

**Craft Forward
Symposium 2011**

**California College of the Arts
San Francisco & Oakland**

April 1st to 3rd

“Craft only exists in motion.” — Glenn Adamson, keynote speaker

Craft Forward examines the multifaceted practices that both distinguish and blur the historically charged boundaries between craft, art, design, architecture, and writing. The symposium brings together a diverse group of makers and thinkers to explore the ethos of craft and its resurgence in the 21st century.

Craft Forward capitalizes on what might be called the “third wave of craft.” Issues resurfacing as cutting edge in the craft debate—corporeal sites of knowledge, alternative economies, sustainability and slow movements, diversity and identity politics, and production from the local to the global—have historical antecedents in both the Arts and Crafts movement and the 1960s Bay Area studio craft movement. With its contributions to both of these movements and its stellar lineage of pioneering artists working in the crafts, fine arts, design, and architecture, California College of the Arts is uniquely situated to be at the forefront of these national and international debates.

Craft Forward addresses the growing number of constituencies interested in the creation of meaning through the nuances of materiality. The symposium fosters debates on issues of critical making within an expansive definition of craft between makers and scholars in a wide range of disciplines, including craft, art, design, architecture, activism, art history, anthropology, and science. Within this transdisciplinary framework, the goal of this symposium is to identify the ways in which craft thinking navigates the territory bridging these disciplines and to envision the trajectory of craft practice in the future.

Generous support for the Craft Forward symposium is provided by an anonymous donor and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Additional support is provided by Grants for the Arts / San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund and by the Chalsty Aesthetics and Philosophy Initiative, made possible by a grant from the Chalsty Foundation. Special thanks to the American Craft Council for their partnership in the realization of the symposium.



**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS**

Day One: Opening Session

**Mission Bay Conference Center at UCSF
Fisher Banquet Room
Friday, April 1**

Welcome reception

6–7 p.m.
Fisher Atrium

Welcome remarks

7–7:15 p.m.

Stephen Beal, CCA President
Mark Breitenberg, CCA Provost

Craft at CCA

7:15–7:30 p.m.

Deborah Valoma, CCA Director of Fine Arts and Associate Professor, Textiles
Allison Smith, CCA Assistant Professor, Sculpture

Keynote address

7:30–8:30 p.m.

Glenn Adamson

The Invention of Craft

When historians of art and design look back at the early 21st century, a period of unprecedented stylistic and conceptual pluralism, they may well conclude that it was the fabrication of works (rather than the works' content) that really mattered. In this lecture, Glenn Adamson will examine production as a framework for invention, arguing for a self-aware attitude to making in which form, metaphor, and ethics are fully integrated.

The talk is organized around terminology such as “the cutting edge,” friction, and tension. Such terms have their roots in the physicality of craft, but can also be radically expanded into a critical account of contemporary authorship and labor.

Day Two: Panel Presentations

Mission Bay Conference Center at UCSF
Fisher Banquet Room
Saturday, April 2

Morning reception
8:45–9:15 a.m.

Welcome
9:15–9:30 a.m.
Remarks by Mark Takiguchi, CCA Associate Director of Fine Arts

Session 1: Sensory Craft
9:30–11 a.m.
Moderated by Julian Carter, CCA Associate Professor, Visual and Critical Studies

David Howes
Craft, Sensory Power, and Delight
Frank Wilson
Hand Made Minds in the Digital Age

Session 2: Body Craft
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Moderated by Julia Bryan-Wilson, Associate Professor, UC Irvine; CCA Fall 2010 Visiting Scholar

Lauren Kalman
Health and Beauty: Intersections Between Consumer Objects, Fashion, and Images of Illness
Allyson Mitchell
Q Is for Craft: Deep Lez Crafting in a Material World

Lunch
12:30–1:30 p.m.

Session 3: Identity Craft
1:30–3 p.m.
Moderated by Sanjit Sethi, CCA Assistant Professor and Chair, Community Arts; Director of the Center for Art and Public Life

Bridget Cooks
The Phenomenon of the Gee's Bend Quilts
Nancy Hernandez
Crafting the Politics of Identity

Afternoon break
3–3:30 p.m.

