



THE DECORATIVE ARTS TRUST

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**Decorative Arts Trust Announced Craft in America Awarded
Inaugural \$100,000 Prize for Excellence and Innovation**

Free Online Video Dictionary of Decorative Arts Techniques

Connects the Past to the Present



*Craft in America's video dictionary will be a free resource for researchers, art historians, students, and the public and serve as an evergreen and widely accessible tool to demonstrate handmade techniques and production J. Isaac Vásquez García, master weaver and dyer, is featured in the *Craft in America: Borders* episode. Photo by Denise Kang. Courtesy Craft in America.*

(8 December 2020, Media, PA) — As part of the Decorative Arts Trust's dedication to nurturing academic and educational programs, **Executive Director Matthew A. Thurlow** announced **Craft in America** as the recipient of the inaugural Prize for Excellence and Innovation in a special presentation last evening. Established in 2020, the \$100,000 Prize for Excellence and Innovation recognizes scholarly endeavors undertaken by a non-profit organization to advance the public's appreciation of decorative arts, fine arts, architecture, or landscape design.

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"The inaugural Prize is a watershed moment for our organization," **Matthew Thurlow** notes. "We are proud to be one of the few organizations able to offer \$100,000 in support of a decorative arts project at this critical moment in the cultural sector. In recent years, we have helped hundreds of students and young professionals make strides toward their careers in the arts, and the Prize will reinforce the value of their dedication."

The Decorative Arts Trust hosted a virtual program on December 7, attended by members, donors, and enthusiasts. Viewers were treated to a presentation that highlighted Craft in America's project as well as the finalists: **Cincinnati Art Museum; The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens; and Thomas Jefferson's Monticello.**

Craft in America is preparing a free online video dictionary of tools, techniques, and materials spanning all decorative arts media, a project led by Craft in America Center Director Emily Zaiden. This free resource for researchers, art historians, students, and the public will serve as an evergreen and widely accessible tool to demonstrate handmade crafts production. Each dictionary "entry" will consist of a short video of a professional artist-maker explaining and documenting a specific process.



Craft in America's video dictionary will be centralized and organized as a searchable bank of verified decorative arts techniques. Linda Sikora, potter and Professor of Ceramic Art/Division Head at Alfred University. Photo by Denise Kang. Courtesy Craft in America.

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"Craft in America will blend the contemporary with the historic by sharing the techniques of talented living craftspeople who represent a continuum of artisanship that stretches back centuries," shares **Matthew Thurlow**. "The project is scalable, malleable, inclusive, and accessible in a manner that will continue to draw interest in and promote the importance and artistry of objects. Craft in America has an impressive history of producing video and narrative of the highest quality. We are proud to reach across the country to support a smaller organization that will make an incredible contribution to further appreciation for the decorative arts."

"This project will organically demonstrate the ongoing continuity of historic craft processes in modern life," explains **Emily Zaiden, Craft in America Center Director**. "The beauty and core of this project is that it captures precisely how historic craft and decorative arts processes are very much alive in the hands of contemporary makers and craft artists. It will demonstrate our connection with the past, with the work of the hand, and our inherent connection with tactile objects and the material culture of our world. These videos will bring to life, in this modern, tech-dominated era, the age-old techniques from our craft heritage."

The Decorative Arts Trust has a long tradition of providing international support to the next generation of museum curators and decorative arts historians via its generous grants, scholarships, and internships. The Trust welcomes additional financial support to endow the Prize beyond this inaugural year. For more information about the Decorative Arts Trust Prize for Excellence and Innovation, visit decorativeartstrust.org/prize, email thetrust@decorativeartstrust.org, or call 610.627.4970.

ABOUT THE DECORATIVE ARTS TRUST

Chartered in 1977, the Decorative Arts Trust has a long history of promoting and fostering appreciation and study of material culture by exchanging information through domestic and international programming, collaborating and partnering with museums and preservation organizations, and underwriting internships, research grants, and scholarships for graduate students and young professionals. The Decorative Arts Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. To learn more about the Decorative Arts Trust or to become a member, please visit decorativeartstrust.org.

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ABOUT CRAFT IN AMERICA

CRAFT IN AMERICA is a Los Angeles-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (est. in 2004) with a mission to promote and advance original handcrafted work through educational programs in all media, accessible to all, including a PBS documentary series with 25 episodes to date, an expansive website, and the Craft in America Center. We are dedicated to the exploration and preservation of craft. We celebrate craft artists, the work of the hand, and the impact of craft on our nation's cultural heritage and economy. [STORYTELLERS](#) & [DEMOCRACY](#) air December 11th on PBS (check local listings).

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