendees participated in discussions on seven topics, each with three discussion leaders from the group. Lively discussions continued at meals, and

as the group assembled at the end of the day for wine and cheese on the veranda of Waverly Inn, one of two inns reserved for retreat participants. The following reflect the words of the discussion leaders as they introduced the session (in some cases this is directly from their notes, in others the highlights) and a summary of the discussion that followed by the full group. This is not a transcription, but highlights, with major recommendations spotlighted at the end of each session.

Dian Magie, CCCD Executive Director

SESSION 1

What education is necessary for the 21st Century studio artist to achieve economic success and/or artist growth and where can it be found.

Discussion Leaders:

- **Donald Fortescue, Wood/furniture faculty, California College of the Arts**
- **Kim Cridler, Assistant Professor, metalsmithing/jewelry, University of Wisconsin – Madison**
- **Stoney Lamar, wood sculptor, CCCD Board President, NC.**

Stoney Lamar – As a “late bloomer” I only came to craft after studying and working in the mental health field, and then my degree was not in art but Technology, woodworking as furniture. I then spent two years as an apprentice to Mark and Melvin Lindquist. It is often frustrating for me not to have the vocabulary of the art world to describe my work, to self-criticize the direction I’m taking.

Kim Cridler: I worked for 13 years after finishing graduate school before entering academia. I have always worked full time to support my art making. It’s no different now, except that I have a responsibility to those students who walk through my door. But I feel the best thing I can give them are the basic tenants of this field. A taste for its’ rich and wild history, which mirrors all the great lusts of human experience, a crash course in the kind of serious dedication and discipline the craft requires, and a bunch of questions about how it might be meaningful today. I want my students to become passionate practioners of an art practice that has a rich history but no limitations. We offer classes on how to apply to residencies and for various funding sources, I stress the importance of my students learning how to write about art and their work. But I don’t teach my student how to become bench jewelers. I teach a craft field within an art department. People are not coming here ***only*** to learn a certain set of tools that deal specifically with the physical properties of metals. They are here to develop their imagination, to develop critical perspective, to learn to take responsibility for the past and to hold that up to the future, to develop discipline, curiosity and the willingness to be wrong and fail, and hopefully the

determination necessary to build a practice that is embedded in both the pleasure and pain of creative work and to find a way to make it last a life time.

It sometimes appears that the emphasis of a university education seems to be inwardly focused, training the next generation of professors. In actuality of course, only a very small percentage of students in any major are likely to get teaching jobs. Students or parents are paying a lot of money for a degree, and I fear the underwritten assumption is that this degree will allow them to go out and make money in art – but we know this isn't true, even for a lot of very good students. My job is to prepare them for a life committed to creativity, to hone tools both physical and intellectual, that will help them find their unique contribution to art and to the field, and to stick with it, to find the faith that this road is worth it, that work done for love is never in vain. David Pye, in his *On the Nature of Workmanship*, wrote admiringly of the amateur, in the person who works for love rather than money, and frankly suggests that getting a job to support one's self isn't a bad trade for making the work you want to make.

I am in favor of providing students with a broad perspective of the career opportunities available to them through craft media, but what I am unwilling to do is to have them watch the finishing line before they even learn how to make work, to have them thinking about commodity before they even learn what it is within themselves that commands them to make. I think they need to have a safe place to risk and fail and learn how to try again – that is a rare and precious opportunity. Then students should be going out into the real world, testing their ideas, finding ways to make a living and gaining experience.

Donald Fortescue I also entered art school at 28-29, after several years in science. It was my desire to have a job that I would never want to retire from that would provide emotional, spiritual and financial sustenance. As a faculty member, I may be rethinking that. After graduation I spent several years working for the JamFactory Contemporary Craft and Design Centre in Adelaide, Australia www.jamfactory.com.au/ Moving into academia, I sought a “culturally and financially secure career.” Today's university graduates have to not only think about a career when they graduate, but also start out with a major debt. They emerge from academia, untrained and handicapped with debt. I often think, if I had the same \$100,000 that many face as a debt upon graduation – would I select art school as the way to spend this money and learn about my craft?

DISCUSSION:

A. There was much discussion students graduating from universities without critical and practical skills. Business skills are seldom included in BFA or MFA programs. Curators and participants who have served as on visual arts grant panels observe that graduates/artists seem ill prepared with even the basic understanding on how to write a statement, provide decent images, or submit the materials that must speak for them when they are not there to explain. Students are under increasing pressure of large educational loans to identify their career goals early. Some recommendations:

1. Internships in galleries, museums, but also important less traditional outlets, to help students define what they might do with their education to make a living after graduation
2. Apprenticeships with practicing artists, a traditional approach that is the age-old method of learning, but less practiced as craft enters the art school environment
3. Visiting practicing artists, who make their living with their work, to talk about their art and the practical aspects of their business, to give students a realistic view of their initial years after graduation.

4. Mentoring role of the faculty, to help students be able to talk about their work articulately. The use of webcams, and/or and quick-time clips of students presenting their work to a curator or gallery owner. Class critiques would be informed by working professionals outside the academic environment.
5. Professional crafts programs in community colleges that provide entrepreneurial courses that teach how to transform craft into a business
6. Art Business Boot Camps could be developed as an online course for graduates and professional artists.
7. Business plan development from a creative artist point of view. Few business models are able to adapt a business plan for the artist.
8. CCCD should make Windgate Fellowship application and presentation "TIPS" available online.
9. CCCD should deliver statement from the 2007 Think-Tank on the critical importance of including practical life-skills as a required component of education in the field – more than a one-day career day.

B. How integrated is the field? It is important for students, as well as practicing artists, have an opportunity to interface with academic faculty, critical writers, mix of galleries, museum curators, collectors, and publication editors.

1. Academia should encourage participation in conferences and their companion lecture series that provide this mix, whether media specific such as NCECA for clay, or object-focused such as The Furniture Society and SOFA Chicago and New York. This also provides an important opportunity for professionals in the field to meeting emerging artists.
2. Schools to Marketplace opportunities in major craft shows such as ACC Baltimore, give students the experience of working on a booth, marketing their work and talking to collectors, curators, as well as the general public.
3. Renegade Crafters or the D.I.Y (Do It Yourself) exhibits are the "guerilla movements" or underground opportunities that provide the same experience and skill set that can be gained from working with an exhibition in an established venue.

C. Artistic growth after graduation happens most often outside of academia.

1. Residencies, of 3 months to 2 years, offered by craft/arts schools are important for artists to intensely explore an artistic direction. Kohler, Penland, Anderson Ranch, Watershed, Arrowmont are a few of the U.S. programs offering residencies, some media specific and others with the opportunity to integrate other craft media. Residencies offered by international programs (outside the U.S.) also offer a broader cultural perspective on the field, placing craft in the U.S. within an international realm..
2. Workshops from 2 days to 2 weeks give artists an opportunity to work intensely with specific artists and also to be challenged/inspired by work of other participants. Penland surveyed their students and 75% said they wanted more business, but when offered they did not sign up – they came to Penland for the artistic growth. Penland and other schools offer an opportunity to "fall in love" again with their craft.
3. Apprenticeships are not as common, but many artists identify the opportunity to work with an admired and respected master in the field as the leap in artistic growth.