Session 4: Digital Craft
3:30–5 p.m.
Moderated by Donald Fortescue, CCA Professor, Furniture

Cat Mazza
Crafting the Grid
Sheila Kennedy
Going SOFT: Hybrid Ecology, Mobility, and the Emergent Public Realm

Day Three: Panel Presentations

**Mission Bay Conference Center at UCSF
Fisher Banquet Room
Sunday, April 3**

Morning reception

9–9:30 a.m.

Session 5: Mass Craft

9:30–11 a.m.

Moderated by Allison Smith, CCA Assistant Professor, Sculpture

Ayse Birsal

Slow Design

Theaster Gates

The Soul Ceramic Manufacturing Corporation and Other Notes on Racialized Materiality

Session 6: Material Craft

11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Moderated by Maria Porges, CCA Assistant Professor and Interim Chair, Visual and Critical Studies

Chris Letteri

New Materiologists: The Move from Designers Crafting Materials to Craft Facilitators

Chris Taylor

Small Craft Advisory

Lunch

12:30–1:30 p.m.

Session 7: Word Craft

1:30–2:30 p.m.

Moderated by Aimee Phan, CCA Assistant Professor and Chair, Writing and Literature

Patricia Powell

Language and Desire and the Discipline of Art

Paul Flores

The Legacy of Spoken Word from Rockland to Amethyst Rockstar

Afternoon break

2:30–2:45 p.m.

Session 8: Resistance Craft

2:45–4:30 p.m.

Moderated by Ted Purves, CCA Assistant Professor and Chair, Fine Arts

Otto von Busch

Dissident Design and Strategic Sloyd

Liz Collins

KNITTING NATION and Ribbons & Donuts

Teddy Cruz

Creative Acts of Citizenship: Performing Neighborhoods

Closing

4:30–5 p.m.

Introduction by Angela Hennessy, CCA Adjunct Professor, Textiles

Remarks by Lydia Matthews

Presenter Biographies

Glenn Adamson

A historian and theorist of craft and design, Dr. Glenn Adamson is deputy head of research and head of graduate studies at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. He also leads the History of Design graduate program collaboratively offered by the museum with the Royal College of Art. Adamson is coeditor of the triannual *Journal of Modern Craft*, and author of *Thinking Through Craft* (Berg Publishers / V&A, 2007) and *The Craft Reader* (Berg, 2010). He is a frequent contributor to museum catalogs and magazines, including *Art in America*, *Crafts*, and *American Craft*, and he writes the blog *From Sketch to Product* published at the Victoria and Albert Museum website. He is currently working on an exhibition about Postmodernism to be held at the Victoria and Albert later this year.

Ayse Birsal

Ayse Birsal is a Turkish-born product designer. As coprincipal with Bibi Seck of Birsal + Seck in New York, she partners with industry leaders such as Hasbro, Herman Miller, Hewlett Packard, Johnson & Johnson, Moroso, OfficeMax, and Target. Simplicity, empathy, and sustainability are central to Birsal's work; her focus is on designing systems in which a few purposeful pieces form rich and adaptable solutions. She has created Deconstruction and Reconstruction (De/Re), a creative toolbox for companies and decision makers. She also originated the Design the Life You Love workshops to inspire people to think about life with originality and creativity using design tools. Birsal has received numerous awards, including the Fulbright, the IDEA Gold Award, *I.D.* magazine's Excellence Award, and the Chicago Athenaeum Good Design Award.

Liz Collins

Liz Collins is an artist and designer, recognized internationally for her use of machine knitting to create groundbreaking clothing, textiles, and installations. She is an associate professor at the Rhode Island School of Design. She was a 2006 United States Artists Target Fellow in Crafts and Traditional Arts, and her work was included in the celebrated exhibitions *Radical Lace and Subversive Knitting* at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York (2007) and *Evolution/Revolution* at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art (2008). In 2005 she created the site-specific multimedia installation and performance project *KNITTING NATION* as a response to working in the textiles and fashion industries. In fall 2011 she will stage two events at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston as part of Helen Molesworth's *Dance/Draw* exhibition.

