



Canadian
Crafts
Federation

Fédération
canadienne des
métiers d'art

The Craft Spectrum

A Position Paper by the
Canadian Crafts Federation

Forward

Craft is a living creature, complex in its existence and evolving alongside humanity and society. The act of making is intrinsically tied to culture, technology, and the ideals of beauty and art, as well as the health and wellbeing of communities, economies, and education. How and why craft artists create, and the way in which we describe this activity will continue to shift over time.

The purpose of this document is to provide government representatives, and those working outside of the craft sector, with an introduction to craft.

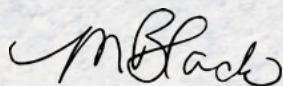
The Canadian Crafts Federation acknowledges, respects, and values the diversity of voices, perspectives, and experiences of craft from across Turtle Island. By developing a spectrum of craft, rather than a rigid definition, space is created to find your place in craft, rather than a set mould you must adapt to.

I would like to thank everyone in the arts community for their interpretations and contributions to the development of this document. This includes the members of our advocacy committee, the community test-readers, as well as everyone who shared their personal definitions in writing, in person, and online. From lecture halls to social media, from studio visits to gallery openings, in quiet corners of conferences, and across the loudspeakers at the podium — you have been heard, and you will continue to be heard.

It is no easy task to put this language in writing, and I am confident that if nothing else, we will continue to discuss the meaning of craft as the future unfolds. In the meantime, we humbly present this living document addressing the spectrum of craft.

Thank you all, for the continued conversation.