D. Only a small percentage of students graduating with a BFA or MFA join the art world as working artists. Is academia preparing these students for careers where their education will be an asset?

1. Ten percent of graduates enter the field. This percentage was discussed but it remains unclear as to the actual percentage. Does this differ from degrees in history, English,

creative writing, psychology, philosophy, etc? An unrealistic number receiving an MFA feel they will go into academia and teach.

2. Visiting arts professionals, who are not practicing artists but work in a field that uses the education – curators, critics, scholars, gallery owners, arts administrators, public art, etc. should be invited into the classroom.
3. CCCD could undertake a study asking arts professionals to outline courses they should have taken while in college.

SESSION 2

How can we attract and train 21st Century craft curators?

Discussion Leaders:

- **Cindi Strauss, Curator, Museum of Fine Art, Houston**
- **Peter Held, Curator of Ceramics, Ceramics Research Center, Arizona State University Art Museum**
- **Catherine Whalen, Assistant Professor, Bard Graduate Center for the Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design and Culture, NY**

The following was a jointly prepared statement, consecutively read by each discussion leader in turn:

Peter Held As many of us in this room have experienced, our careers have not always been pre-planned, predestined or followed a clear linear path. Past and present curators have come from studio practice, art history, material or cultural studies, decorative arts, literature and a myriad of other areas. Will this be true in the future?

Meaningful internships are one avenue to attract and train future curators, for both undergraduate and graduate students. For undergrads, showing them that there is a world outside of painting, sculpture, and photography is important. Getting students engaged with objects early in their college education and keeping them involved is a surefire way to create a passion for the handmade and consider a career track in the crafts. For graduate interns, the challenge is keeping them motivated in the face of limited traditional career opportunities.

We should also consider less structured or informal internships which might include one-on-one mentoring or time spent in artist's studios to gain a deeper appreciation to process and physical and intellectual engagement from an artist point of view. Should we consider setting up a national curatorial mentorship program for graduate students interested in a career path in the craft field? Mentors could advise on how to get a job, where to find opportunities in both traditional and alternative spaces, or how to navigate institutional politics while advocating for craft within a fine arts museum.

Cindi Strauss Senior curators should be mentoring their assistants now, are they? Or are they too busy or burnt out? Should curators be more progressive in their thinking about organizing exhibitions, thinking about new platforms or technologies that might be more attractive to a younger generation of curators and the audiences they serve?

We must be creative about ways in which to provide opportunities for recent grads since jobs are scarce and often low paying. One exemplary program is run out of Cranbrook. They have a 10 month renewable fellowship for prospective curators with a graduate degree. The fellowship comes with a real salary and is renewable for two years. The responsibilities are exhibition related, publishing on a collection, and working with donors. It offers the best parts of our jobs

without the hassle of the administrative mundane. I think that it offers an amazing experience. The Renwick also has a great fellowship program focused on research and writing. CCCD now has a program [the Windgate Museum Intern Fellowship Program] to place four museum interns nationally.

Can we encourage more scholarship opportunities for the next generation? Do we need more symposia targeted for emerging voices and consistent publishing opportunities in magazines and journals? Too much attention goes to known entities or “safe bets” which is often the result of laziness on the part of organizers. Young curators complain all the time about how discouraging it is to “break in.”

Catharine Whalen For major conferences or fairs put on by craft organizations (whether it is SOFA or media specific) should we be more proactive about scholarship assistance to bring young curators, curatorial assistants, or graduate students to these gatherings? So often, they have no travel budget. Giving them the opportunity to become part of a community is an important link to recruitment and retention.

Should organizations such as Arrowmont, Haystack or Penland be more proactive in inviting respected curators and aspiring ones for workshops, presentations or seminars?

Finally, we would like to play the devil’s advocate. As we have discussed at conferences, read in journals and meetings sponsored by CCCD, in the past, if the fields of art, craft and design are blending and becoming more fluid, should we be rethinking or be more holistic on how we define craft curators in the future and the changing landscape of institutions they will serve? Should we send art and design curators to “craft camp” in the summer to create an awareness of the beauty of the handmade?

DISCUSSION:

A. Curator positions in major museums are rare, how does this impact future craft curators?

1. A Ph.D. is now accepted as the terminal degree (expected) in almost all museum curator positions EXCEPT Craft. In Craft, the MFA or MA is considered still a terminal degree, although this may be changing. The demand in the next 20 years will be greatest for 20th Century contemporary decorative arts/crafts because of the number of collections going to museums and the lack of curators on staff trained in this area. An increasing number of smaller exhibition spaces and arts centers are seeking curators with expertise in contemporary craft because it has been demonstrated that craft increases attendance and is viewed by the public as more accessible.
2. Meaningful paid internships need to be increased. These need to be paid internships – a real job. Curators with interns must make this a meaningful experience, mentoring the interns. With as many as 150 applicants for one position, an internship on the resume is a great advantage. These are still very rare in the field. The CCCD \$5,000 Windgate Museum Intern Fellowships provides the museums with the funding for an intern to work with a craft collection/exhibition and by connecting the 50+ university partners with the intern opportunity, greatly expands the number and diversity of applicants. Cranbrook awards one ten-month renewable fellowship with a real salary, exhibition, publication, and donor interface opportunities. Smithsonian internships are three to six months focusing on research. Mint Museum of Craft and Design offers two Virginia Kemp \$2,500 internships each summer.

3. Benefit to museums and their curators from student interns who provide new paradigms about ways of connecting with younger audiences with web blogs, renegade craft fairs, pod casting. Galleries that mix craft/design/art reach new audiences.

B. There needs to be more opportunities for emerging voices in writing and curating.

1. Museums and organizations need to take the risk and invite curators and writers from material studies, American studies, emerging artists, other fields, rather than recycling the tried-and-true over and over. How can older established curators find exciting, young, emerging artists for exhibits? MAD contracted with Sabrina to find younger artists for the exhibit *Radical Lace and Subversive Knitting*. Gregg Museum of Art & Design opened collection to 16 MA candidates in Public History to choose objects, research and design exhibit space. Public History, material studies, American Studies students all work with objects.
2. Emerging and writers from diverse fields should be given a forum. This can include a writer attend the next Think-Tank and write about the meeting for American Craft or other publication. Design curators and historians need more exposure to craft, process and product. Periodicals need to reach out – example of Ellen Lupton, (*DIY – Design It Yourself*, 2007, author), from the design field, curated *Metalsmith Magazine's* 2007 Exhibition in Print.

C. Art/craft history students and curators need more hands-on with making, and makers need to have more art/craft history.

1. Curators need to understand process and making to communicate with the public through publications, and when talking to potential donors. (Jentel Critic at the Bray and Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts both offer such programs.) Art schools should be encouraged to invite curators to summer programs for an experience with making. Academia should require studio courses (making) for students enrolled in Art History, Museum Studies, Curatorial Studies or other similar MA and PhD degrees for future curators.
2. Academia should require art/craft/design history courses for studio majors. Art history courses, in most institutions, focus on European, Asian, African, Latin American painting and sculpture. The forthcoming history/text *20th Century American Studio Craft* provides the needed text for a one-semester craft history course, currently offered in only a few institutions.

