



Long-Time Leader of Contemporary Craft Janet McCall To Retire in June

PITTSBURGH, PA (January 14, 2021)—Janet L. McCall, executive director at Contemporary Craft for more than 25 years, announced her retirement yesterday, effective June 2021. She has been at the helm of the internationally recognized arts organization for half of its successful 50-year history.

“It’s been my honor to head up such a unique arts organization. When you are fortunate enough to find a job where you can put your skills and professional experience in service of your great passion, as I have been, you are lucky indeed! I have loved working with so many talented staff, board members, and artists on shared goals of building community and offering high quality art experiences free to all,” said McCall. “I’m most proud of being able to settle the organization in a beautiful new permanent home. Contemporary Craft is poised for a bright future as it moves into its 50th anniversary year and ready for a new leader to take it forward. I can’t wait to see what the next chapter will be!”



During her tenure—which spans from 1995 to 2006 and again from 2009 to 2021—McCall accumulated a remarkable list of accomplishments. She leaves the organization in a sound financial position, even with the COVID-19 pandemic, because of her foresight in developing reserve funds and a capitalization strategy. In 2013 she initiated the creation of an Arts Finance Cohort for Contemporary Craft and three other arts organizations to hire a shared CFO. The cohort members have worked collaboratively since then on strengthening strategic financial management and long-term sustainability for each organization.

On the artistic side, McCall launched the international Raphael Prize, an exhibition series and prize recognizing excellence in contemporary craft. The organization received the national American Craft Council’s Award of Distinction in 2018, the only local organization to be so recognized. McCall also spearheaded Contemporary Craft’s commitment to exhibitions that address social issues. Since 2013 the organization has curated *Enough Violence: Artists Speak Out*; *Mindful: Exploring Mental Health through Art*; and *Shelter: Crafting a Safe Home*, as well as *Food Justice: Growing a Healthier Community through Art* which opens in September 2021. Each of these social justice-themed exhibitions has travelled to museums and galleries around the country, taking Contemporary Craft’s creative excellence and social conscience to audiences in other cities.

One of McCall’s most significant accomplishments as executive director was the successful move from the organization’s location in the Strip District to a new, fully funded, permanent home in Upper Lawrenceville. The relocation was unplanned yet necessitated because of the sale and redevelopment of the historic Produce Terminal, where Contemporary Craft was located for 34

years. Opening of the new facility was planned for April 2020 but delayed due to the pandemic. Contemporary Craft opened its stunning new space at 5645 Butler Street in September 2020 with *The Heart Lives through the Hands*, an exhibition by acclaimed street artist, Swoon.

“Janet has been not just remarkable, but peerless in her leadership of Contemporary Craft. Her understanding of artistry and artists, coupled with her keen management style and financial acumen, are not often found in a single nonprofit leader. We all have been fortunate to experience someone of her caliber. I have enjoyed working along-side Janet over the years, as well as developing a personal friendship with her. She will be missed by many but we wish her continued creative experiences,” said Susan Golomb, Contemporary Craft board chair.

McCall worked for Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh in roles including assistant to the president, director of public programs & services, and media relations manager. Other previous positions included interim program manager at Pittsburgh Glass Center; artistic coordinator for *Aliquippa Embraces Art*, a site-specific community-based art exhibition in an aging steel community; and as a freelance contributor of art reviews to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. She spent an eight-week residency at Setagaya Art Museum in Tokyo and participated in the Museum Management Institute at the University of California, Berkeley.

The recipient of the YWCA’s Tribute to Women Award for Creative Arts in 2015, McCall also was awarded a McCune Revitalization Initiative grant to carry out an 18-month, self-directed study program in craft and arts management. She is a graduate of Leadership Pittsburgh XIX. She has curated or served as a juror for a number craft exhibitions over the years and has presented papers at national conferences on both arts management and art historical subjects.

A resident of Gibsonia, McCall received her BA from Bowling Green State University and her MA in Art History from the University of Pittsburgh. She served as an adjunct faculty member in the History of Art & Architecture department at the University of Pittsburgh for many years where she taught Museum Studies seminars and also taught Museum Operations in the Heinz School at Carnegie Mellon University.

The Contemporary Craft board of directors has formed a Search and Transition Committee to recruit a new executive director. The committee retained [Nonprofit Talent](#) in partnership with [DHR International](#) to manage the process.

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ABOUT CONTEMPORARY CRAFT

Presenting contemporary art in craft media by regional, national, and international artists since 1971, Contemporary Craft offers cutting edge exhibitions focusing on multicultural diversity and contemporary art, as well as a range of artist-led studio workshops, community outreach programs, and a store. Located at 5645 Butler Street in the Upper Lawrenceville neighborhood of Pittsburgh, PA, Contemporary Craft’s exhibition and Drop-In Studio art activity are always free to the public. For questions related to accessible accommodations, please contact us at info@contemporarycraft.org or visit www.contemporarycraft.org.