Bridget Cooks

Dr. Bridget Cooks teaches in the art history and African American studies departments at UC Irvine. Her research focuses on African American art and culture, black visual culture, museum criticism, film, feminist theory, and postcolonial theory. She has received a number of awards, grants, and fellowships, including the prestigious Henry Luce Dissertation Fellowship in American Art. Cooks has curated several exhibitions of African American art at the de Saisset Museum at Santa Clara University and *The Art of Richard Mayhew* (2009) at the Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco. Her writings have appeared recently in *American Studies*, *Afterimage*, *Exposure*, the *International Review of American Art*, and *African American Review*. Her first book, *Exhibiting Blackness: African Americans and the American Art Museum*, is forthcoming from the University of Massachusetts Press.

Teddy Cruz

Teddy Cruz was born in Guatemala City. He established his research-based architecture practice in San Diego in 2000 and has since received international recognition for his urban research of the Tijuana–San Diego border. In 1991 he was awarded the prestigious Rome Prize in Architecture, and in 2005 he was the first recipient of the James Stirling Memorial Lecture on the City Prize. His work has been profiled in the *New York Times*, *Domus*, and *Harvard Design Magazine*. In 2008 he represented the United States in the Venice Architecture Biennale, and this year his work will be included in the *Small Scale, Big Change* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. He is a professor of public culture and urbanism at UC San Diego, where he cofounded CUE / Center for Urban Ecologies. He holds a master's degree in design studies from Harvard University.

Paul Flores

Paul Flores is a published poet, performance artist, playwright, and spoken-word artist. His work explores the intersection of urban culture, hip-hop, and transnational identity. He spent much of his youth between Tijuana and San Diego, developing a border consciousness, and his PEN Award–winning novel *Along the Border Lies* (Creative Arts Book Company, 2001) reflects this experience. Flores's most recent one-person show, *You're Gonna Cry*, sold out its premiere weekend at Dance Mission Theater in February 2011. His play *Representa!* toured to 17 cities, including New York, and other performance projects have taken him from HBO's *Def Poetry* to Cuba, Mexico, and El Salvador. His newest play, *Placas*, is about Central American immigrants and tattoo removal. Flores also produces independent events and performs throughout the United States. He manages the Latino Men and Boys Program, funded by the California Endowment, at the Unity Council in East Oakland. He also teaches hip-hop theater and spoken word at the University of San Francisco.

Theaster Gates

Theaster Gates is an artist, musician, and “cultural planner” as well as director of arts program development for the University of Chicago. In his performances, installations, and urban interventions, Gates transforms spaces, institutions, traditions, and perceptions. He has assembled gospel choirs, formed temporary unions, and used systems of mass production as a way of underscoring the need that industry has for the body. His *City Ceramic Manufacturing Corporation* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit converted the entire museum into a ceramic production facility with the goal of making 40,000 ceremonial soul-food wares. He is currently a Loeb Fellow at Harvard Graduate School of Design. In 2010 he performed and exhibited at the Whitney Biennial and the Armory Show in New York; the Milwaukee Art Museum; the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts in St. Louis; and the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston.

Nancy Hernandez

Nancy Hernandez is an artist and community activist dedicated to grassroots movements for social justice and youth empowerment through art. She is the project manager for *Water Writes*, an ambitious undertaking mobilizing graffiti artists and street muralists to tackle current environmental and social issues via urban public art in Oakland. Over the upcoming year, she will be coordinating 10 massive public art projects on the streets of 10 cities all struggling to gain access to clean water. Hernandez served on the board of Homies Organizing the Mission to Empower Youth (HOMEY), which addresses the root causes of gang-related violence in San Francisco's Mission District. Past projects with HOMEY include a collaboration with graffiti master SPIE 1, for which she coordinated more than 200 volunteers to create the mural *Breaking Down Barriers—Building Bridges of Solidarity* on the corner of 24th and Capp Streets in San Francisco. She was also instrumental in *Green My Ride*, a project dedicated to converting old-school cars into biodiesel lowriders.

