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## **Craft Think Tank Report highlights craft's multipotentiality**

*Interdisciplinary convergence and discussion to shape the Center for Craft's future direction*

**ASHEVILLE, NC (August 30, 2022)** – In October of 2021, a group of multidisciplinary thought leaders convened for the Craft Think Tank, a three-day visioning process to facilitate reciprocal and generative craft and craft-adjacent conversations.

The event took up questions of craft's relevance and future impact, not only for artists, but for a broad swathe of disciplines and professions, including experts in urban planning, climate change, robotics, and more. The discussion also centered voices and perspectives historically excluded from these conversations, focusing on questions around how the craft community can move towards taking responsibility for existing histories while embracing nuance and wholeness in craft's future.

For Advisory Committee member and Center for Craft board member Bernie Herman, “the wonder of the Craft Think Tank resides in the collective and collaborative effort to imagine the future of craft at a turning point in American and global history. A vision of craft flourishing at the heart of everyday life in ways that connect people, inspire making, and create community is powerful and compelling. The core realizations that processes around making are about crafting community and exchanging perspectives open the field to entirely new dynamics that are at once hopeful and inspiring. Craft is not just about the object, craft is about who and how we want to be in the worlds we share.”

Participants were invited to explore these shared intersections of craft to their own work, and, together, to change the inputs that are typically part of craft conversations to create outputs that foster more expansive thinking and a greater depth of conversation. The discussions that emerged from the Craft Think Tank will shape the Center's goals, from developing large projects to framing strategic thinking.

Craft Think Tank participant Anna Burkhardt, Neville Bryan Assistant Curator in the Department of Architecture and Design at the Art Institute of Chicago, elucidated the potentiality of craft objects – and the practice of craft itself – to be a portal into different worlds, a rich metaphor for the participants' time together and one that allowed them to step into “different ways of collaborating or knowing” that the Center hopes will continue long past the three-days of exploration and conversation. Participant Cannupa Hanksa Luger connected craft with deep time:

“a sense of time,” she explains, “that is much larger than our individual lives. There are practices that have been passed down, practices that will always be relevant to the present, but were initially created by ancestors distant in the past. That will continue into the future.”

Seven themes emerged which will inform the Center’s strategic plan: Circulating vs. Harvesting Value, Community Building, Empowerment Through Agency and Accessibility, Construction and Deconstruction of Systems, Craft as Technology and Innovation, Embracing the Expansiveness of Craft, and Telling More Inclusive Craft Histories.

Each theme offers a nuanced perspective on how conversations about craft can support community, offer choice and opportunities for ownership, foster truth-telling, increase accessibility, and help chart paths forward to build inclusive, sustainable futures characterized by technological innovation and a “de-siloing” of artists and disciplines within and outside of traditional craft.

The first two days of discussion fed into an exploration of what “Craft Can...,” a lens that participants used to explore the multipotentiality of craft, particularly the expansiveness and flexibility that craft can cultivate and embody.

“Craft Think Tank participants moved seamlessly across multiple domains of thought bringing new thinking and energy to the potential of what craft can... be, create, accomplish, and make,” says Carlo Cuesta, Managing Partner for Creation in Common and lead facilitator of the Craft Think Tank. “ Our team is grateful for the opportunity to engage with them and to collaborate with the Center for Craft on making this all possible.”

The 2021 Craft Think Tank was an early step in an ongoing, community-driven exploration of where craft is headed and what support artists need, in what the Center for Craft hopes will be a rich discussion of craft’s relevance, within and beyond artistic practice.

Read the full report [here](#).

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**ABOUT CENTER FOR CRAFT** The Center for Craft is a 501(c)3 nonprofit advancing the field of craft through awarding grants, offering exhibitions and public programs, building strategic community and national partnerships, and spearheading initiatives in the United States. Founded in 1996, the Center is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential national organizations working in the craft field today. For more information, visit [www.centerforcraft.org](http://www.centerforcraft.org).