

## Mission Statement:

To engage the public in creative experiences through contemporary craft.

## Core Values:

Contemporary Craft offers meaningful art opportunities through four core values:

- Providing vital support for artists
- Filling critical gaps in public education
- Sharing cross cultural perspectives
- Using art to build community

## Background:

- 1971 — Elizabeth R. Raphael opened The Store for Arts and Crafts and People-Made Things in Verona, PA. Today, the organization is a nonprofit, visual arts organization with a history of presenting nationally and internationally known contemporary artists who work in craft materials (clay, fiber, glass, metal, wood, mixed media, and found materials).
- 1986 — The Store for Arts and Crafts and People-Made Things became the Society for Contemporary Craft and moved from Verona to the historic Produce Terminal Building in Pittsburgh's Strip District.
- 1990 — The Satellite Gallery at BNY Mellon Center (formerly One Mellon Center) was created as a companion exhibition space for Contemporary Craft.
- 2001 — The Society for Contemporary Craft became Contemporary Craft and doubled in size following a major expansion/renovation at the Strip District location. The Studio, a 4,000-square-foot education center with three large working studios, opened at Contemporary Craft's renovated space.
- 2018 — The American Craft Council recognized Contemporary Craft with an Award of Distinction, which is a biennial award that recognizes an organization, publication, school, or individual who has made significant contributions to the field of craft with a minimum of 25 years of service in the United States. Contemporary Craft is the first one and the only one to receive this award in Pittsburgh, PA.
- 2019 — Due to the Produce Terminal Building redevelopment, Contemporary Craft purchased a former industrial building at 5645 Butler Street in Pittsburgh, PA to ensure a sustainable future for the organization.

- 2020 — Contemporary Craft moved into its renovated, permanent facility in Upper Lawrenceville neighborhood in September 2020, with inaugural exhibition, *The Heart Lives through The Hands*, featuring works by renowned artist Swoon. The new location provides a space for inspiration, contemplation, and creativity in everyday life, as well as serving as a cultural gateway for Lawrenceville and a tourist destination for the region.

### Summary of Programs and Activities:

- Contemporary Craft is one of the few arts organizations in Western Pennsylvania that is free of charge. Its focus on contemporary crafts makes it very accessible since craft represents the materials and forms people use in everyday life. It also offers a free, self-guided art activity for adults and children in its Drop-In Studio.
- Exhibitions – Contemporary Craft offers two to three major exhibitions with a national/international programming focus per year at the main gallery, and three to four exhibitions with a local/regional programming focus per year at the Satellite Gallery located in the BNY Mellon Center in Downtown Pittsburgh.
  - *The Bridge Exhibition Series*, established in 1988, seeks to heighten the public's awareness of the powerful works being created by contemporary artists. Three concurrent solo exhibitions feature mid-career artists.
  - *The Elizabeth R. Raphael Founder's Prize Exhibition*, established in 1997, is a biennial juried exhibition/award that awards a \$5,000 prize to one winner. The exhibition's material focus changes with each iteration.
  - *The Social Justice Exhibition Series*, established in 2013, is a biennial exhibition that explore complex human issues that can shape and influence positive change in pressing social issues. This exhibition series explored violence in 2013–14, mental health in 2015-16, human displacement and housing insecurity in 2017-18, will explore food justice in 2021-22, and incarceration in 2023-24.
  - Contemporary Craft regularly travels its exhibitions nationally to other cities. In developing an exhibition, Contemporary Craft looks for a compelling idea, a new voice, or a concept not previously exhibited. Successful past traveling exhibitions includes, *Mindful: Exploring Mental Health through Art*, *Edward Eberle Retrospective*, *Shelter: Crafting a Safe Home*, and more.
  - Since 1986, Contemporary Craft has presented more than 250 exhibitions, featuring the work of more than 2,400 artists, and produced more than 80 exhibition catalogs and brochures. More than 35,000 people visit Contemporary Craft each year; with another 100,000 viewing its changing exhibits at its BNY Mellon Satellite Gallery.

- The Studio – features workshops taught by highly accomplished professional artists, including eight to ten master workshops led by national visiting artists each year. Workshops in paper arts, fiber, metal, and wood are the primary focus. Contemporary Craft has offered hundreds of workshops, seminars, and other public programs.
  - Outreach Programs – Contemporary Craft has partnered with social service agencies that address four target audiences: at-risk children and families, the elderly, and those experiencing homelessness. Its Museum/School Partnership with Southbrook Middle School was established in 1995 and infuses art throughout the school’s curricula, allowing more than 400 middle school students annually to work firsthand with local artists in craft media.
  - In 2020, Contemporary Craft began hosting virtual artist-led workshops and artist demos.
- Public Programs and Events – Every free admission includes access to the hands-on Drop-In Studio art activity designed by an artist in the major exhibition. Contemporary Craft also hosts artist lectures and demonstrations, artists' studio tours, gallery openings, and salon-style speaker series regularly.
- The Store – Featuring the best of international, national, and regional artists, The Store offers handcrafted artworks by more than 400 artists. Items include jewelry, ceramics, glass, tableware, textiles, ornaments, accessories, and furniture.
  - The Store’s annual Lydon Emerging Artist Program (LEAP) was established in 2007 to recognize exceptional emerging contemporary craft artists and to bring their artwork to the consumer market. This yearlong retail program features, markets, and sells the work of one winner and four finalists. The winner also receives a \$1,000 cash prize. The program seeks to advance the careers of emerging artists through retail gallery representation.
  - An official online store, which features over 1,000 art objects by emerging and established artists, was launched in August 2020 at: [contemporarycraftstore.com](http://contemporarycraftstore.com)

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