David Howes

Dr. David Howes is a professor of anthropology at Concordia University and the director of the Concordia Sensoria Research Team (CONSERT). His main fields of research include sensory anthropology, culture and consumption, constitutional studies, and the anthropology of law. Howes has conducted field research on the cultural life of the senses in Papua New Guinea, northwest Argentina, and the southwestern United States. He recently completed an ethnographic analysis of current trends in multisensory marketing, and a study of the sensory life of things in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. His new media art project involves the creation of a chamber that plays with a wide range of sensory phenomena. His latest book is *The Sixth Sense Reader* (Berg, 2009). He is managing editor of *The Senses & Society*, a journal published by Berg since 2006, and a co-convenor of the website SensoryStudies.org.

Lauren Kalman

Lauren Kalman is a visual artist whose practice centers on installation, video, photography, and performance. Through her work she investigates perspectives of beauty, body image, value, and consumer culture. Raised in the midwest, Kalman earned a BFA with a focus in metals from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design and an MFA from Ohio State University. She exhibits and lectures internationally and is currently an adjunct professor at the Rhode Island School of Design. Her most recent body of work, *Blooms, Efflorescence, and Other Dermatological Embellishments*, merges the beautiful and the grotesque by using gold acupuncture needles, their heads set with precious stones and pearls, to pierce the skin in arrangements that simulate dermatological conditions such as acne, warts, shingles, and symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases.

Chris Lefteri

Chris Lefteri is the founding principal of the studio Chris Lefteri Design. He has published eight books on design and material innovation, including the *Materials for Inspirational Design* series (RotoVision, 2001–7) and *Making It: Manufacturing Techniques for Product Design* (Laurence King, 2007). He is the editor and creative director of *Ingredients* magazine, which has a global subscription base of more than 5,000 designers. His studio has worked with several Fortune 100 companies and major design studios across Europe, the United States, and Asia, helping them formulate strategies for effective materials integration in the design process. Lefteri has conducted workshops and lectures for Nike, Philips Design, LG Electronics, Samsung, New Balance, Dyson, and Hyundai. His studio also works with major material suppliers such as Corning, Eastman Chemical Company, and Exxon Mobil, helping them market their products to the design industry.

Sheila Kennedy

Sheila Kennedy, AIA, is a principal of Kennedy & Violich Architecture Ltd. (KVA), an interdisciplinary design practice that explores the relationships among architecture, digital technology, and emerging public needs. The firm's recent projects include the IBA Hamburg Soft House in Germany, the University of Pennsylvania Law School, Harvard University's Department of Film and Video, and the East River Public Ferry Terminal at 34th Street in Manhattan. KVA has been recognized with numerous awards, including a National Design Excellence Award from the American Institute of Architects and the Industrial Design Excellence Award. Kennedy directs MATx, KVA's material research division, which works collaboratively with industry leaders, cultural institutions, and public agencies to realize designs that advance the use of sustainable digital technologies. MATx has developed designs and technology applications for Dupont, Siemens, Osram, Herman Miller, Saint-Gobain, BASF, Procter & Gamble, the North Face, and the United States Department of Energy.

Lydia Matthews

Lydia Matthews is dean of academic programs and a professor of visual culture at Parsons The New School for Design. Trained as an art historian at UC Berkeley and the Courtauld Institute of Art, she taught for 17 years at CCA, where she cofounded and chaired the Graduate Program in Visual Critical Studies and directed the Graduate Program in Fine Arts. Her work examines how artists, artisans, and designers foster democratic debates and intimate community interactions in the public sphere, often in response to urgent global conditions. Her curatorial commissions include international exhibitions and urban intervention projects in post-Soviet countries and in Greece. She curated the United States pavilions of *Artisterium International* (2008, 2010) and *Art Caucasus Biennial* (2005, 2007) in Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia. She will work there again in 2011–12 with the Open Society Institute.

