

Mission Statement:

To engage the public in creative experiences through contemporary craft.

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.
- 2024 — Contemporary Craft expanded its Studio space with the build-out of a new Rabbit Laser Studio. In 2024, CC also formalized and catalogued its archive and permanent collection and received a gift from Cathie Raphael to create an endowment for the organization.

- 2025 – Contemporary Craft embarked on a major expansion and corresponding capital campaign with the purchase of the former Hunter Saw Building – now known as the Timmons Studios, located directly across the street at 5688 Butler Street. This expansion doubled the organization’s size, creating new fibers and paper studios; expanding the metals studio; re-introducing a wood studio; introducing a blacksmithing studio; and creating a new National Artist-in-Residence Studio and regional gallery. The building at 5645 Butler Street is now known as the Raphael Building. In addition, the Windgate Foundation generously established a \$2.5 million endowment, designated for the support of Contemporary Craft’s programs and operations.

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.
- Exhibitions – Contemporary Craft offers three major exhibitions with a national/international programming focus per year at the main gallery, three exhibitions of regional artists in the Zeve Regional Gallery, and three exhibitions of smaller works in the Gerri Kay Exhibition Cases.
 - *The Elizabeth R. Raphael Founder’s Prize Exhibition*, established in 1997, is a triennial 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 triennial exhibition, exploring complex societal issues that lead to open dialogs with the greater community. This exhibition series explored violence in 2013–14, mental health in 2015-16, human displacement and housing insecurity in 2017-18, food justice in 2021-22, and climate change in 2023-24.
 - *The Solo Artist Elevation Series*, established in 2024, is a yearly solo exhibition that highlights artists at different stages of their careers who continue to focus on the materiality of craft and the advancement of technical skills and practices.
 - 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 10,000 people visit Contemporary Craft each year.
- The Studio – Contemporary Craft features workshops taught by highly accomplished professional artists, including a variety of eight-week workshop series that teach the fundamentals of skills such as weaving and jewelry making. Workshops in fibers, metal, and wood are the primary focus. Contemporary Craft has offered hundreds of workshops, seminars, and other public programs.

- Community Engagement Programs – Through the Partners in Craft program, Contemporary Craft partners with four nonprofit organizations each year to present creative programming in the Studios, at no cost to the organizations.
- TACT – Teen Apprentice in Craft and Technology – TACT is a free 8-week program for creative teens in grades 9-12. Participants explore the intersection of Craft and Technology while working in one of Contemporary Craft’s multiple studios. By the end of the program, all participants are certified to use the Rabbit Laser Cutter and have a completed capstone project.
- Artists-in-Residence – Contemporary Craft offers opportunities to both regional and national artists through its residency programs. National Residents come from around the world and receive free furnished housing, a semi-private workspace, access to all of CC’s studios, and a monthly stipend. Regional Residents come from within 100 miles of Pittsburgh and receive access to all of CC’s studios. All residents engage with the CC community through teaching workshops, hosting artist talks, and engaging with visitors about their work.
- Public Programs and Events – Admission to Contemporary Craft’s exhibitions is always free. Contemporary Craft also hosts artist lectures and demonstrations, artists' studio tours, gallery openings, and salon-style speaker series, and two free Community Days each year.
- The Store – Featuring the best of international, national, and regional artists, The Store offers handcrafted artworks by more than 150 artists. Items include jewelry, ceramics, glass, tableware, textiles, ornaments, accessories, and furniture.
 - An official online store, which features over 1,000 art objects by emerging and established artists, was launched in August 2020 at contemporarycraftstore.com

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