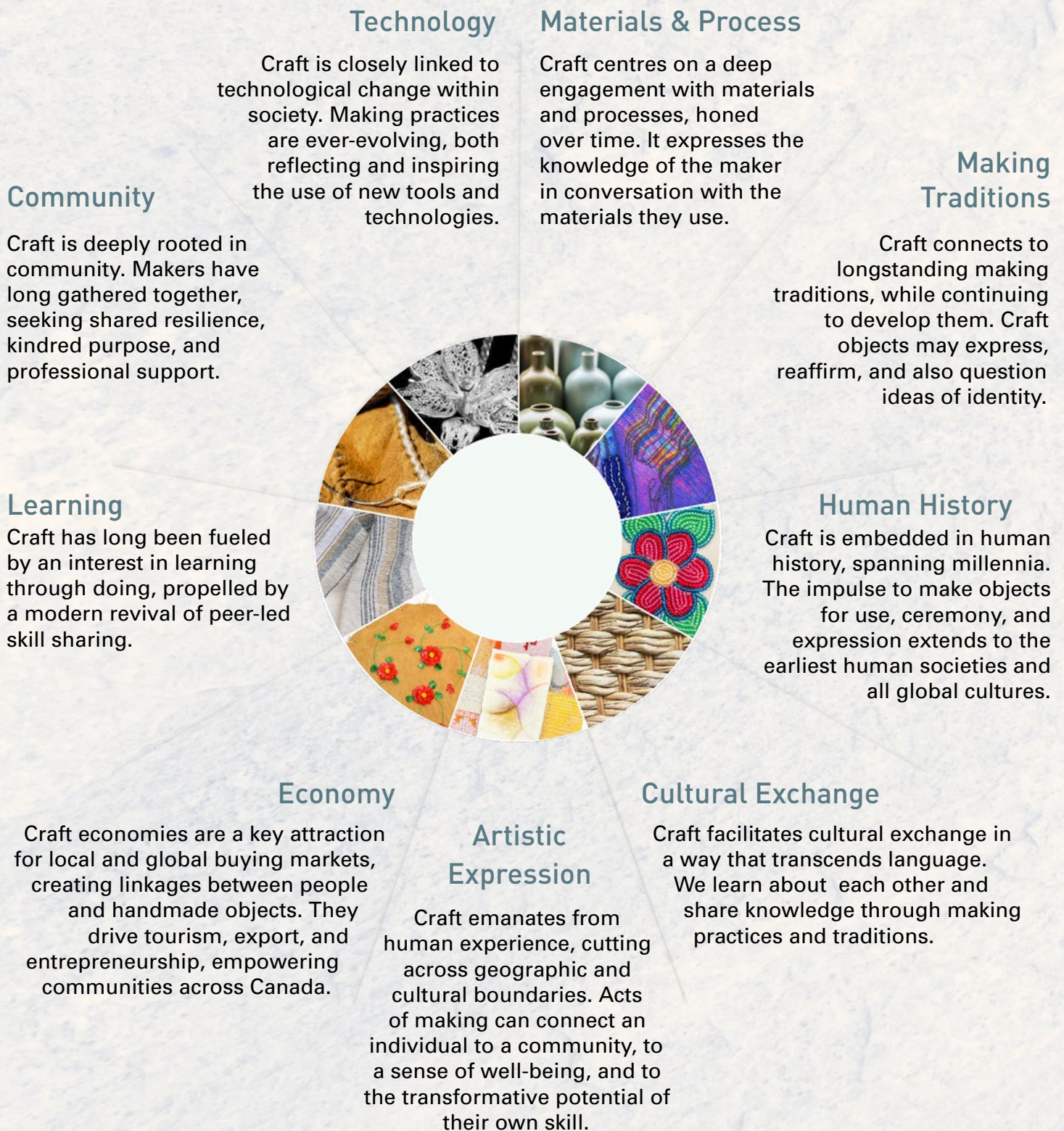
In solidarity,



Maegen Black
CCF/FCMA Director

CRAFT ARTIST - ARTI
CRAFTER ARTIST - D
SCULPTOR - HOBBYI
TEXTILE ARTIST FAS
DESIGNER - TAILOR -
- WEAVER - SPINNER
ARTIST - JEWELLER
ARTIST - SILVERSMIT
BLACKSMITH GOLDS
METALSMITH - CERA
CERAMIST - POTTER
ARTIST - BOOK PAPER
- CARVER - PRINTMA
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ARTIST - JEWELLER
ARTIST - SILVERSMIT
BLACKSMITH - GOLD
- METALSMITH - CER
ARTIST - CERAMIST -
- WOOD ARTIST - BOO
PAPER ARTIST - CAR
PRINTMAKER - MARI
- SURFACE DESIGNE
SCULPTOR - LAPIDA
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ARTIST - ARTISAN - C
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HOBBYIST DIY - TEXT
FASHION DESIGNER
KNITTER - WEAVER -

The Craft Spectrum





Craft in a Tweet



CCF/FCMA [@CCFFCMA](https://twitter.com/CCFFCMA)

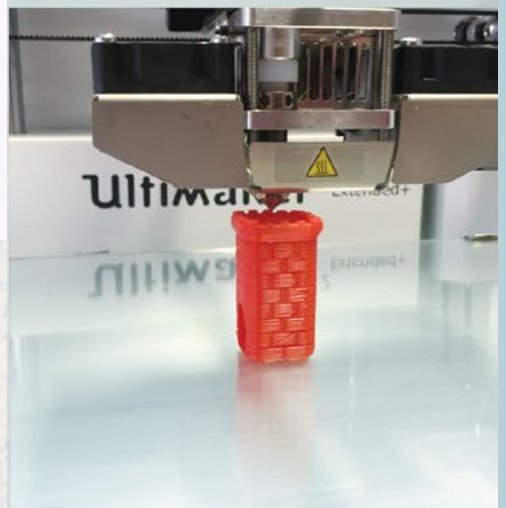
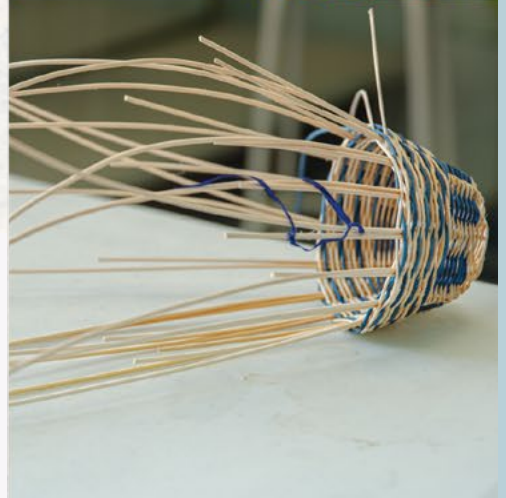
Follow

Craft is a form of making that pairs material traditions with contemporary skill, design, and technology.

It is a broad and flexible term, but at its core, craft is a meaningful way to connect with ourselves, with each other, and across borders.



We invite you to share your [#craftinatweet](https://twitter.com/CCFFCMA) online with us



Amir Sheikhvand

Craft in Context

In 2020, the craft sector accounted for

\$2.4 billion

of the culture GDP in Canada.

