

EXHIBITION CALL

2027 Elizabeth R. Raphael Founder's Prize Award and Exhibition

OVERVIEW

In 1997, the Elizabeth R. Raphael Founder's Prize was established to recognize excellence in contemporary craft, with a focus on the theme of transformation. Named for Elizabeth Rockwell Raphael (1920-1998), the founder of Contemporary Craft, this biennial juried exhibition has built a significant international legacy. It highlights both emerging and established artists who push the boundaries of clay, glass, metal, wood and found materials—challenging traditional techniques and reimagining craft in innovative and thought-provoking ways.

This program offers a \$5,000 grand prize award in conjunction with a [video profile](#), exhibition catalog, and a juried group exhibition—Transformation Series. Prizes are selected by medium, with the designated medium changing with each award.

The 2027 prize will be awarded for an artwork in SMALL METALS.

Past winners and winning artworks include:

Vivian Chiu, *Revolving Vase (9 Peaches)* (wood), 2025
Lauren Kalman, *To Hold...* (glass), 2022
Melissa Cameron, *1.1.2017* (found materials), 2018
Linda Swanson, *Cypreus Lumen* (clay), 2013
Meghan Patrice Riley, *Interstitial* (small metals), 2011
Christian Burchard, *Days of Summer by the Pond* (wood), 2009
Mark Zirpel, *Pair* (glass), 2007
Jim Rose, *Quilt Cupboard* (found materials), 2005
SunKoo Yuh, *The Memory of Pikesville, TN* (clay), 2003
Suzan Rezac, *Opus Tessellatum* (small metals), 2001
David Sengel, *Haloed* (wood), 1999
Sibylle Peretti, *Vogelkuss-Birdkiss II* (glass), 1997

INQUIRIES

For questions, please email:

Yu-San Cheng, Director of Visual Engagement at yscheng@contemporarycraft.org

2027 RAPHAEL PRIZE CALENDAR (Two Phases)

- (Phase I) Call for Artists begins **April 1, 2026**
- Deadline for receipt of application **May 31, 2026**
- Notification of Finalists **July 15, 2026**
- (Phase II) Deadline for Finalists' digital submissions **February 28, 2027**
- Final work to be delivered by **April 1, 2027**
- Notification of prizewinners **May 1, 2027**
- Exhibition schedule **May 28, 2027 - September 4, 2027**

MEDIA CRITERIA

The 2027 Elizabeth R. Raphael Founder's Prize competition is open to all artists working in **small metals**.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to artists 18 and older who are in the early, mid or late stages of their career and reside in the United States or abroad.

The prize will be awarded to an original work created between May 2026 and February 2027 that addresses the theme of “transformation.”

JURYING PROCESS

Jurying will take place in TWO phases. From the initial submissions, a group of finalists will be invited to submit a new work on the selected theme for the final jurying and inclusion in the Raphael Prize exhibition. Only one work per artist may be provided for final jurying. Artists are eligible to include work made after May 2026.

OPEN CALL SCHEDULE

All digital entries must be received by 11:59 pm Sunday, May 31, 2026.

FINALISTS (TWO PHASES) & NOTIFICATION

Phase I - Finalists will be notified by **July 15, 2026** of their selection for inclusion in the Raphael Prize exhibition and catalogue.

Phase II - The prize-winning entry will be chosen from among the works submitted by these finalists for the second round of jurying. The winner of the prize will be notified by **May 1, 2027** (embargo) and the winner will be announced at the exhibition opening. Finalists should be prepared to submit two or three additional pieces for the exhibition if they are selected as the Raphael Prize winner.

SHIPPING

Artists who are selected as finalists will be responsible for one-way transportation of works to Contemporary Craft; Contemporary Craft will pay return transportation costs and insurance for the work that arrive in a ready-to-ship condition. Works must be packed securely and double boxed in reusable containers with thorough re-packing instructions and complete forms for return.

INSURANCE/LIABILITY

Artists who are selected as finalists will be responsible for insuring their work in transit to Contemporary Craft. Contemporary Craft will insure artworks for the entire exhibition period, storage and during return shipment. Contemporary Craft cannot be held liable for lost or damaged pieces during shipping.