D. Training of future curators needs to include education outside of academia.

1. Travel grants for students of design, craft, art history should be made available to attend conferences where there is the mix of makers, curators, publication editors, collectors.
2. New voices should be invited to symposia offered by craft schools (Penland, Haystack, Archie Bray, etc) in a two-way exchange of viewpoints from age or ethnicity.

SESSION 3

What is the future of the handmade, limited production, and/or mass production in studio craft? What is the impact of technology on makers?

Discussion Leaders:

- Lena Vigna, Curator, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Wisconsin
- Sabrina Gschwandtner, author, MFA student, Bard College, New York
- Catharine Ellis, Fiber Faculty, Haywood Community College Professional Crafts Program, North Carolina

Catharine Ellis

After thirty years as a traditional weaver, handweaving on the loom, and thirty years teaching fiber arts I am enthusiastic about the opening in Hendersonville of a new mill that uses Jacquard technology with the artist and designer as the client. Although the large textile mills have all moved out of the country, there is a market for the limited edition that is not cost-effective for the off-shore large textile mills to produce. Creation of the handmade can be physically demanding and can take a toll on the artists ability to produce work. The artist brings to the mill production an in-depth understanding of material and design but must translate this into the computerized weaving process. I feel that I am going through a personal "Industrial Revolution."

Lena Vigna

The John Michael Kohler residencies of two weeks to six months give artists access to industrial production in clay and metal. The residency program was created to develop a dialog between two groups who are both making objects but from a very distinctive perspective (the artistic and the industrial). This allows the artist the opportunity to create a body of work that would not be possible in the studio. It also introduces the ability to make multiples of their design. The program is limited in that once the residency is complete the artist no longer has access to this method of production. Artists are not asked to create designs that will be a part of the Kohler products.

Sabrina Gschwandtner

Technology of the internet is a way to reach new audiences and is being increasingly used by artists to make a social statement about injustice. The internet is a method of creating demand for the handmade, by reaching a huge nontraditional audience that has not been tapped previously in the "art world." The internet can expand the part-time into the full-time for a blogger who links with an audience and a demand for their work. Other artists are connecting to a new and larger community via the internet, and through this online dialogue sharing not only their art and design but their convictions on social issues such as sweat-shop labor and the war in Iraq.

DISCUSSION:

A. Large corporations are looking to craft makers for design concepts for small scale industrial production. Most production is for are runs of 300-400 that do not require warehousing. Much of the sales are online, with flagship stores handling a limited edition.

1. Academic craft programs are designing for industrial production. Wal-Mart in San Francisco has recently partnered with a studio furniture production class, challenging students to design a sustainable product, with one selected and produced off-shore. RISD students are designing for DKNY, offering to place one work going into production. There is a USA fellowship from Target for an artist/designer. Kendal College of Art and Design students have a project where they design a chair without ever building it. How can this be organized and/or encouraged?
2. Internships with industry should be encouraged. One artist created a work for Kohler in 1974 that is still in production. This type of program should be explored and expanded. Scandinavian countries, Australia and other countries are ahead of the U.S. and could provide models.

B. The mass production of U.S. craft designs in Asia is a reality with positive and negative impacts on the craft artist.

1. U.S. Craft artists are creating object/prototypes and producing the work in Asia. Specific examples include U.S. clay artists are working with production in China, developing the

object prototype, and in-control of the product placement. Painters/fiber artists are creating rug designs woven in Nepal and selling them online.

2. Work by U.S. craft artists is being copied in Asia and sold at a fraction of the cost. Agents are attending craft fairs for the purpose of copying popular craft work, and reproducing it in Asia, then returning it to the U.S. market at a fraction of the cost of the handmade object.

C. The U.S. is far behind Australia and Europe in craft-design-industrial production, how can this be improved?

1. CCCD should focus on Design in the 2008 Think Tank reviewing the several conferences taking place in 2007 outside the U.S. In March 2007 the Australian conference/book/exhibit *SmartWorks: design and the handmade* examines the work of over forty designers from Australia and New Zealand who are exploring the industrial production of their work while maintaining the integrity of the “handmade,” often combining traditional skills with new designing and manufacturing technologies. [www.powerhousemuseum.com] In July 2007 *New Craft – Future Voices* conference and exhibition hosted by Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee, Scotland, brings together craft practitioners and academics to develop a new vision for the 21st Century, digital, radical, innovative, fine, D.I.Y., Process, Craftivism and Hobbyist craft. [see project blog www.craftresearch.blogspot.com] The November, 2007 international craft conference in Nova Scotia, Canada *Neocraft* features one of the five themes -“Craft, the senses and New Technologies.”
2. American Craft magazine plans a Major Re-launch. The first issue of the all-new AMERICAN CRAFT – the October-November 2007 issue – will feature new typography, new photography, and a new editorial voice. It will reflect the current, rapid convergence of craft, architecture, art, design, and fashion, and the magazine will push these connections to the forefront of cultural conversation.
3. Academia must dissolve the artificial barriers between departments. Faculty is often accused of operating within “silos,” with little communication between the fine arts, craft, and design departments. University museums and galleries should plan exhibits that illustrate the design/craft overlap.

D. The use of online websites and blogs are dramatically changing the market place for craft, connecting the artist to the customer. Who is designing these sites, and where did they receive training? Are there “Tips” for an artist on the design of an effective blog/website?

1. DIY (Do It Yourself) Craft Fairs are popping up in urban areas and being promoted over the internet by twenty-something artists. (This provides the same spontaneity as the music/dance “raves” that this generation flocked to).
2. Open Studio Tours, marketed through the downloadable map on the internet, brings the customer to the artist studio in rural communities (cultural tourism) over a weekend expanding the town/city targeting of a regular gallery night.
3. Individual Artist Blogs provide the sale of work directly to the customer from the artist. If this method of purchasing art work increases with a customer base that is increasingly internet savvy – how will this impact the gallery world and organized craft fairs?

E. How can craft exhibitions connect with a more broad based audience?

1. Connecting marketing with guilds and clubs as in the example of the exhibition *Laced with History* curated by Lena Vigna at the Kohler, who used guilds (lace making and fiber) for marketing with an extraordinary response in interest and attendance. The Museum of Art & Design, NYC exhibit *Radical Lace and Subversive Knitting* curated by

David McFadden with assistance from Sabrina Gschwandtner, had the highest attendance of all NYC museums in 2007, linking with knitting clubs and knitting circles around the anti-war theme.