Cat Mazza

Cat Mazza is an artist whose work combines craft with digital media to explore the overlaps among textiles, technology, and labor. She is the founder of microRevolt, a web-based project that hosts knitPro, a free web application that translates digital images into knit, crochet, needlepoint, and cross-stitch patterns. She is currently an assistant professor of art at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Mazza is a 2007 Rockefeller Media Arts fellow, a 2008 Creative Capital grantee in film/video, and a 2009 Craft Research Fund recipient. Her art has been exhibited at the Triennale di Milano in Italy, Garanti Gallery in Istanbul, the Jönköpings läns Museum in Sweden, and the Museum of Arts and Design in New York. Mazza was a founding staff member at Eyebeam, an art and technology center in New York. She received her BFA in studio art from Carnegie Mellon University in 1999 and her MFA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 2005.

Allyson Mitchell

Allyson Mitchell is an artist working in sculpture, performance, installation, and film. Her practice melds feminism and pop culture to investigate contemporary ideas about sexuality, autobiography, and the body, largely through the use of abandoned and reclaimed textiles and craft. Her works have included a coven of lesbian feminist Sasquatch monsters, a room-sized *vagina dentata*, an army of super-genius Holly Hobbies, and a woodland utopic library. Her works have been exhibited in galleries and festivals across Canada, the United States, and Europe, including the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto; the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the British Film Institute, London. Until its members retired in 2004, Mitchell also performed actively with the fat performance troupe Pretty Porky and Pissed Off. She is an assistant professor in the School of Women's Studies at York University.

Patricia Powell

Patricia Powell is an associate professor of English at Mills College and author of *The Fullness of Everything* (Peepal Tree Press, 2009), *Me Dying Trial* (Beacon Press, 2003), *A Small Gathering of Bones* (Beacon Press, 2003), and *The Pagoda* (Harcourt, 1999). Excerpts from her novels have been widely anthologized, and she has lectured and led creative writing workshops in literary venues both nationally and internationally. In 1993 she was a finalist for Granta's Best of Young American Novelists Award. She has received a PEN New England Discovery Award, the Publishing Triangle's Ferro-Grumley Award for fiction, and the Lila-Wallace Reader's Digest Writers' Award. She is currently working on a memoir.

Chris Taylor

Chris Taylor was born in Tehran, Iran, and lived in Buenos Aires, Madrid, Manila, Mexico City, Brussels, and Tegucigalpa—all before he was 20. He describes his work as an exercise in critical social practice that engages audiences and situations, frequently outside of traditional art institutions. He once reproduced a 16th-century Venetian goblet (using a technique that was lost for more than 500 years) and then planted it in a cabinet next to the original in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, a move intended to exploit the friction generated within material and process, evoking convention, tradition, and history. Taylor has been awarded awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts, and the Rhode Island School of Design.

Otto von Busch

Otto Von Busch is a Swedish fashion artist, theorist, designer, crafter, DIY demagogue, and researcher at the School of Design and Crafts at the University of Gothenburg. His research focuses on "hacktivist" practices in design, fashion, and craft, identifying how such practices engage users to break the so-called "interpassivity" of consumerism. He is a member of the National Swedish Handicraft Council, and as a founding member of the Institute of Strategic Sloyd he is engaged in the resurgence of educational *sloyd* (handicraft-based education).

Frank Wilson

Dr. Frank Wilson was an early contributor to the development of performing arts-related medicine in the United States and Europe in the 1980s. In 1986 he was a cofounder and neurologist for the Health Program for Performing Artists at UCSF, where he focused on impaired hand control in musicians. In 2001 he accepted an appointment as a clinical professor of neurology at Stanford University School of Medicine, researching deep brain stimulation for patients with complex movement disorders. His career-long interest in the neurology of the human hand is reflected in his two books, *Tone Deaf and All Thumbs?* (Viking-Penguin, 1986) and *The Hand: How Its Use Shapes the Brain, Language, and Human Culture* (Pantheon Books, 1998). The latter was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction.

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Acknowledgments

The organization of the Craft Forward symposium at California College of the Arts has been a collaborative effort among faculty and staff across many divisions and programs. Special thanks to Provost Mark Breitenberg and the graduate program chairs for their initiation and support of the symposium. The following people have been instrumental in envisioning, supporting, and organizing Craft Forward:

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