PRIZE

In addition to being featured in the group exhibition and an exhibition catalog, the prize winner receives a \$5,000 cash award, and a 5-7 minute video will be made of the artist and their work.

JURORS

A five-member panel will select finalists from the initial submissions, and also select the prize-winning entry.

Guest Juror – Carissa Hussong.

Carissa Hussong has served as Executive Director of the Metal Museum since 2008. Under her leadership, the Museum has grown significantly, expanding its collection, educational programming, and staff. Hussong is currently leading a \$35 million capital campaign to support a major expansion that will transform the Museum, advance the field of metalworking, and have a lasting impact on the greater Memphis community. Prior to joining the Metal Museum, Hussong was Executive Director of the Urban Art Commission, a Memphis-based non-profit managing public art for the City of Memphis and private clients. She also served as Associate Curator at Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis and as a curatorial fellow at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Hussong holds an M.B.A. from the University of Memphis, a B.A. in English Literature from Boston University, and a B.A. in Art History from the University of Washington. She has been recognized as a Superwoman in Business by the Memphis Business Journal (Class of 2022) and as one of 25 Who Shaped Memphis: 1989–2014 by the Memphis Flyer.

Guest Juror – Seth Papac.

Seth Papac grounds their practice in a deep love of jewelry, an appreciation of its 150,000-plus-year history,

and a sincere belief in its ability to affect our experience of—and existence in—the world. Their exploration of jewelry includes teaching and mentoring students, researching and producing conceptual one-of-a-kind jewelry, and creating production and fashion jewelry. In addition to being an Associate Professor in Jewelry + Metalsmithing at Rhode Island School of Design, Seth lectures and serves as a visiting critic throughout the US and beyond. Seth received their BFA from the University of Washington, Seattle and an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI. Their work is exhibited and published internationally, and is part of numerous permanent collections including the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Cranbrook Art Museum, and the Rotasa Foundation.

Catherine Raphael, Metalsmith, storyteller, and daughter of Elizabeth Rockwell Raphael, Pittsburgh, PA
Rachel Saul Rearick, Executive Director, Contemporary Craft, Pittsburgh, PA
Yu-San Cheng, Director of Visual Engagement, Contemporary Craft, Pittsburgh, PA

APPLICATION DETAILS

Applications may be submitted online at [Artwork Archive](#) for **Phase I**. Application materials must include:

- 1) **Resume** (2-page maximum) in **pdf** format only (file size must be under 1MB);
- 2) Artists are required to submit at least 4 and up to 6 artworks. **Representative Images** should reflect similar in quality and nature to the work the artist would enter if selected as a finalist, images need NOT be the exact pieces the artist intends to enter (file size for each image must be under 2MB);
- 3) **Image Details** including: title, year, medium, size, retail value, and description (artist statement)
- 4) **Non-refundable Entry Fee**** of \$45 payable online via credit card or paypal

* Applications will be juried anonymously. Resume is only for the internal record. Please do not include names in your files and the artist statement. Violation of this rule might result in disqualification.

**Please contact Contemporary Craft if the application fee is prohibitive.

SALES

All works (Phase II) must be for sale. CC receives a 50% commission on artworks sold. Commissions received through CC sales help support the free admission, education and community outreach programs of the nonprofit organization.

Getting Started with Your Artwork Archive Submit Account

This [guide](#) is for artists applying to opportunities on Artwork Archive using a Registered Submit Account. Whether you're completely new to the platform or just getting familiar with the application process, this step-by-step tutorial will walk you through everything you need to know to submit applications.

RIGHTS OF REPRODUCTION

CC reserves the right to photograph exhibited work, and use photographs - or the artist's entry images - in both printed and electronic materials for publicity and promotion.

ABOUT CONTEMPORARY CRAFT

Presenting contemporary art in craft materials 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 engagement programs, and a store featuring work by top artists from across the country. Located at 5645 Butler Street in Pittsburgh, PA (USA), Contemporary Craft's exhibitions are free to the public.

www.contemporarycraft.org