SESSION 4

How is critical writing and scholarship on studio craft being supported and encouraged? What role can the CCCD portal www.crafthistory.org serve? (portal recommended in 2006 Craft Think-Tank)

Discussion Leaders:

- **Charlotte Brown, Director, Gregg Museum of Art & Design, North Carolina State University**
- **Vicki Halper, curator, co-author of *Choosing Craft: A History Told by Artists* (to be released in 2008 by University of North Carolina Press), Seattle, Washington**
- **Melissa Post, Assistant Director, UNC Center for Craft, Creativity and Design**

Charlotte Brown: outlining types of publications

1. Monographs (non-museum), artist or topical, often pictorial surveys

Sources of funding:

- Writer (under academic salary, for example)
- Private collector (vanity publication?)
- Artist (Marquis)
- Organization (Pilchuck)
- Gallery (Gaylen-Hansen)
- Hansen)
- Foundation – (such as Windgate for the Craft history/text)
- Publisher funds or co-publishes (University of Washington Press, University of North Carolina Press)

2. Exhibition Catalogues

Museums are the major source of monographs in the crafts

- Commitments are often small scale, regional; few ambitious projects (Woodman, Met)
- Collections catalogues overrated (Mint, Arkansas), vanity publications
- Future production depends upon health of the institutions is problematic, because the distribution is limited, academics don't value them, often with justification.

3. Collections Catalogues

- Overrated, usually vanity publications
- Exceptions are exceptional collections with catalogues focused on one aspect

4. Periodicals

- Critical reviews – virtually absent in craft magazines, rare in mainstream press or art press, author is poorly paid
- Craft theory – virtually absent
- Topical articles – sporadic, often appear in non-art context.

Questions to pose: Who will write? Who will publish? Who will read? Who will pay enough?

Vicki Halper

I got a request from a quarterly last week for an article assessing the career and influence of a retiring administrator at a major craft school. The deadline was too soon – immediately in fact; the article too short – 500 words; fee was too small - \$100, or 20 cents a word. They also asked

me to consider becoming their Northwest contributor. They pay \$500 for a 1500-word feature; \$125 for a review.

When Diane Douglas and I decided to edit an anthology of artists' writings and transcribed interviews about crafts at the 2003 CCCD retreat, we decided we would not do the project without funding for the writing as well as the rights and reproductions, manuscript preparation, travel and a research assistant. The budget was \$100,000 excluding editing, design, printing.

Academics vs. independent writers parallel the issues of academic vs. independent artists. Marguerite Wildenhain vs. Arline Fisch for example. Who pays if you are an independent scholar with no academic salary or institutional backing. Funding agencies rarely grant to individuals.

We wrote a proposal to the University of North Carolina Press, as the easiest route to finding a publisher and, more important, to finding a nonprofit umbrella organization to apply for grants. The proposal got extremely thorough peer reviews and was revised. UNC Press agreed to be applicant first to the Windgate Foundation which awarded a \$50,000 matching grant, and then to the National Endowment for the Arts which awarded a \$35,000 grant – the project might have ended if UNC Press had refused to be the funding umbrella. This will probably be the last time UNC Press will do this, as there is a potential conflict of interest as manuscripts to UNC Press must go through a stringent peer review, and could be refused.

The importance of individuals and foundations in supporting critical writing cannot be overstated – the Windgate Foundation and Nanette Laitman funding of the oral histories at the Smithsonian.

When Vicki applied to for a James Renwick Fellowship from the Smithsonian American Art Museum to research at the Archives of American Art, the supplementary income derived from the grants (for living expenses) was questioned – although supplementary sabbatical income for academics is unquestioned.

A first application to the Craft Research Fund was not awarded but in 2006, a second grant was recommended by the panel review to provide funds for transcriptions.

Recommendations:

Publications are needed:

- Conference proceedings, like Asilomar
- Anthologies of important texts from periodicals
- Reprinting of catalogue essays in periodicals

Web possibilities:

Of the publications listed above – but who pays for rights and reproductions?

Index of writers in the crafts

- Sponsorship of newspaper and magazine criticism
- Fellowship for a critic, (at the NY Times? Art in America? American Craft?)
- Grants to publishers for critical writing.

Unaffiliated scholars need umbrella organization to serve as fiscal agent when applying for grants.

Melissa Post:

The role of the Center for Craft, Creativity and Design (CCCD)

The **Craft Research Fund** seeks to advance scholarship in the field of craft by supporting peer-reviewed research undertaken by university faculty, graduate students, museum curators, artists and independent scholars. The Fund supports research that demonstrates the relevance of craft within contemporary culture. Its aim is to increase the number of creative scholars and practitioners interested in pursuing craft studies and research.

The **Craft Research Fund** is a three-year pilot program that first awarded grants in 2005 and has been renewed for another three years through 2010. Beginning in the fall of 2008, each year a total of \$95,000 will be awarded in **Project grants** of up to \$15,000 by faculty, curators, scholars and **Graduate Research grants** of up to \$10,000. **Travel grants** of \$500 are also available for individuals participating in a panel at the annual College Art Association meeting, who are speaking on the topic of craft in the United States.

The Craft History Text under the auspices of CCCD began in 2004 with Janet Koplos and Bruce Metcalf research and writing the history of 20th Century American Studio Craft. It goes to the University of North Carolina Press in May and will be released in Spring 2008. This project was identified as the highest priority initiative in the first CCCD retreat in 2002.

Craft History Course will be found on more campuses across the country with the release of the Craft History text. [CCCD Website, under Research, outlines the development of this project]

Residencies that support critical writing in the field include:

- o Jeremy Theophilus, HAT (Hear & There Project – International Research Fellowships on Contemporary Craft <http://www.hat.mmu.ac.uk/>
- o Jentel at the Bray – a critical writing residency focusing on ceramics- partnering 2 weeks at Archie Bray and a 4 week writing at the Jentel retreat in Wyoming www.archiebray.org/Jentel%20Residency%20description.pdf
- o Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts – Curatorial Forum
- o Haystack Center for Crafts *Object and Making: Function and Meaning*, July 15-19 conference continues their ongoing series of innovative symposia, conferences and retreats.
www.haystack-mtn.org

DISCUSSION:

A. The need for critical reviews in the field of craft has been universally recognized. This is almost nonexistent. How can the field support and expand critical writing and reviews?

1. CCCD should invite and pay a writer to attend the 2008 Think-tank. The observation could be published in American Craft, or publications that would also reach the target audience – academia and museum curators.
2. Critical writing should be endorsed by inviting writers to participate in workshops and residencies (ie Penland, Arrowmont, Haystack), including writers in collaborative residencies (such as Mountain Lake Workshop and Janel/Archie Bray), paying writers a reasonable fee for their work.

B. Greater value is placed on single-author peer reviewed books than writing for catalogs, in the “publish or perish” mantra of academia.

1. Craft Research Fund provides research funding for academics working on books.

C. Critical voice is desired but also resisted. Craft writing has been primarily the author/craftsman writing about their friends or themselves. Until there is serious critical writing the field will not be taken seriously in the art world. Desire to establish one critical voice whose writings will become a part of popular culture (i.e., Clement Greenburg).

D. Suggestions for the CCCD web portal to expand knowledge of critical writers:

- 1.. Listing of writers/curators/speakers on the web portal that have three recommendations, and a sample of work, should increase the pool for museums, magazines, etc. Writers names could be solicited from all previous CCCD Craft Retreat participants and grant participants.
2. Links with museum catalogues and monograph, historically this has been the primary source of research on craft artists. Museum curators can provide regular updates on publications.
3. Abstracts of Craft, Research Fund Grants
4. Link to Google Books

SESSION 5

How is the intersection of craft and design shaping academia and the marketplace?