[*\(Statistics Canada, 2021\)*](#)



Textile crafts increase a sense of well-being for those with chronic fatigue syndrome, depression and other long-term health problems.

[*\(How Craft is Good for our Health, 2018\)*](#)



In 2019, Craft Councils across Canada sold

\$14,024,577

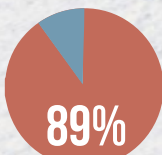
in Canadian craft.

[*\(Canadian Crafts Federation\)*](#)

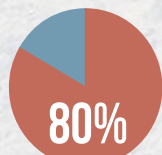
UNESCO recognizes that crafts, amongst other creative activities, address the basic needs and rights of children, **"building creativity and self-esteem, helping them to work on personal issues and trauma."**

[*\(UNESCO, 2009\)*](#)

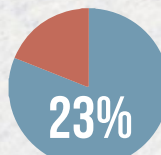
In 2017, Etsy reported more than 2 million active sellers on their platform. In Canada,



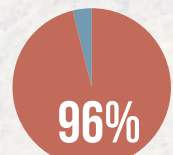
are women



are businesses of one



live in rural areas



of these sellers work from home

[*\(Etsy Impact Update, 2017\)*](#)



In a research study of 50,000 participants, creative activities were shown to help regulate mood and boost a sense of wellbeing.

[*\(BBC Arts, 2019\)*](#)

FAQs

What is the difference between art and craft?

Craft is not distinct from the world of fine art. Often set apart by its material origins or skills-based approach to making, craft crosses the lines of definition. Makers are artists and artists are makers — fine art borrows from craft, and craft rightly assumes the moniker of “art” — you can’t have one without the other.

How are craft and new technologies related?

Craft is a living and evolving artform in which skills are constantly developed and new technologies introduced. Technology and craft are in a dance at the forefront of science, design and engineering. From textile innovations that heal the body, to innovative ways of making AI more human-friendly, craft considers the human aspect of sometimes cold technologies. The hand and the machine are essential partners in creation, innovation and inspiration — craft is the conversation that lies between material and meaning.

FAQs

What makes craft unique in Canada?

Many rich making traditions are rooted in communities across Canada, and the materials, tools, and teachings found there. The style of ceramics from Nunavut's Kivalliq Region is distinctive to communities in the North, as the Cheticamp hooked rugs are to the makers of Cape Breton. In towns and cities across Canada, makers also gather in community spaces, guilds, and learning studios — each unique to the region and its people — informed by a synergy of shared knowledge, supply chains, and local expertise.

How do craft artists access training?

There is a long-standing tradition of mentorship and apprenticeship hard-wired into craft practice. Though this form of learning is less common today, its influence remains. Craft artists gain their education from a wide variety of sources, including college/university programs, short-term courses, or professional development through crafts councils and guilds. Artists may be self-taught, impacted greatly by the rise in online education opportunities, or benefit from the tradition of technical skill passed down from family members. Often, learning takes place through a combination of means, allowing artists to hone their skills over time, and assume a mentorship role to a new generation of makers.

Artist Profile



David Freeman, Saskatchewan

David Freeman is a luthier, an artist who makes or repairs stringed instruments such as guitars, harps, mandolins, ukeleles, dulcimers, etc.

I craft musical instruments. I am a sculptor of sound, an eclectic advocate of all things craft. I create function and beauty in material objects while expressing visionary concepts.



About David

- Ran an international private school and artist residency program teaching stringed instrument construction from 1986 to 2021.
- Participates in markets, festivals, and conferences, leading workshops and lectures throughout the world.
- Builds and repairs all stringed instruments, researches acoustic and aesthetic designs, and undertakes original commission work.
- Is also a musician, jeweller, and ceramist deriving income from these related artistic practices.



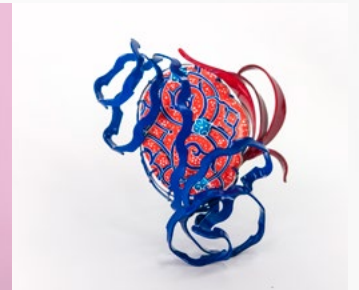
Artist Profile



Amir Sheikvand, Ontario

Amir's education in biology, graphic design and jewellery blends together in his one-off wearable artworks made of metal, wood, enamel, and other materials.

“Most of my work is loaded with social affairs, paradoxes, tradition, and modernity. It challenges the wearer to be its display case.”