Discussion Leaders:

- **Andrew Wagner, Editor-in-Chief, *American Craft***
- **Suzanne Ramljak, Editor, *Metalsmith***
- **Andrew Glasgow, Director, *The Furniture Society***

Andrew Glasgow

The ICFF (International Contemporary Furniture Fair) is an incubator the intersection of craft and design and the only show managed by George Little Management that is growing. It is the only show that is growing, bringing together the craft, design, galleries and production.

Suzanne Ramljak

We were asked to explore the relationship between four fields: Craft, Design, Academia and Marketplace. There is now a steady erosion of the barriers between these areas, resulting in new hybrids and cross-fertilizations. Within the last ten years especially, we've seen a surge in the markets and discourse surrounding both craft and design.

There is much evidence for the commingling of fields across the board, the following will quickly point to signs of new life in the different areas:

Craft & Marketplace/Mainstream:

- Declaration a few years ago of March as "National Craft Month," billed as a "Consumer awareness program designed to draw attention to crafts and the benefits derived from craft activities."
- Numerous cable programs and websites devoted to crafts, over a dozen on HGTV alone
- Entrepreneur.com reported that the crafts industry pulled in more than \$30 billion in sales in 2006, "thanks to a growing number of enthusiasts who are finding joy in the simple art of crafting."
- One result of this mass movement toward crafting is increased literacy in the ways things are made and the process of bringing an idea into material fruition.

- Plus the booming DIY (Do It Yourself) movement, a separate but related grass roots phenomenon, not directly tied to either the academic or capitalist arenas: more like an underground movement that runs counter to both.

Design & Marketplace/Mainstream:

- A wealth of television programming about design, including programs like 24 Hour Design; Design Star; Designers' Challenge; Designing for the Sexes; Divine Design (all HGTV) and the popular Bravo show, Top Designer
- In the process of watching such shows, many of which include judges and critiques of competing design solutions, amateurs can acquire greater self-consciousness about their own decisions and develop critical skills to do more sophisticated work
- Good design is now a marketing tool, and companies like Target play up their design savvy and sell under the slogan "Design for All"
- Countless magazines, books, websites and products

Craft & Academia:

- CCCD is working hard to make progress on that front through the textbook *20th Century American Studio Craft*, and by sponsoring CAA sessions and topics
- And in their list of recent and forthcoming publications on crafts, find many of them published by University presses including: *By Hand: the Use of Craft in Contemporary Art*, Princeton Architectural Press (2006); *Object of Labor: Art, Cloth and Cultural Production*, MIT Press, 2007; *Nature of a Discipline*, Howard Risatti, University of North Carolina Press
- And the peer-reviewed academic *Journal of Modern Craft* to provide an interdisciplinary and international forum for the rigorous analysis of craft

Craft & Design:

One merger that isn't fully realized in the U.S., unlike Europe and Australia, is that between craft, design and marketplace. The individual craftsperson or designer has made very little headway with the mass production of their products. Steuben is one of the few exceptions of a company that works directly with artists to develop and execute new designs. Interesting that at Kohler, artists are invited to play with the machinery and means of production, but not asked to produce designs for the marketplace. (We can talk about the reasons why this type of artist/industry collaboration has not happened in this country)

While there is an increased presence and vigor of both craft and design within the market and academia, this is not necessarily the result of a craft-design interface. In fact these two spheres are still rather foreign to each other. One could even compare the encounter between craft and design worlds to East and West Germans after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Workers in the East were insular and dependent on an internal support system, and not wise to capitalist ways, while the West was used to free trade and an open exchange of ideas. After the wall came down there was general euphoria about the new freedoms and possibilities. The West Germans were quick to capitalize on the resources and markets of the East, and there is now a strong feeling that Eastern Germans were cheated, robbed rather than united. In a similar way, we can see the market savvy design world rummaging around and taking the resources and markets that were formerly a craftsperson's province, while the frightened craftspeople cower and get ripped off, unable to fend for themselves in this new open marketplace. This comparison applies mainly to the older generation of Craftspeople, who, like East Germans, were not able or eager to learn a whole new approach to working and living. The younger generation coming through the education system now is more hip to the marketplace and more able to play within its parameters.

So, now that the barriers or walls are crumbling, a series of questions comes to mind about the commingling of once-separate pursuits:

- What is the promise land, or what constitutes a successful scenario in this new open terrain?
- As old distinctions erode, what criteria can/should be used to navigate through the shifting landscape?
- How can we find commonality or shared values between the disparate populations and practices that now fall under the craft/design banner?
- What about the question of quality vs quantity? While there is a vast increase in craft related activity and consumption, what exactly is being propagated? Is it just a superficial trickle down “craft effect” (like hippie fashions of the 1960s that were divorced from any counterculture values) or is there a deeper understanding of what the handmade entails? Or does it even matter what people are thinking when they make or buy crafted objects?
- Who stands to gain from this new porous interchange of fields and practices: the craftsperson, designer, consumer, corporation?
- In order for any product to thrive in the marketplace, it requires promotion and marketing. How will craft or design objects get adequate promotion to capture a strong piece of the market?

Andrew Wagner

In the craft/design relationship, academia is confusing where the marketplace is wide open. The Craftsperson has to be a designer, but all designers are not craftspersons, but all designers are not craftspersons. Divisions are shaped by academia and specialization that weakens both areas.

Practitioners understand the need to converse across disciplines. Virginia Postrel is an example of a writer who crosses discipline. [Postrel writes a monthly column on “Culture & Commerce” for *The Atlantic*. www.dynamist.com] Periodically calls arise for Professional Standards. Making things are always important to the market place and craft offers a thorough understanding of materials, how things are made. Craft offers a thorough understanding of materials, of how things are made. The craft world itself has been insular and needs to invite design professionals to the table. Craft needs to think of itself as design. In the area of marketing – Craft needs a better spokesperson.

DISCUSSION

A. What are the tensions between popular cultures use of craft and craft connoisseurship and how can each advance the field?

1. Craft/design in the 21st Century speaks to both popular culture and counter culture. The Craft fairs of the 1960's were a counter-culture movement, similar to today's Renegade Fairs. Knitting is a craft that has its widest following ever through all economic and age levels. Communities of makers are coming together, from popular to subversive (often via internet see www.boozeandyarn.com and www.knitknit.net/wartimeknittingcircle.html) *Radical Lace and Subversive Knitting* at MAD had the largest attendance of any exhibit in New York City during the exhibit.
2. Popular culture has embraced the hobbieist crafter and popular books and magazines on craft as a hobby, how can the craft field benefit from this acceptance and still recognize levels of professional craftsmanship. Fear of Populism sprung out the 60's when Guilds

and societies formed and prided themselves on excluding the hobbier, that a “professional” craftsman could not be a part-timer. Collectors and the marketplace supports this exclusivity. Institutions have dropped “craft” from their name because of fear of being associated with the “hobbier craft.” If the hobbier is introduced to the handmade, is there not an opportunity for them to learn and appreciate the well-crafted handmade object?

3. Some of the tensions relate to an inter-generational communication divide.
4. Technology in the last decade has changed marketing and communication. The use of blogs and the internet can create a community, or a “buzz” leading to success of a product, or the success or downfall of a career (Don Imus brought down in one week). The D.I.Y. (Do It Yourself, www.seedsofgrowth.com/inside-americas-diy-movement/) movements relies on technology in making, marketing, and linking with community. The under 30 population has a high comfort level with cell phone as a camera, instant messaging, ipods and yet-developed methods of communication that is not always shared with those over 30. The world of instant communication and instant gratification can collide with the craft lifestyle associated with professional craftsman of the late 20th Century, who can be anti-commercial and anti-capitalist.
5. CCCD should work to coalesce the generational divide and include some of the recent graduates who received a Windgate Fellowship in the next meeting. Other medium specific conferences should be encouraged to follow the example of the 2006 Furniture Society conference that included a session with six younger makers and charged them with making a manifesto. MO6 rocked the traditional makers, who then included it in the mainstream journal. (The MO6 manifesto can be found at www.furnituresociety.org/frames/fconf/home.shtml)

B. The future for craft is in strengthening the bond between craft and design.

1. There is a historical framework for the craft/design convergence of the 21st Century The Arts and Crafts movement represented the integration of craft and design.
2. As the marketplace opens to this merger – what is the role for artisanship and good design? How can HGTV and other popular components of design, include artisanship in craft/design and can the handmade supply the quantity needed for the marketplace?
3. Craft is the basis of material culture, utility, material, function, process are all a milieu of craft. But American craft made it about the object, rather than about a lifestyle. Target and other popular purveyors of design, are selling a lifestyle.
4. What can we learn from countries outside the U.S. to advance the craft/design convergence.
5. CCCD can use the 2008 “think-tank” as a forum for a formal detente between craft and design. Design in this forum should not be considered monolithic, but including all areas of design. It should include participants representing the successful craft/design/industry convergence in other countries.

SESSION 6

Who is the audience for craft in the future and how will we reach that audience?

Discussion Leaders:

- **Lily Kane, Director of Education, American Craft Council**
- **Bruce Pepich, Director, Racine Art Museum, Wisconsin**
- **Jean McLaughlin, Director, Penland School of Crafts**

Where do we stand as a field in our understanding of audiences for craft? How are we working to develop audiences? What marketing strategies are we putting in place or wish we could put in place? Who are our audiences – do we know? And who do we want them to be? Have they

been changing over recent years? Are we aware of trends reflecting audience demographics for craft? If there is a goal it is to define the questions that need to be researched and documented. Existing studies include the CODA (Craft Organization Development Association) study positioning the craft field as an industry, with the resulting economic impact numbers. Arts and Civic Engagement, by the National Endowment for the Arts www.nea.gov/pub/CivicEngagement.pdf and Americans for the Arts have looked into audience development and marketing. Marketing strategies need to be put into place and the target audience identified.

We'd like to start with a brief description of how our organizations are approaching audience development...then we'll ask some questions we are asking ourselves, and see if this can lead to an outcome that will help us all help the field rise together.

Lily Kane

ACC is a membership organization and show presenter. How craft is brought to an audience, the maker-marketplace, audience/population is a focus - how to market the work and how makers can bring their work to market. ACC has several key initiatives in place. One is to make the ACC library better known to a new audience. The library holds periodicals, museum catalogues, and books that span the 20th Century and are rich in images and information. Two pilot programs were started at the Baltimore Show. "Search Light" highlights artists who have never attended a show previously and was very successful in introducing new work and young makers. Next year this will be expanded into the wholesale show. A second pilot program "Schools to Marketplace" featured students from Kendal College of Art & Design reaching out to younger makers and academia, also a marketplace. This program will continue in the future with three schools represented, lectures with Q&A about the marketplace, global economy and internet impact on the maker and work. The goal is to connect the field with the new younger audience.

Bruce Pepich

The need is marketing to audiences, not audience, and how to move from temporary to long lasting connections with audiences. Everyone should be taking advantage of the PBS Craft in America special to hit new audiences. One organization is having parties to watch the special and discuss it afterward. In our area RAM has been participating with the Cultural Alliance of Greater Milwaukee, a trade organization, to draw attention to cultural institutions and for business groups to see culture as an asset. This involves the first inter-county (seven counties) collaborative and a major research study funded by private foundation support. This provided very interesting demographic information with a survey base of 29% of all households, broken into six lifestyle clusters. This was followed with a telephone survey. What was interesting was the demystifying of previously held assumptions that audiences interested in one cultural activity are therefore interested in all, when there was only 30% with one overlap. This broke down elitism in the results. Those that enjoyed dance, were more likely to participate in visual arts education activities, but not necessarily attend an exhibit. The groups received the results recently and are working on how to parse and disseminate data collected.

Jean McLaughlin

Penland is in the business of education – continuing education, life-long learning, career development at all ages, avocational crafts person to the professional. It is very inclusive, but do we know our audience and who we want it to be? We want students who are serious of their learning experience whatever category they fall into, and include visitors – tourists, collectors/consumers, professional artists, educators, craft history enthusiasts, public schools, kids and families. We have not used the word "hobby" in the past and we know that people who

are avocational are often afraid to come because they think it is professional. Inclusivity and diversity are a commitment. In our surveys, we find 90% say they find out about Penland by word of mouth which is both a plus and a minus because it is repeating existing audience. The challenge is attracting new audiences to expand the Penland community. We now have a DVD about Penland, that took nine years to create, that can go to donors, colleges and universities, etc. We use Survey Monkey for certain questions and host focus groups of those attending called "parties." We place ads on Public Radio – but do not know how to find out if it worked and as with most organizations we have a very limited marketing budget. The Lila Wallace Foundation is supporting Arts Action Research in a multi-year project on how to "grow audiences" and North Carolina is one of the states involved. It looks at three levels of audience, the committed, inclined and disinclined, placing the most effort in changing the inclined to the committed.

Some discussion questions for the retreat:

- Is there an organized approach to audience development that we want to encourage our field to develop?
- Is there a way we can work together to effect change that will help us all?
- Is a linked activity desirable, possible, necessary?
- How can we move our audiences from entry level understandings of craft material (from how-to magazines/marketing magazines to American Craft to the new journal to radio to TV) to deeper levels of understanding and appreciation
- What are we doing, what can we do to use the Craft in America series to promote craft nationally?
- Are there other national events that the whole field could rally around to raise the waters for all?
- How well organized is our field around marketing? Do the craft-centric museums get together? The non-degree granting craft schools? The universities which teach craft material?

DISCUSSION:

A. The Craft World in American has been a very small village, we need to give up control if we are to break down barriers.

B. To understand the world we live in and the present and future of craft/design, certain blogs will be as important as newspapers and CNN.

C. Action recommended:

1. Enlist Appalachian State University to update their economic impact study for the field
2. Engage government agencies.
3. Pursue Joint Effort Marketing (J.E.M) grants promoting cultural tourism
4. Determine the message for the craft field.

SESSION 7

What are some shared issues for craft in the U.S., Canada and England? What are some significant Differences?