About Amir

- Graduated from Tehran's Gold Institute in 1994, leading to a 30+ year career in jewellery.
- Exhibited in Iranian galleries until resuming his practice in Canada in 1999.
- Amir's work incorporates graphic renderings of Persian calligraphy, typography, and illumination, exploring the boundaries of jewellery art and Persian poetry.
- Has been an advisor to emerging artists at Harbourfront Centre and George Brown College in Toronto.
- Commercial success is not his main goal when creating artistic work for collectors and exhibitions — artistic excellence and recognition from the community is.

Artist Profile



Melissa Peter-Paul, PEI

Melissa's quillwork apprenticeship was grounded in traditional Mi'kmaq techniques and cultural teachings. Her work incorporates complex geometric design and the harvesting/dyeing of natural materials.

I began my artistic expression at a young age, making regalia and beadwork, surrounded by a family of basketmakers. My exposure to other Mi'kmaq artforms led me to quillwork, a traditional skill in which my ancestors excelled.



About Melissa

- An emerging artist on the rise, Melissa launched her first solo exhibition in Charlottetown in 2019.
- Follows the traditions and protocols related to harvesting raw materials for her work.
- Has been integral in establishing a community of quill workers locally and online, expanding awareness of the artform and working on collaborative projects.
- Proud to be passing these skills on to her two sons and the broader community.

Artist Profile



Naila Janzen/Rox, Manitoba

Rox was born in Jamaica, grew up in Miami, and now lives in Winnipeg. The tropical colours and culture of her upbringing are reflected in her textiles.

“My name is Naila, but I go by Rox. I started quilting during recovery from breast cancer treatments. Quilting was a slow project that kept me busy, and helped me heal.”



About Rox

- Rox is a designer/maker of home goods and accessories.
- Key influences in her work include minimalist design and architecture, tropical culture (including the flora and fauna), South Beach Art Deco, and her family.
- Designing and making is a rich part of her DNA, with a maternal grandmother supporting her family as a designer/dressmaker and a paternal grandfather designing and building mid-century homes in Jamaica.
- She wants to create pieces that are both modern and cozy, reviving traditional techniques to create modern art pieces that serve to bring comfort and warmth.



Acknowledgments

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Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

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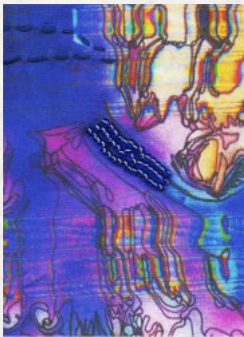
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Photo Credits



Cover and Craft Spectrum: Cultural Traditions (p.1, 3)
Khadija Aziz.
Influx (Source).
2019, Approx. 5 x 9 cm
Digital print of original gouache painting, seed beads, embroidery thread.



Craft Spectrum: Technology (p.3)
Samantha Tam.
Felicity.
2019, 5 x 4 cm
Chinese Inlay Filigree, fine silver, sterling silver, Swarovski stone, stainless steel.
Image Source: Zephyr Wen.



Craft Spectrum: Learning (p.3)
Emma Enright.
Brier (detail).
2020, 23 x 6 cm
Handwoven cotton and wool, tabby weave, clasp weft, machine stitched.



Craft Spectrum: Economy (p.3)
Jennifer Buckley
My Love comes in 3's.
2015, 30.5 cm circle.
Metal hoop wrapped in hide, fish scales and bones on hide, sinew
Image Source: NWT Arts



Craft Spectrum: Artistic Expression (p.3)
Yahn Nemirovsky.
I come apart from my binding.
2020, 20 x 12 cm
Paper and cotton yarns, cotton thread and embroidery floss, Aida cloths, watercolour pastel, cotton fabrics.



Craft Spectrum: Human History (p.3)
Alice Evans
Traditional Dene Beading.
2019, 10 cm x 5 cm.
Beading on stroud.
Image Source: NWT Arts



Craft in a Tweet (p.4)
Amir Sheikvand

Craft in a Tweet, (p.4)

Unless otherwise indicated, all photos taken on site during the 'CCF/FCMA's 10 Digit Technology' conference in Saskatoon, March 20, 2020.

Artist Profiles

All images provided by featured artists.

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Wave texture: p. 2, 6, 7, 12

Pottery, basket, leather images: p.3

3D Printer: Craft in a Tweet, p.4

Knitting, Thread, Pottery image: p.5