Discussion Leaders:

- **Simon Olding, Director, Crafts Study Centre, University College for the Creative Arts at Farnham, England**
- **Sandra Alfoldy, Assistant Professor, Historical and Critical Studies, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Canada**

Simon Olding

WHAT ARE THE SHARED ISSUES FOR CRAFTS IN THE U.S. CANADA AND ENGLAND Risk, bravery and foolhardiness

The Devon Guild of Craftsmen was founded in 1955 by a spirited collaboration of educators, net workers, makers and craft troublemakers. The founding membership included David Leach, the now little-known furniture designer-maker Judith Hughes and the potter Marianne de Trey, whose retrospective exhibition is currently on show at the Devon Guild's headquarters. The momentum behind this membership was the lack of shared space and regular opportunity to promote work in the county; it was driven less by the momentum of the Leach and Hamada inspired Dartington International conference in 1952, and more by pragmatism, a sort of collegiate need, a, frankly, the availability of enough cheap rural housing.

By the 1970s, the Guild, with a heritage of annual exhibitions but a loss of confidence, was close to closure. The membership had fractured. At this moment of risk, the Guild did a remarkable and visionary thing: the Guild purchased a building, Riverside Mill in Bovey Tracey, on the edge of Dartmoor, and turned their fortunes around.

Today, the Guild has completed a highly successful capital development, with funds from the UK's National Lottery. This has led to:

- New, remodelled interior and exterior spaces to sell and exhibit craft from the membership but also drawn more widely from craft practitioners in the UK;
- A major series of exhibitions, including touring shows for small to medium scale arts venues in England
- The refocusing and determination of a forceful and creative membership with real clout to their activities;
- The stimulus behind a new large scale selling craft fair in parkland adjacent to the Guild's building
- The security of state funding for the overall operation as a 'Regularly Funded Organisation' of Arts Council England, South West

This is a major success story for a redoubtable craft organisation in England. It is one underpinned by funds, competitively secured, from two public funding sources: the National Lottery and Arts Council England. The model of public funding is in complete contrast to the private funding stream for cultural organisations in the U S. Second, we see a difference in physical scale. At a rough guess, one could fit three Devon Guilds into the interior galleries of Blue Spiral, Asheville. Enterprise comes with more square feet.

Success and Failure: failure or success

So does the remarkable venture led in Asheville by Bethanne Knudson and Stefan Mickelson. I could not help but compare this grandiose scheme with the rise, fall and rise again of the Ann Sutton Foundation, sometime resident in the small English town of Arundel. The Foundation was the brainchild of the eminent and mercurial woven textile artist Ann Sutton. She prompted the creation of a small organisation eventually titled ASF Weave giving three young postgraduate Fellows two year funded positions in a well equipped textile studio the chance to:

- Develop their creative work
- Seek new work both individually and collectively
- Develop public art projects

- Attempt to act as the research and development arm for projects commissioned by industry

This experimental model was core funded again by state funds from Arts Council England South East. These funds attracted additional resources from charitable trusts, but the hoped-for collaboration with industry providing a secure financial base did not materialise. Industry money (that is to say private money) did not succeed public money, and the Arts Council, in a straightened budget situation, could not support the venture ad infinitum. The Foundation (a foundation in name and not in essence) closed in Arundel and the four computer assisted looms and the residue of the foundation were eventually relocated to the Western Isles of Scotland to form part of a creative industry hub there. This was a risky model: and none the worse for that. Perhaps if it had been fully endowed to start with it may have succeeded with more time at the organisation's disposal. I could the application and ethos of the model taking a new shape in the nameless weaving factory under progress in Asheville. The differences are again to do with scale and funding. Here, the American example has been underpinned by a venture of immense physical scale and major private funding. There are very few private philanthropic investments in the crafts and creative industry sector in England.

This is not to say that England does not have buildings in the crafts of size and substance. The impact of the National Lottery has seen important new craft and craft-associated organisations open new doors: the Crafts Study Centre; MIMA, the craft and design galleries at Manchester Art Gallery; the Hub at Sleaford and to come, the new home of the Embroiderers' Guild.

The peril of strategy: or, the fear of sport

I was commissioned recently to write a chapter for a book called *The Cutting Edge*. The book looked at the work of contemporary crafts in Scotland (where there is huge energy and initiative at present) from a number of perspectives: from England, Australia (Grace Cochrane) and America (David McFadden). My chapter focused on the history of craft organisations in Scotland, and to my surprise, I found this to be the first such survey since the 1950s and a little known book on the history of the Scottish Crafts Centre. I found that craft strategy had been securely underpinned by state investment, and that a major review of support for the crafts had been led by the Scottish Crafts Council. New funds had flowed after this policy review and one could track the rise in state grants and revenue support with clarity. The strategy had been openly debated and established around some clear objectives that carried the value of consensus and the weight of a shared dialogue.

This is not currently the case in England, where the *National strategy for the crafts* has been pursued with zeal but also a high degree of silence by the Arts Council. It has morphed from a strategic statement that could claim to represent the interests of the craft community in England to a statement for the Arts Council and its internal operations. No money has followed the strategy. The Crafts Council has also made a major strategic shift, withdrawing from some key prior activities such as the provision of gallery space at the Islington headquarters and focusing on strategic priorities that seem to represent a shifting on its London events (Collect and Origin) and an as yet unrealised new compact with the craft organisations in the English regions. With these changes, there has yet to be a new central voice for the crafts in England. This Think tank is remarkable because it feels like an open, generous National conversation. There is no such inevitable meeting place for the crafts in England. The closest and newest equivalent is the Clore Leadership Programme – Crafts which will bring together emerging and existing craft leaders to debate and challenge issues of common concern in a two year funded project.

Sandra Alföldy

Canadian craft history, theory and practice have similarities to British and American craft. Canada occupies an interesting position- colonized by the British, also colonized by the French, and constantly influenced by the U.S. The story of Canadian craft is often conflicted regarding these influences. On the one hand there is great admiration for these cultures, also a great reliance on craft imports from Britain and the U.S., and there is an argument that these imports prevented Canada from establishing any strong craft industries. On the other hand, there is a need to distinguish craft as distinctly “Canadian.”

The most pronounced similarity to British Craft came in 1905 with the establishment of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, modeled on William Morris’s Arts and Crafts Movement, established in Montreal, by Anglophones, but involved also in preserving traditional Qubecois craft. It was linked directly to the British model of cultural imperialism – helping those in need and the civilizing mission of the “other” through craft. Another huge British influence (like in the U.S. I suspect) was Bernard Leach’s potter’s book. Although Leach only visited Canada once in early 1950’s, he was very influential.

There are also many similarities to the U.S. Both countries deal with waves of immigrants. There is a question of how to use their craft production to indoctrinate them into a new national culture. Like the Hull House in Chicago, Canada had settlement houses that promoted immigrant craft, and the Canadian Handicrafts Guild promoted it as well. There are many imports from U.S. to Canada. Still today many ceramists bring freight trains of clay into Canada. In the 1940’s Canada was particularly influenced by Aileen Osborn Webb and the establishment of the American Crafts Council and the importation of modernist ideas related to craft production. In the 1960’s Teginia Clay movement imported instructors from the U.S. who inspired postmodern clay – Voulkos, Nagle, Melchert, and Gilhooly. Also in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s there was a great influx of conscientious objectors from the U.S. The Kootenay region of British Columbia Quakers set up an underground railroad for those avoiding the draft, and many young men became involved in the crafts and counterculture. Since Canada did not have a graduate program, during this same period of time, many American MFA’s came to Canada to teach in art schools and universities. Their legacy is strong today – Walter Ostrom, Robert Archambault, Donald Lloyd McKinley, and Ruth Gowdy McKinley.

What is distinctly Canadian? Aboriginal craft production/motifs/traditions are often used to promote a truly “Canadian” identity. The irony is that Aboriginal craft was greatly oppressed through the 1876 Indian Act forbidding traditional cultural practices. Even today Aboriginal motifs are the most popular “craft” objects.

Quebec’s Conseil des Metiers d’art is tremendously important. www.metiers-d-art.qc.ca Quebec sees itself as an independent nation and their provincial government funding supports cultural initiatives to reflect this autonomy. The Craft Council in Quebec is quite financially secure. Quebec craftspeople do not feel the same alignment with British Arts and Crafts traditions. The result has been more daring innovation, more willingness to work with industry and design concerns. Quebec has always been close to the U.S. In 1942 Oscar Beriau, Quebec’s cultural representative was in touch with Aileen Osborn Webb, and he wrote an article for *Craft Horizons* on Qubecois craft.

Canadian craftspeople, craft writers and craft historians are greatly influenced by the publications/conferences/academic programs in the U.S. and Great Britain. Very little has been published on craft history in Canada, but this is changing. The U.S. and Britain are the models to which many Canadians turn. NCECA is often the place where Canadian ceramists go to see

each other. For me personally there are many connections to both the U.K. and the U.S. I did my doctoral research at the American Craft Council archives and library, and did post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Rochester with Janet Berlo. I've relied on the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow for research but most of my academic "craft" conferences happen in Scotland.

These overlaps lead me to believe that the U.K., the U.S., and Canada share many similar concerns related to crafts including:

- The complex relationship between the crafts and modernity
- The influence of new technologies
- Impact of globalization on crafts
- Role of the crafts in political economies
- Understanding the nostalgic romanticism for the crafts

With the popularity of craft blogs, the internet is helping us feel like a closer community.

SESSION 8

Recommendations to CCCD for future of the "Think-Tank." Topics, size of group, changes in structure. Other recommendations.

1. Participants agreed the size, 21 participants, allowed for discussion and flow of dialogue.
2. The diversity of ages, mediums, and experience was good and should be continued as well as participation of craft/design field from outside the U.S..
3. In 2008 there should be a focus on design/craft intersection.
4. Invite a critic or writer to attend 2008 and write an article about the Think-Tank.
5. Provide participants with more information on attendees (bio & current projects) prior to Think-tank
6. Discussion leaders to present their background prior to introducing topic
7. Offer satellite versions of the Think-Tank in Halifax and the U.K.
8. Organize break-out sessions- smaller, tighter sessions over a 12-18 month period
9. Include participation of one or more recent graduates – from Windgate Fellows.
10. Would like to have a time frame to see "art" by makers in the group.
11. Encourage participants to share their syllabus – it's happening but could expand
12. Include the issue of connoisseurship in next meeting.
13. Include more makers not connected to academia
14. Tour was very helpful and should be continued.
15. Documentation is important
16. The formal/informal balance was a right mix, with time for many sidebars.
17. Be sure to continue geographic diversity of attendees – geography has impact.

Michael Puryear

Observations

This is the third in a series of events that I have attended in the last year that I have found quite provocative. The first was the Furniture Society Conference in Indianapolis and the second being the ACC conference in Houston.

Let me say first that I have always seen the art/craft dichotomy to be largely a European concept. To my mind it is rooted in the early Renaissance when what is now seen as the fine arts gained the patronage of nobility which conferred on it an elevated social status. What has come to be called craft was that part of material culture that was associated with need and function and became the basis of the trades which gave rise to the guilds. In other cultures,

material culture (an anthropological term meaning a made object that has cultural significance), tends not to be perceived in this way. In fact when one views a collection such as the Metropolitan Museum's much of what is presented as art from other cultures might well be seen as craft objects.

If the primary concerns of craft are material, process, form and function and, up until quite recently in human history, was a consequence of the hand. Then, as I suggested during our discussions, craft is the basis of all material culture and the concepts of art and design are permutations of it.

So how are these three events provocative? They all espoused the idea of the merging of art and craft, an idea that I support but with some concerns. Much of what gets put forth as examples of this merging shares many of the criteria of craft, except in the area of function and form in the sense of everyday usefulness. I would call this a craft sensibility in that they engage in what has been traditionally craft materials and processes but in regards to form and function they have more of an art sensibility.

This new perception is being generally embraced by the curatorial, critical and to a degree the academic communities. I think the academization of crafts since the '70s, to a large degree explains this phenomena. In many colleges and universities these two disciplines tend to cross fertilize each other due to shared concerns and often facilities. All of this is fine, except that there is not much discussion of the functional traditions which have been integral to craft historically. My concern is that we may be repeating history where usefulness relegates some objects, no matter how well crafted, to a lesser status. One refuge that has been suggested for functional objects is design. I think this is a discussion worth pursuing. Design, however, with its association with industrial production is not a perfect fit. A handmade object is not the same as one produced through CAD and rapid prototyping. I think this could be a discussion that CCCD could have.

2007 North Carolina Craft Retreat PARTICIPANTS

1. **Sandra Alfoldy**, Assistant Professor, Historical and Critical Studies, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Canada
2. **Charlotte Brown**, Director, Gregg Museum of Art & Design, North Carolina State University
3. **Kim Cridler**, Assistant Professor, metalsmithing and jewelry, University of Wisconsin-Madison,
4. **Donald Fortescue**, Wood/Furniture faculty, California College of The Arts, CA
5. **Sabrina Gschwandtner**, MFA student Bard College, founder of KnitKnit Magazine, NY
6. **Vicki Halper**, curator/scholar, co-author *Choosing Craft; A Story told by Artists*, Seattle, WA
7. **Peter Held**, Curator of Ceramics, Ceramics Research Center, Arizona State University Art Museum
8. **Lily Kane**, Director of Education, American Craft Council, NY

9. **Simon Olding**, Director, Crafts Study Centre, University College for the Creative Arts at Farnham, England
10. **Bruce Pepich**, Director, Racine Art Museum, WI
11. **Michael Puryear**, Furnituremaker, NY
12. **Suzanne Ramljak**, Editor, *Metalsmith*, CT
13. **Howard Risatti**, author, retired Chair, Craft Department, Virginia Commonwealth University
14. **Cindi Strauss**, Curator, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, TX
15. **Lena Vigna**, Curator, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, WI
16. **Andrew Wagner**, Editor *Craft Magazine*, previously Senior Editor, *DWELL*, NY/CA
17. **Catherine Whalen**, Assistant Professor, Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design and Culture, NY

Center for Craft, Creativity and Design Board Members and Staff participating

Catharine Ellis, Professional Crafts Program – Fiber, Haywood Community College
Andrew Glasgow, Director, The Furniture Society
Stoney Lamar, wood sculptor
Jean McLaughlin, Director, Penland School of Crafts
Dian Magie, Executive Director
Melissa Post, Assistant Director